

**MINNEAPOLIS NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION PROGRAM**

**LOWRY HILL  
NEIGHBORHOOD  
ACTION PLAN**

**Date Adopted by the Policy Board: July 31, 1995**

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**Document Number: 95-272M**

**LOWRY HILL NRP**

**ACTION PLAN**

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*LOWRY HILL RESIDENTS, INC.*

***NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION PROGRAM***

**FINAL DRAFT**

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DRAFT 6 - JULY 25, 1995

**INTRODUCTION: NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZING EFFORTS**

Lowry Hill was one of the first neighborhoods chosen to participate in the Neighborhood Revitalization Program, in early 1991. Like the other neighborhoods that entered the program early, it has served as a kind of "test site" for the NRP process. For many neighborhood residents, the NRP has involved an intensive *effort* over several years.

Initial organizing focused on organizing a Steering Committee, developing strategies for neighborhood outreach and preparing a Participation Agreement, submitted in February, 1992. Following approval of the agreement, a part-time coordinator was hired in April, 1992. In the next few months, resident and business surveys were designed and administered with assistance from the Minnesota Center for Survey Research at the University of Minnesota. The resident survey was conducted from May 5 through June 17, 1992. Questionnaires were sent to all 2,005 households, and were completed and returned by 575 residents, for an overall response rate of 32 percent. Survey responses were well-balanced, with 40 percent of the responses coming from renters. Businesses and institutions were surveyed during August, 1992; 19 questionnaires were completed and returned, for a response rate of 50 percent. (Survey responses are summarized in Appendix I and II.)

Much of the pre-workshop phase focused on informing neighborhood residents about the NRP process and eliciting their concerns. An ice cream social was held in Thomas Lowry Park on June 18, 1992, attracting over 200 participants. This was followed by a neighborhood-wide meeting at the Walker Art Center on June 23, with city and county representatives and other speakers. A series of 16 block parties where block leaders and neighbors met to discuss issues of concern were held from August through November of 1992.

During the workshop phase, input from the block parties and the surveys was used to form a set of committees, each dealing with a single issue area or a set of related issues. These committees held a series of meetings throughout the spring and summer of 1993 to discuss issues and potential solutions; committee members also met with city staff and conducted independent research. Two "cluster" groups of combined committees also held two meetings apiece (group #1 consisted of Parking, Traffic, Transportation, Hennepin Avenue; group #2 consisted of Crime and Safety, Lighting, Parks and Recreation, History and Preservation).

This process resulted in completion of a draft action plan and several Early Access proposals in fall of 1993. Draft reports were mailed to all households along with a response form, and 92 responses were received. Early Access funds were approved for a number of projects: traffic counts, a master plan for Thomas Lowry Park, and the Hennepin Avenue Strategic Plan, now complete. Since that time, the Steering Committee has continued to meet to incorporate , revisions to the plan, and to develop cost estimates and a proposed allocation of NRP funds. This report includes all revisions up to this point, and is offered for neighborhood ratification at the Lowry Hill Residents annual meeting on May 25, 1995.

## GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

**REPORT ORGANIZATION:** The main body of this report is divided into sections based on the work of each NRP committee. Each section consists of the following elements:

- **Background:** A brief summary of the issues explored by each committee
- **Recommendations,** consisting of the following elements:
  - **Goals and objectives:** goals express desired future conditions, while objectives are elaborations or more detailed expressions of the goals (not all goals are followed by objectives).
  - **Strategies:** specific actions intended to achieve goals, to be undertaken by Lowry Hill Residents, Inc., a Lowry Hill NRP Implementation Committee, and public agencies such as the Park and Recreation Board and the Minneapolis Public Works Department.
- **Implementation:** In some cases, these strategies have already been, or are currently being implemented, and the implementation process is discussed here.

### 1. CRIME AND SAFETY

#### Background

Crime levels in Lowry Hill, as in the other Calhoun-Isles neighborhoods, tend to be lower than in the city as a whole; the most common crimes are burglaries, auto theft, theft from autos, and property damage. From 1993 to 1994, a slight increase occurred in the number of crimes reported in all of these categories except for auto theft. There were also small increases in numbers of robberies and criminal sexual conduct reported. Although crime statistics at the neighborhood level fluctuate from year to year, this data emphasizes the need for greater resident awareness of and participation in crime prevention and block activities.

#### Recommendations

*Goal A: Make police officers more visible in the neighborhood and bring them closer to the citizens.*

Strategy A1: Bring more police bike patrols into the neighborhood by contributing funds to purchase two equipped mountain bikes for such patrols. Bike patrols are being used in several neighborhoods and have proved effective at increasing police visibility and deterring crime. As suggested by Fifth Precinct staff, funds will also be used to purchase two pairs of high-powered binoculars to assist police on bikes.

Strategy A2: Provide funds for "buy-back" time of police officers: to provide additional police time to cover special needs that residents identify (i.e. bike patrols in summer, special events, etc.)

Strategy A3: Promote increased face-to-face interaction between police officers and residents by encouraging collaboration between Park and City police on bike patrols or other projects, encouraging police to attend community meetings, improving general communications.

*Goal B: Improve residents' understanding regarding crime levels in their neighborhood,*

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*threats to their personal safety; and actions to enhance personal safety and safeguard property.*

- Strategy B 1: Continue to work with CCP/SAFE and existing block clubs to keep residents informed. Work to organize more block clubs, recruit McGruff Houses, etc.
- Strategy B2: Provide graffiti remover at no cost to area businesses, etc., distribute pamphlets on graffiti removal.
- Strategy B3: Working through block clubs, provide residents with parking stickers to indicate which cars belong in the neighborhood. Residents can record license plate numbers of cars without a sticker and can relay these numbers to police if a crime occurs during the same time period.
- Goal C: Improve pedestrian safety and visibility through improved street lighting and through traffic calming measures.*
- Strategy C1: Ornamental street lights provide better street-level lighting, thus improving pedestrian safety. See Section 6, Street Lighting, for a discussion of this strategy.
- Strategy C2: Improve lighting levels through selective trimming of trees and shrubbery where these obstruct visibility, sharing costs with property owners if on private land.
- Strategy C3: Provide motion detector lights or interior block lighting for problem areas (coordinate with block clubs).
- Strategy C4: Traffic calming strategies discussed under Section 7, Traffic, will help to deter shortcutting traffic from outside of the neighborhood, and will slow traffic speeds. Achieving these goals will help to increase pedestrian safety.

