

June 24, 2014

To: Mayor Betsy Hodges, Council Member Lisa Goodman, Council Member Lisa Bender, Council Member Kevin Reich, Commissioner Anita Tabb, Commissioner Marion Greene, Commissioner Charlie Zelle, Senator Scott Dibble, Representative Frank Hornstein, Steve Kotke, Don Elwood, Ole Mersinger, Jessica Laabs, Beverly A.B. Farraher

RE: Shared Stakeholder Vision for Hennepin-Lyndale Project

Dear elected officials and Hennepin-Lyndale Reconstruction Project team,

The forthcoming Hennepin-Lyndale reconstruction project is a tremendous opportunity for Minneapolis, local neighborhoods, and local institutions. We have formed a community task force of diverse interests to help support this opportunity. This letter articulates the shared vision our various institutional stakeholders for this project based on a meeting held on June 11th. We recognize that project consultants and staff are working to hone options for the project and we hope this vision can help inform and support that work.

Vision

- Hennepin-Lyndale contributes to a **must-see green corridor** that reconnects the Walker Art Center (Walker) and adjacent neighborhoods and institutions with Loring Park, Nicollet Mall, and Hennepin Avenue downtown.
- Hennepin-Lyndale is a **safe and attractive place to walk, bike, and take transit**.
- Hennepin-Lyndale is a **positive gateway to Downtown and the rest of Minneapolis**.

Current Challenges

Currently Hennepin-Lyndale is a physical and visual barrier that divides the Walker, Lowry Hill, and Uptown from Loring Park and Downtown. It can take more than four minutes and several traffic signals to legally walk across the street at Vineland/Oak Grove. The beautiful green spaces on either side of the street are divided by space that is unwelcoming and unsafe. The broad freeway-style scale of the street leads to speeding traffic rather than creating a place that is core to the arts, culture, and community of Minneapolis.

Currently Hennepin-Lyndale has a number of pedestrian and bicycle safety concerns, including the shared bike-walk space between Groveland and Oak Grove, long crossing distances, intersections with too many crashes, and transit stops that are unsafe and unattractive. There is also a lack of a buffer between the walking and biking areas along the street.

High-Level Opportunities

Previous community work—including the Downtown Council’s *Downtown 2025 Plan*, the *Loring Park Neighborhood Master Plan*, and a 2008 Hennepin-Lyndale Civic Corridor Design Charrette—provide a number of great ideas that we hope to see incorporated in to the reconstruction project. It is also a tremendous opportunity that the Walker and the Park Board are planning to reconstruct the Sculpture Garden in 2015 and that the Walker is improving the design of its Vineland Place entrance as well as the green space on the west and east sides of the Art Center. We hope that project staff will pro-actively work with the Walker and Park Board to integrate design elements and maximize the benefits of the shared timing of these improvements.

Some high-level ideas that contribute to our vision include:

- Reducing pedestrian crossing distances and providing more space for greening by **reducing the number of lanes as feasible and reducing lane widths**;
- Improving crossings at Groveland Terrace/Groveland Avenue and at Vineland/Oak Grove Street by **providing ‘pedestrian zone’ cues to drivers such as colored concrete, and bold and wide striping, larger islands