**Funding levels and sources:**

- NRP funds: A total of **\$10,000** is proposed, to be allocated approximately as follows:
- \$1,600** for two equipped mountain bikes
  - \$1,600** for additional equipment, such as compact high-powered binoculars, communications equipment, etc., to assist police patrols
  - \$250** for parking stickers
  - \$6,550** for buy-back funds to increase police bike patrols, attendance at special events.
- Any funds not needed for items such as equipment will be used to increase the amount of buy-back funds.

## **Background**

For several years, residents in the Calhoun-Isles area have been concerned about disturbing trends of development taking place along Hennepin Avenue, specifically the "suburbanization" of the avenue through the growth of strip malls and franchises, often with large parking lots in front. In the past decade, attempts were made to study development and zoning along the avenue, but with few results. Using the NRP as an impetus, LHRI organized a task force which conducted a series of meetings to examine land use, traffic, and urban design along the avenue in the spring of 1993. The group was composed of residents, business people, property owners, and representatives from the institutions, religious and artistic, along the Avenue (about 50 people). The task force also conducted a survey of businesses along the Avenue asking questions about what they liked, hoped for, feared, and recommended for the area. Those meetings resulted in a decision to hire a consultant to conduct a comprehensive planning study of the entire Hennepin corridor, from the Basilica to Lakewood Cemetery.

In 1994, LHRI received \$50,000 in Early Access NRP funds to "front" the money to initiate this study. Adjacent neighborhood associations, including Lowry Hill East (the Wedge), East Isles, CARAG, ECCO, and CIDNA, have been asked to contribute to the study costs, and several have agreed to do so. In September, 1994, the consulting firm of Martin & Pitz Associates was chosen as leader of a team of consultants. A draft of final recommendations, "Hennepin Avenue Strategic Plan," was presented to the Hennepin Avenue Task Force on January 9, 1995. After feedback from neighborhood and business groups, the final report was presented and approved on March 7, 1995.

Rather than repeat the detailed recommendations contained in the Strategic Plan, this plan simply outlines the goals and objectives of the Hennepin Avenue Committee and the specific objectives of the study, along with a proposal for a preliminary allocation of funds to implement those recommendations.

## **Recommendations**

The following goals, objectives, and strategies developed by the Task Force led to the initiation of the Hennepin Avenue planning study discussed above, using NRP funds.

*Primary Goal: To preserve, protect and enhance Hennepin Avenue between the Basilica and Lakewood Cemetery to assure that this important public place remains a vibrant, economically successful, diverse and attractive focal point for the city.*

*Goal A: To promote cooperation among groups to plan and carry out improvements along the Avenue.*

Objective A1: Improve ongoing communication/coordination among agencies with responsibilities on the Avenue: Public Works, Planning (including those charged with revising the Zoning Code), Police, and others.

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Objective A2: Encourage groups on the Avenue, including the fledgling South Hennepin Avenue Business Association, to work together on such matters as graffiti removal,

snowplowing, parking, and help them apply for funding for improvements to MCDA and other potential sources.

Objective A3: Identify sources of funding such as MCDA, NRP, MNDOT, federal ISTEA funds and foundation support; make applications by end of the year.

Strategy A1: Using NRP Early Access funds, an areawide planning study of the Avenue was conducted by a team of consultants, working with all the contiguous neighborhoods (as well as CIDNA) and other stakeholders. The study, titled "Hennepin Avenue Strategic Plan: Sustaining the Spirit of the Avenue," is complete. This effort has done much to achieve the goals and objectives outlined in this section.

*Goal B: To improve service delivery and governmental planning along the Avenue.*

Objective B1: Develop consensus about the Avenue's function and character—for instance, whether it is a thoroughfare or a boulevard.

Objective B2: Urge the city to consider the following issues in conjunction with any future actions that would affect the Avenue:

- land use and development
- parking
- appearance and character
- traffic and on-street parking
- streetscape
- redevelopment and building improvements
- safety.

Strategy B1: Continue working with city agencies to address issues that impact Hennepin Avenue and implement the Hennepin Avenue Strategic Plan:

- Work with the Planning Department on its rewrite of the Zoning Code to ensure that the above issues, as well as the results of the Hennepin Avenue Strategic Plan, are addressed.
- Ongoing collaboration with the Public Works Department on traffic management issues, street alignment, parking, etc.
- Establish an ongoing implementation committee to monitor progress and develop funding strategies.

### **Hennepin Avenue Planning Study Goals**

The following goals were developed by the Task Force to guide the consultants conducting the study.

- To enhance and improve the urban streetscape
- To protect the historic character of Hennepin Avenue
- To improve the attractiveness and safety of the area for pedestrians
- To enhance the commercial environment and foster commercial growth

- To find ways for the commercial areas and adjacent residential areas to coexist
- To make Hennepin Avenue a neighborhood resource while recognizing that it is also a regional commercial area

- To find a traffic plan that, while serving the needs of the region, will protect the livability of the neighborhoods and the viability of the small businesses

### **Implementation**

As mentioned above under Strategy B2, an implementation committee will be established to continue working on the strategies discussed in the Hennepin Avenue Strategic Plan.

Specifically, the Plan recommends the following physical improvements within the neighborhood boundaries of Lowry Hill:

- New streetlights with a distinctive "double-headed" design, and with luminous colored panes as a signature element. These lights are to be used the length of the Avenue as common design element.
- Boulevard pavements: creation of planted boulevards between sidewalk and street to set the street edge and buffer the pedestrian from traffic.
- New street trees (45 trees, 4" in diameter, between the Basilica and 22nd Street South)
- Annexation of additional land within the street right-of-way to enlarge and landscape the pedestrian island at Franklin Avenue.

The total project cost estimate for these improvements (including "soft costs" such as administration and a 10% contingency) is between \$441,870 and \$449,020. Funding would come solely from NRP funds, but would also be generated through a special services district which businesses along the Avenue would belong to. Please refer to the Hennepin Avenue Strategic Plan itself for a more detailed discussion of how these improvements are to be implemented, as well as additional design and traffic management strategies.

### **Funding levels and sources**

- NRP funds: **\$250,000** (including **\$50,000** in Early Access funds for planning study, a portion of which will be reimbursed by other Hennepin Avenue neighborhoods)
- Other funding sources may include Public Works budget, MnDOT, federal ISTEA funds proposed special services district, and private contributions.

## **3. HISTORY AND PRESERVATION**

### **Background**

The Lowry Hill neighborhood is one of the oldest intact residential areas close-in to the city center. Moreover, this area is rich in homes designed by some of the state's most prominent architects in a wide range of styles. Most structures are in good condition and retain their residential character. Further, the neighborhood was home to some of the city and state's noteworthy political, artistic, and business leaders.

However, with pressures for development, renovation, and break-up of the largest dweller units, there is a need to set guidelines in order to retain the character of this unique neighborhood. Design, mass and detail-related land use controls and guidelines are needed if this fragile area is to remain healthy for another hundred years.

### **Issues**

Throughout the past three years, throughout fourteen public meetings, two area-wide mail surveys and several cluster meetings, there has been a consistent and strong neighborhood voice for focusing this

committee's efforts around returning the statue of Thomas Lowry to Thomas Lowry Park, the center of the neighborhood's most historic residences. However, for many reasons related to funding availability and city agency priorities, this project no longer appears feasible, leaving the neighborhood to create a new focus for a historic "gateway." This committee has melded the original "wants" of the neighborhood with the "possibilities" allowed, and restated a plan for:

- The artistic and spacial expression of an appropriate "gateway" project;
- The identification and interpretation of the "most significant" historic areas of the neighborhood.

### **Recommendations**

*Goal A: To collect and summarize the neighborhood's historic resources.*

*Goal B: To enhance the neighborhood's awareness of its heritage by completing a of neighborhood architectural features and streetscapes.*

Objective B1: To identify historic structures and areas of the neighborhood.

Strategy B 1: A survey and summary of primary and secondary sources on the developmi Lowry Hill will be made by a consultant team working with the neighborhi Identification of the "most significant" structures or streetscapes will be ma from a summary of available and survey data. This material will be present booklet form with photos and maps, intended for use as a guidebook or wa tour booklet.

*Goal C: To create a gateway site in Thomas Lowry Park which creates a sense of J and neighborhood identity and celebrates Thomas Lowry, founder and devi of the neighborhood.*

Objective C1: To design a gateway project to be a focal point of the historic district and located at the main entrance to Thomas Lowry Park.

Strategy C1: A team of consultants comprised of local historians, sculptors, and landsca architects will design an appropriate gateway site for Thomas Lowry Park, located at the "tip" of the park; the intersection of Mount Curve and Doug] Avenues. The site will be designed in coordination with the NRP Parks any Recreation Committee and its consultant. The following guidelines should followed in the design of the gateway site:

- Victorian era/pre-1920s style.
- Permanent materials of stone, brick, concrete or metal.
- Scale and mass filling the allotted space without detriment to the histoi character of the surrounding streetscape.
- Naturalistic or humanistic form.

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- Subject thematically related to some aspect of Thomas Lowry's life and work.
- Landscape setting and plants chosen for multiseasonal color and period appropriateness.

- Period appropriate lighting and seating will be planned around the gateway site to create a usable gateway area for the neighborhood.

### **Implementation**

Phase I: Initially a design study will be commissioned to present the neighborhood with at least two alternative gateway designs, complete with signage/identification, landscaped setting and lighting. Simultaneously, the Historic Resource Study will be commissioned to pull together the existing primary and secondary information on the neighborhood's architectural heritage. A booklet based on study will be printed.

Phase II: A final gateway design will be chosen and commissioned by the neighborhood within the context of an appropriate landscaped setting. The gateway will be constructed.

### **Funding levels and sources**

NRP: Phase I: **\$28,000** for Historic Resource Study

- review of information available from within the neighborhood as well as from public and archival sources
- collection and reproduction of maps and photographs
- report writing, design and printing of "glossy" booklet

**\$23,000** for Gateway Design Study

- research on "period appropriate" gateway design
- site inventory and survey
- development of alternative designs for gateway
- development of design for landscape setting
- lighting and signage design

Phase II: Budget is undetermined at this time, but it is expected that all of Phase II (gateway construction) will be paid from private funding or a mix of private/public funding.

### **Time frame**

Phase I - Historic Resource Study: Early Access funding for study was approved by LHRI-NRP Steering Committee, by the NRP Policy Board and by City Council in 1994. However, a Request For Qualifications ("RFQ") for a consultant was not issued due to unresolved issues about the project's scope. The RFQ process for consultant selection should be completed within six weeks, and completion of the study, following consultant selection, should take approximately six months.

Phase I - Gateway Design Study: An RFQ should be completed within six weeks and the study should be undertaken in coordination with the Historic Resource Study. Completion of the

Phase II - Gateway Development: A gateway fundraising project should be completed within six months. Alternative funding sources will be sought during Phase 1 of the project, so that site development can take place within the following six months.

## 4. PARKING

### **Background:**

A shortage of parking is endemic in Lowry Hill. It results from the parking demands of la institutions, spillover of commercial parking into residential neighborhoods, and the many multifamily buildings that were built without any off street parking. Parking problems are severe in specific areas:

- The northeastern portion of the neighborhood, where patrons of the Walker Art Center and the Guthrie Theater, and several other institutions all contribute on-street parking.
- The southeastern portion of the neighborhood, bordering Hennepin Avenue, where many existing businesses lack adequate off-street parking, and shared parking arrangements are not in place.
- The area around Franklin and Hennepin, where many multifamily buildings lack adequate off-street parking. North-south streets in that area (e.g. Colfax and Dupont have also experienced parking problems.

The city's current snow removal practices also contribute to parking problems throughout 1 neighborhood.

The Parking Committee developed a set of seven recommendations which were included ii draft report. Based upon comments received, and on changing circumstances, several of the recommendations have been dropped:

- Use of the Scottish Rite Temple parking lot for neighborhood parking: this parking is now shared by the former Title Wave video store (currently vacant), and by other nearby commercial uses.
- Creation of additional parking lots on Colfax through purchase of properties for sale opposed by residents on Colfax.
- Angle parking and one-way traffic on Colfax, Emerson, and Fremont Avenues: majority of respondents were opposed.

### **Recommendations:**

The Committee recommends the following goals, objectives and strategies for implement at least on a trial basis.

*Goal A: Create additional parking spaces for the neighborhood.*

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Objective A1: Work towards development of a parking ramp in the vicinity of the Walker Art Center and the Guthrie Theater. This parking ramp would greatly reduce the number of cars parking in the neighborhood and contribute to the success and vitality of two of Minnesota's most renowned cultural institutions. The original proposal was for a ramp on the site of the current Allianze parking lot; however, Allianze has shown no interest

in pursuing this option. Therefore, the first step must be to seek another site in this area.

Strategy A1: Conduct a locational and feasibility study for a parking ramp in the Walker/Guthrie area. This study would include potential sites, cost estimates, a demand analysis, and funding strategies for parking ramp development.

Objective A2: Create more parking spaces for the numerous renters on or near Franklin Avenue; increase safety of residents by allowing them to park closer to their residences.

Strategy A2: Allow on-street parking on the north side of Franklin Avenue at all times ex 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. This strategy could be implemented on a trial basis (as with many of the traffic strategies in this report) to assess the impacts on through traffic.

Objective A3: Deter excessive on-street parking by nonresidents (downtown commuters and employees, visitors, and customers of area businesses and institutions) through the permit parking system.

Strategy A3: Lowry Hill Residents, Inc. (LHRI) will assist any block desiring permit park by providing them with the information on permit parking regulations and h to obtain city approval for permit parking (see Appendix J

Objective A4: Create more parking spaces during the winter and improve public safety thrc a return to the previously high standards for snow removal that seem to hav' been abandoned in recent years.

Strategy A4: The following recommendations are put forward for consideration by the Public Works Department:

- Tag and tow all "snowbirds" before plowing the streets.
- Plow curb-to-curb for snow removal and repeat more diligently than is currently being done.
- Clear snow from all MTC stops and all street corners.
- Plow all alleys.
- Have city parking ramps allow storage of cars during the winter at a minimal charge.

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- Publicize the availability of no cost overnight parking at Calhoun Square during snow emergencies
- Improve enforcement of regulations prohibiting parking within 20 feet of a corner.

### **Funding levels and sources:**

NRP funds     **\$30,000** for parking ramp demand analysis and feasibility/location study

Other strategies should not involve additional NRP costs.

## **5. PARKS AND RECREATION**

### **Background**

The Parks and Recreation Committee has inventoried and assessed the neighborhood's three major parks, as follows:

- Thomas Lowry Park (Douglas Avenue, Mount Curve Avenue, and Colfax Avenue South) Thomas Lowry Park is a public park created in 1917 through a donation of this land to the Minneapolis park system by a group of Lowry Hill residents. The park was redesigned 1927 with a pergola, cascading water pools, sculptured English-style landscaping and Victorian-style gardens. In 1985 the park was renamed for area resident and Lowry Hill founder Thomas Lowry. The park property and adjacent lands were originally owned by Thomas Lowry; his homestead was located within a block of the existing park, and on his streetcar lines ran adjacent to the park on Douglas Avenue.
- Douglas School Park (Dupont Avenue South, Franklin Avenue and Emerson Avenue S This private park was created in 1976 on the site of the demolished Douglas School. I owned by the Lowry Hill Community Corporation, which was created to manage the I The park area contains a buried mountain of rubble from the brick and concrete; schoo structure. The topography of this high, brimmed, mesa-like park would be ideal for development of a neighborhood park.
- Kenwood Park (Lake of the Isles Parkway, Logan Avenue South, Penn Avenue South Kenwood Parkway)  
Kenwood Park is a large public park which was added to the Minneapolis park systerr 1888 by private donations from area residents (including Thomas Lowry and his fathe law Calvin Goodrich). It has functioned over the years as a mixed-use park for area-w and city-wide recreation. It contains passive open space and playing fields, as well as structured play areas in the tennis courts and playground areas adjacent to the Kenwoi School and the Recreation Center attached to the school.

The Committee also looked at "Area Overlap Parks," a fourth broader geographic cate including Cedar Lake Park, the Chain of Lakes parks, Parade Park and Kenwood Park The health of the urban forest and crime and safety issues were also considered.

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### Recommendations

*Goal A: To strengthen the heritage of neighborhood parks, to capitalize on the character of individual parks, and to assure access to parks and park services by all groups of neighborhood residents.*

**Objective A1:** Thomas Lowry Park should be identified as a passive park, and its primary use should be consistent with its focal point in the historic area of Lowry Hill.

Strategy A1: Develop an overall park master plan that is consistent with the area's historic character while meeting the needs of Lowry Hill residents of all ages. The should address the following specific improvements:

- Appropriate landscape design and plantings to realize the concept of the as a gateway to the neighborhood.
- Vacation of Bryant Avenue South between Mt. Curve and Douglas Ave, and incorporation- of this land and the small utility triangle into the park
- Identification of Thomas Lowry Park on Park Board maps and brochure its correct name and location.
- Posting in the park of park use rules and clearly visible phone numbers police.
- Installation of a small plaque or other marker identifying Thomas Lowry's role in the neighborhood and city.

Safety issues:

- Increased lighting with period-appropriate fixtures in several areas of the park and under the pergola.
- Increased Reduction of overplanting, removal of tall, dense shrubs and overgrown trees, major pruning, and more scale-appropriate choice of plantings (knee high)

Access and Park use issues:

- Planning of open spaces for unstructured activities. Better grass maintainer (better and more regular mowing of lawn areas) and weed control. Rem of large weeds and "volunteer" scrub trees. Installation of annual and/or colorful perennial beds, perhaps as demonstration beds by various horticultural groups.
- Reinstallation of appropriate: walkways in the' park to make it more accessible to elderly and handicapped.

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- Improvement of water quality in the pools through addition of a pump and recycling purification system. Extension of an in-ground watering system for grass and landscape areas.

Landscape restoration issues:

- Use of structural materials throughout the park (on walkways, benches, pools, lighting, and accessories) that are consistent with the park's historical character.

- Landscape plans for future plantings, including careful site planning for the gateway area.
- Careful communication and consultation between Park staff and appropriate neighborhood groups, on at least an annual basis, regarding on-going maintenance and planting plans.
- Better cooperation between the Park Board and neighborhood volunteer nonprofit groups in planting and maintenance activities.
- Moratorium on all Park Board plantings that are inconsistent with the park's master plan.

### **Implementation**

This strategy has largely been accomplished with the use of Early Access funds to hire a consultant to prepare a master plan. This plan has been reviewed by the Committee and largely approved in concept by the Park Board.

The master plan contains several major elements that include most of the improvements listed above. The Committee has designated site utilities and drainage improvements, paving work and site improvements and furnishings as priority elements. Landscaping is a lower, more term priority. NRP funding requests are based on the master plan.

Objective A2: The Douglas School Park should be identified as a passive park and developed for eventual neighborhood use.

Strategy A2: Continue to work with Lowry Hill Community Corporation and adjacent residents to develop an ownership and management agreement for this site. Only after such an agreement is developed can further improvements to the park be considered. One option to be explored is to work with an established land trust or other nonprofit organization (the Sustainable Land Resources Center may be setting up a trust of this type for urban parks and gardens) that could own and maintain the site.

Objective A3: Identify Kenwood Park as a mixed-use park with both active and passive areas and as the primary playground area for younger children.

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Strategy A3: Make renovation of playground equipment, playground areas, walkways and fencing along Franklin Avenue the priorities for NRP funding. Develop renovation plans in cooperation with East Isles, Kenwood, and Cedar-Isles-Dean neighborhoods.

Objective A4: Work cooperatively with East Isles, Kenwood, and Cedar-Isles-Dean neighborhoods to develop priorities and recommendations for:

- Intensity of use and parking issues for parade park and Kenwood Parkway.
- Replacement and maintenance of the urban forest, including planting of shade trees on private property and on Boulevards, with Park Board approval.
- Water quality improvement in the Chain of Lakes.
- Coordinated development of Cedar Lake Park trails.
- Reduction of crime and improvement of personal safety in the parks.

**Funding levels and sources: NRP funds:**

NRP funds: **\$265,263** for Thomas Lowry Park improvements (as outlined in Thomas Lowry Park Master Plan)

**\$42,500** was allocated in Early Access funds, of which \$25,300 was allocated Thomas Lowry Park for master planning and \$17,200 was allocated for design of the Douglas School site. Of this amount, approximately \$7,000 of the Douglas School site funds remain. This amount will be reserved as part of a contingency fund for the eventual disposition and long-term management of the Douglas School site. This contingency fund shall not exceed \$10,000 (\$7,000 Early Access and \$3,000 additional NRP funding).

**\$30,000** for improvements to Kenwood Park

**NRP TOTAL: \$340,763**

Other funding sources: Park Board capital improvement budget, private donations (i.e. memorial gifts etc.)

**6. STREET LIGHTING**

**Background**

The Lowry Hill neighborhood has elected to participate in improving its residential lighting through the NRP, using a portion of NRP funds to help offset the cost to property owners.

Originally, the Lowry Hill neighborhood had lower height light standards spaced relatively close together along its streets. These lights were replaced by the city with a "cobra head" fixture placed high on wooden poles located at each intersection and all mid-block lights were removed. These fixtures provided a large amount of concentrated light and effectively

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illuminated the intersections. However, since the light was concentrated directly below the fixture the space between the intersections was left with virtually no light. During the late 1960's, the city undertook the Midblock Lighting Program which added some lights to improve overall lighting levels. On the typical north-south blocks a single fixture was added mid-block; on larger blocks (between Lincoln and Franklin) two lights were added. This is the existing lighting situation in the neighborhood.

However, the locations between the high overhead lights still remain very dark. On most blocks there are large "dark spots" on streets and sidewalks, especially on the east-west blocks, the "side streets," where few if any mid-block lights exist. This is especially noticeable on Franklin and Douglas Avenues. The pole-mounted lights are also so high that much of the light is lost in the trees.

Several area neighborhoods have recently improved their lighting: the Loring Park neighborhood, the area along Ridgewood Avenue east of Lyndale, the revamped 31st Street south of Calhoun Square, and the Wayzata Boulevard service road between The Parade and Dunwoody. These are all examples of a growing trend to make lighting more effective and attractive.

### **Issues: Why the Program?**

Many NRP neighborhoods have selected street lighting improvements as one of their priority strategies, both for safety and esthetic reasons. The lighting program would essentially remove all the "cobra head" pole-mounted lights and replace them a greater number of lower lights, about 15 feet in height. These are spaced twice as frequently, so that the typical block would have two lights at the intersection and two lights mid-block. This would apply to east-west streets as well as north-south ones.

The new lights have many advantages. Lighting levels remain the same overall, but are better distributed, and less light "leaks" into upstairs windows. The attractive light standards create a more "human-scaled" streetscape. The new lights are more energy-efficient. Another benefit of the program is that on-street wires are placed underground, resulting in a more attractive streetscape. Two NSP-approved styles of light fixtures--a "lantern" and an "acorn" design--are available. Lowry Hill residents overwhelmingly prefer the lantern type. NSP would maintain the lights as they do today.

### **Recommendations**

*Goal: Improve pedestrian safety and visibility, and improve the neighborhood's attractiveness and livability through improved street lighting.*

*Strategy: NRP Steering Committee members will continue to canvass the neighborhood assess support for the new lighting program.*

City- requirements are that residents along a minimum of 8 contiguous block faces must agree to be assessed for the new lights. The assessment is approximately \$ .30 per square foot of property (i.e. \$1,500 for a 5000 square foot lot) and can be up front or assessed over a 20 year period. Operation and maintenance costs are

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paid by the city. A maximum of .25 percent of the assessment costs can be underwritten through the NRP.

Residents are asked to sign a petition to determine their willingness to be assessed for new lights. Lowry Hill's petition drive started in 1994 and has covered approximately 25 of the neighborhood's 46 blocks. The average approval rating has been 67 percent, with 15 blocks obtaining 83 percent approval. It should be noted that the canvassing effort thus far has received

289 approvals and only 10 outright rejections; the remaining residents have simply not been home when canvassed.

The percentage of support that must be received on each block is determined by each neighborhood's City Council representative; Lowry Hill's Council Member Pat Scott has stated that 75 percent of all property owners would constitute a suitable majority.

### **Funding levels and sources:**

**NRP funds:** \$250,000 is allocated to provide the 25 percent subsidy for the lighting program. We will attempt to provide new lights in large contiguous areas of the neighborhood, with a particular focus on Douglas and Franklin Avenues and 22nd Street. All blocks meeting the city criteria where resident approval has been obtained by a certain cut-off date (to be determined) will share in the NRP subsidy. Residents on non-participating blocks could enter the program at a later date (if they met the city criteria) but would have to pay the entire assessment themselves.

## **7. TRAFFIC**

### **Background**

At the heart of any discussion about neighborhood traffic lies an almost universal concern about the safety of children. The recommendations contained in this chapter have the goal of increasing the safety of residential streets for children and other pedestrians.

Lowry Hill's traffic problems are in large part caused by the same forces that adversely impact all the Calhoun/Isles neighborhoods: shortcutting traffic which mainly originates outside of the neighborhood bound for destinations also outside of the neighborhood. Because there has been no overall policy and/or plan put in place to reduce traffic, the city's response over time can be fairly characterized as patchwork. The result has been the unintentional exacerbation of traffic problems elsewhere in the neighborhood.

### Traffic actions within Lowry Hill:

- James made one-way between Franklin and 22nd
- Four-way stop signs installed and Fremont and Franklin, Irving and Franklin, Douglass and Irving.
- Left-turn prohibition from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. from westbound Franklin onto Irving
- Left-turn prohibition from 7:00 - 9:00 a.m. from eastbound Franklin onto Logan and K

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- Franklin designated as an MSA street.

### Traffic actions within adjacent neighborhoods:

- Lake of the Isles Parkway made one-way.
- Burnham Bridge made one-way
- No a.m. right turns from East Lake of the Isles Parkway
- Lagoon and Lake Streets made one-way
- Diverging one-way streets created at south end of Irving between Lagoon and 28<sup>th</sup> Street.

There are also forces 2 wholly external to the neighborhood that are contributing to the growth in traffic. These include:

- The building of 1-394.
- Office development downtown
- Development of Calhoun Square
- Installation of metered ramps on Highway 100

The Traffic Committee recognizes that while it would be desirable to "turn back the clock on many of these actions, that course is not feasible. Instead, additional traffic calming; techniques need to be utilized, looking at Lowry Hill as a whole and at the Calhoun/Isles Community.

The following recommendations are the result of four open neighborhood meetings that took place from May through August of 1993, and a final meeting in November 1993 to review the first draft of this chapter. The meetings were widely publicized as part of the general Lowry Hill NRP mailings. In addition, the committee chairs met with staff of the Transportation Division of the Minneapolis Public Works Department. Telephone interviews were conducted with several traffic engineers in other cities, including Berkeley, Boulder, Seattle, and Edina. A fairly extensive literature search also produced valuable *information* about various traffic mitigation techniques. Following circulation of the first draft of this report, further revisions were made, including removal of recommendations for the use of diagonal diverters for traffic calming. City policy with respect to the installation of one way streets was further clarified to underscore the requirement for approval by residents on the affected streets.

### **Principles**

The following set of guiding principles have been used in formulating the recommendations in this chapter:

- Safety is a primary concern especially for pedestrians, children and elderly who are less able to cope with high traffic on residential streets. Safety for drivers is also important.
- No action will be taken on one residential street which has the effect of increasing traffic on another residential street.
- Traffic destroys neighborliness and contributes to the deterioration of the neighborhood.
- Residential streets are for the primary use of residents (and steps should be taken to ensure that they remain in or return to that state).

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- Residents should have access to all parts of their neighborhood, but neighborhood streets are not for accommodating commuters.
- Some resident inconvenience is acceptable if it results in less neighborhood traffic.
- Both commuters and residents are guilty of driving too fast.
- Some streets in the neighborhood have been more severely and adversely impacted by traffic than others.
- The Park Board, the Walker, the Guthrie, the Blake School and other major institutions need to help reduce the neighborhood traffic produced by their presence in Lowry Hill

- Traffic problems should be monitored on an ongoing basis. If the solutions proposed here result in problems for other Lowry Hill streets we will continue to meet and address problems as they occur.
- Traffic plans and devices should be designed to encourage pass-through traffic to stay on arterial routes and not cut through residential streets.
- Although the city may have a vested interest in getting commuters to work, the transportation infrastructure should not include neighborhoods.
- Mitigation of neighborhood traffic is possible. A look at Georgetown, Beacon Hill, Berkeley, Boulder, and San Francisco, all of which have creatively controlled traffic in residential neighborhoods, demonstrates that this is an attainable goal.

In the end the goal should be for as many of Lowry Hill's streets as possible (and for streets citywide) to become "family streets." This concept was first described by a pioneering traffic planner, Donald Appleyard, as part of his work in San Francisco. Appleyard characterizes family streets as sanctuaries for adults, an escape from the bustle of city life, a place for withdrawal and restoration. Family streets are where our children are introduced to the city and where they should be able to walk or cycle safely. Drivers should understand that the guests, not owners of the street, and should move slowly and carefully. The street should be a pleasant enough environment that people can sit, converse, and play in front of their homes. We should reclaim those streets that were once intended as family streets, but have become major thoroughfares by default, not by design.

### **Recommendations**

*Goal A: Keep shortcutting commuter traffic off residential streets.*

Strategy A1: Conduct neighborhood-wide traffic counts in order to establish baseline data for all the neighborhood's affected streets. Traffic counts at 48 sites were proposed for Early Access funding in 1994, and \$35,000 has been set aside for this purpose. No changes to traffic patterns will take place until after these traffic counts, scheduled for Spring 1995, are completed. This process will do two things. First, it will enable the neighborhood and city staff to select the most

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appropriate traffic calming techniques for specific problem areas. Second, it will allow the neighborhood to assess the true impacts of the traffic calming techniques by comparing baseline counts with counts taken after the techniques are implemented. As discussed below, a nine-month trial period is recommended for all traffic calming techniques and other changes in traffic patterns, so that neighborhood impacts can be assessed.

Strategy A2: Create three "Traffic-Calming Zones" by designating Lowry Hill streets, except for Kenwood, Douglas and Franklin, as "local streets."

This strategy defines three zones, divided from north to south by by Douglas and Franklin, and extending beyond the neighborhood's southern boundary at 22nd Street. Douglas is a designated bus route and Franklin is an MSA (Minnesota State Aid) street. Although the Committee would prefer to have streets designated as "local," both are defined as part of the city's "essential street" system. However, these streets should be carefully studied as part of an overall Lake of the Isles-area traffic study (see Section 1, Additional Actions, below).

The intent of this recommendation is to improve pedestrian safety on all neighborhood streets. While traffic on Douglas and Franklin already splits the neighborhood into three north/south "neighborhood boxes," it is gradually becoming further subdivided by traffic which travels north and south along Irving and along Fremont.

The third neighborhood box extends beyond the southern boundary of Low Hill at 22nd street. Common sense and neighborhood sentiment dictate that third zone ultimately encompass the neighborhood streets all the way to Lagoon.

Simply declaring streets as "traffic-calming zones" does not in and of itself solve problems on those streets. Affirmative action is needed to return Fremont, Irving, Groveland Terrace and 22nd Street to their intended use. The following strategies are aimed at achieving that result.

*Goal B: Manage traffic to reduce speed and increase pedestrian safety in heavily impacted areas.*

Strategy B1: In order to accomplish Strategy A1 (Traffic-Calming Zones) use the following proven traffic control devices, or additional traffic calming methods, in the key locations identified below.

- a. Four-way and three-way stop signs  
Stop signs can be effective in improving safety at specific locations, but are generally regarded as not particularly effective in reducing traffic volume or speed. Stop signs are also subject to violations by many motorists. However, many residents find stop signs valuable for their contribution to pedestrian safety. The city has a master plan for stop sign placement that should be used as

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a guide for siting any additional stop signs in Lowry Hill. Costs are approximately \$100 per sign.

- b. Speed humps  
These are gentle undulations in pavement surface, designed to slow speeding traffic. Speed humps have become a widely accepted traffic calming device in many U.S. cities. In the winter of 1994, speed humps were tested on a street in Southeast Minneapolis and were found to keep traffic speeds at or below 20 mph--an average reduction in speed of 6 to 9 mph--without interfering with snow removal. The Minneapolis Public Works Department has developed a set of

guidelines for speedhump use, including levels of speeding, street width, grades, and horizontal and vertical alignment. Speed humps are only permitted on local streets. Speed humps are installed in pairs; costs are approximately \$9,000 a pair.

c. Diverging One-way Streets

Diverging one-way streets can be highly effective in reducing through traffic by creating discontinuities: The tendency to speed is counteracted by limiting the one-way continuity to one-block increments. Costs are mainly for signs; approximately \$100 per intersection. City policy requires that one-way streets be created in pairs on parallel streets and that 65-75 percent of affected residents must agree to the action by signing a petition requesting one-way designation.

d. Turning Prohibitions

Installation of "No Right Turn" or "No Left Turn" signs has already been implemented at Franklin at Logan and Knox and on East Lake of the Isles Parkway in some locations. These signs apply only during morning or evening rush hours. Turn prohibition signs have been shown to have a significant effect in reducing traffic volumes, although from 10 to 15 percent of motorists typically violate the sign. Costs for signs would be approximately \$100 per intersection.

e. Other Traffic Calming Strategies

These include visual reminders such as chokers and partial chokers (narrow of street at intersections or midblock), serpentines (for example, the pattern being tested on 31st Street in the Uptown area of Minneapolis) traffic circles, and raised intersections. On-street bike lanes (painted) have also proven effective at slowing traffic and improving bicycle and pedestrian safety. Many of these devices have been used in other countries and other U.S. cities, but have not yet been thoroughly evaluated for use in Minneapolis, where additional research is now underway.

### **Priority Locations for Traffic Calming**

Recommended techniques for each location are listed below. It is important to note that these strategies are not listed in priority order. The neighborhood traffic counts will be used to assess the most appropriate strategy for each location.

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### **A. Irving and 22<sup>nd</sup> Streets**

In November 1993, a four-way stop sign was installed at this intersection, as requested by neighbors. The goal was to keep traffic from accelerating up the Irving hill, and to create a safe pedestrian crossing. However, the stop sign has had no effect on traffic volumes. The Committee recommends that the following techniques be considered as alternatives to divert or discourage shortcutters on Irving:

1. Speed humps would help to solve speeding problems and discourage shortcutters.
2. Other traffic calming strategies such as turning prohibitions, visual reminders, etc.

**B. Fremont and Lincoln Avenues**

Consider the following techniques to divert or discourage shortcutters:

1. Speed humps on Fremont on either side of Lincoln.
2. Other traffic calming strategies.

**C. Irving and Lincoln**

Consider the following techniques to divert or discourage shortcutters:

1. Speed humps on Irving on either side of Lincoln.
2. Other traffic calming strategies.

**D. Franklin and Douglas between Logan and Hennepin**

Install "No Left Turn" signs along the length of Franklin and Douglas between Logan and Hennepin to prohibit eastbound commuters on both these streets from cutting through residential streets during commute hours. The recent addition of "No Left Turn" signs on Franklin at Logan and Knox has been highly successful. Residents on these streets report that the signs have made a dramatic difference reducing morning commuter traffic. This same protection should be extended to the other residential streets that intersect with Franklin and Douglas.

**E. Groveland Terrace**

As recommended in the preliminary draft of this report, Groveland was not widened as part of the 1994 repaving project. We recommend that the following actions be considered as well:

1. Three-way stop sign at the intersection of Groveland and DuPont
2. Speed humps on Groveland Terrace in close proximity to the Mt. Curve hill would slow traffic speeding down the hill and would prevent westbound traffic from speeding up the hill.
3. Other traffic calming strategies.

**F. East Lake of the Isles Parkway**

Install "No Right Turn 7-9 a.m." signs at additional intersections along the parkway. Although the Park Board has installed a number of "No Right Turn" signs along the parkway, there are a number of gaps (notably 25th, 26th and 27th Streets) that are being used as shortcuts through Lowry Hill.

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It is recommended that the Park Board take steps to limit the use of Lake of the Isles Parkway as a commuter route feeding external traffic onto neighborhood streets. A "No Right Turn" sign on Franklin would benefit all surrounding neighborhoods, including Kenwood and East Isles, by limiting this commuter traffic.

**G. Dupont and Emerson Avenue south of Franklin**

Both streets experience heavy traffic shortcutting between Hennepin and Franklin, as well as traffic entering and exiting from commercial parking lots along Hennepin. The Committee recommends investigating potential solutions and installing appropriate traffic control devices.

**H. Humboldt between 22nd Street and Douglas**

Residents of Humboldt have expressed concern about the number of cars travelling at unsafe speeds. Installation of speed humps is requested and funding is recommended in this report. Residents of Humboldt have expressed support for initiatives to reduce speed on other streets in the neighborhood, including Irving Avenue.

**I. Bike lanes**

Addition of an on-street (painted) bike lane on Franklin between Dupont and Logan would help to control traffic speeds while providing an important link to the Chain of Lakes bike path system. Bike lanes have been striped on several streets in downtown Minneapolis, and have not interfered with on-street parking or traffic flow. Designation of a north-south street as a bicycle route (marked with signs but not a painted lane) should also be considered.

**J. Additional Actions**

The Committee recommends that the Seventh Ward Traffic Task Force, under the auspices of the council member, continue to work on other effective actions that would keep external commuter traffic out of the Calhoun/Isles neighborhoods, and present these to neighborhood associations for review. To ensure that traffic issues are looked at with an area-wide perspective, the Committee recommends allocating funds toward a Lake of the Isles area traffic study, encompassing East Isles, Kenwood, and part of CIDNA as well as Lowry Hill.

**Funding levels and sources**

NRP funds:   **\$30,000** in Early Access funds for traffic counts  
                  **\$120,000** for traffic calming measures (covering up to 10 intersections at roughly \$10,000 apiece, plus the additional signage and bike lanes recommended above)  
                  **\$10,000** for Lake of the Isles area traffic study

**NRP TOTAL: \$160,000**

Other sources:   Potential funding sources may include federal ISTEA funds for bicycle and pedestrian enhancements and state gas tax funds for other improvements.

**Implementation**

A nine month trial period is recommended to evaluate the effects of these recommendations. It is important to reassure neighborhood residents that all the proposed recommendations are temporary until there has been an adequate period of time to evaluate their impacts and gauge residents' reactions. We need to test the solutions to be sure that all problems have been identified, goals have been achieved, and unintended consequences addressed. The traffic counts to be conducted in Spring of 1995 will be an important first step in establishing a baseline against which changes can be measured.

These first steps toward creating three Traffic Calming Zones should be viewed as preliminary. Traffic is dynamic and its impact on neighborhoods needs to be constantly monitored and controlled. If the recommendations proposed here are not feasible, we will continue to work with the Public Works Department and NRP staff to find mutually acceptable solutions. In any event, we believe that- a continuation of the "status quo" is unacceptable.

## **8. Zoning**

### **Background**

Zoning problems have been most evident along Hennepin Avenue, where large new buildings and strip malls have been constructed with inadequate parking and circulation patterns and without adequate coordination with adjacent uses. This has resulted in unsafe traffic patterns (cars backing onto Hennepin) and incremental development of individual lots with high-intensity, high-traffic uses.

In the "transition zone" between commercial and residential areas, problems have occurred in the past through development of high-rise apartments that have been incompatible with their low-rise surroundings.

Within the residential portion of the neighborhood, problems have generally involved demolitions or remodelings that are insensitive to the architectural and historic character of buildings and their surroundings.

The Minneapolis Planning Department is currently revising the city's zoning code to reflect the many changes in land use and planning methods that have taken place since the code was developed in the 1960s. The following recommendations are intended to be considered as part of these revisions. Recommendations that apply to Hennepin Avenue are intended to be considered as part of the Hennepin Avenue Study (see Section 3).

### **Recommendations:**

*Goal A: Encourage master planning that is sensitive to the unique characteristics of each block along Hennepin Avenue, and use the plan to ensure that redevelopment achieves compatibility between new and existing uses in terms of parking, circulation, and design.*

Strategy A1: The neighborhood will work with the Planning Department, and other appropriate city agencies, to examine land use, traffic, parking and planning

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issues when new uses occur or significant improvements are made.

The Planning Department will evaluate Hennepin Avenue as a possible location for a special overlay district as part of the Zoning Code revision. The Hennepin Avenue Strategic Plan will be taken into consideration in development of the overlay district.

Strategy B 1: Ensure that the ongoing zoning code revisions address the issue of the parking demands of various uses, including new high-turnover uses such as video rental

stores. Parking should be reviewed every time a demolition permit, building permit, or other type of permit is issued. The "reserve parking" or "proof of parking concept" (in which additional parking area is set aside for future use but not constructed unless needed) should be considered for inclusion in the zoning code.

*Goal C: Encourage responsible and appropriate home office uses, in keeping with current trends.*

Strategy C1: Provide for continued home office use in the zoning code revisions, by providing reasonable standards for:

- alterations to primary building
- use of accessory buildings
- signage
- outside employees
- limits on retail and other customer-intensive uses
- avoiding potential impacts on residential neighborhoods (i.e. deliveries, client traffic)

*Goal D: Encourage use of design guidelines in historically significant areas of Lowry Hill, to ensure that new uses complement existing ones and to discourage removal or changes to exterior materials without design review*

Strategy D1: The neighborhood will work with HPC staff and commissioners to educate residents about the historically significant areas of Lowry Hill and develop a set of voluntary guidelines for exterior home improvements that may be used by neighborhood residents. The guidelines should be integrated into any historic interpretive materials developed through the NRP. The guidelines should be constructive and flexible and allow for a diversity of housing types and personal choice. Guidelines could address such features as: building height, bulk and massing, street rhythms created by spacing of existing homes, proportion of openings, roof treatment, cornice height, and basic architectural character.

### **Funding levels and sources**

The strategies proposed above require no additional funding to implement. They do require consideration by the Planning Department, as part of its Zoning Code revisions, and by the Hennepin Avenue Corridor Task Force, as part of that ongoing planning process.

| <b>Category</b>          | <b>Early<br/>Access</b> | <b>Current<br/>Request</b> | <b>Total<br/>Request</b> |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Crime and Safety         |                         | 10,000                     | 10,000                   |
| Hennepin Avenue          | 50,000                  | 200,000                    | 250,000                  |
| History and Preservation | 48,000                  | 3,000                      | 51,000                   |
| Parking                  |                         | 30,000                     | 30,000                   |
| Parks & Recreation       | 42,500                  | 298,263                    | 340,763                  |
| Street Lighting          |                         | 250,000                    | 250,000                  |
| Traffic                  | 32,000                  | 128,000                    | 160,000                  |
| Zoning                   |                         |                            |                          |
| Administration           |                         | 17,850                     | 17,850                   |

|       |         |         |           |
|-------|---------|---------|-----------|
| TOTAL | 172,500 | 937,113 | 1,109,613 |
|-------|---------|---------|-----------|



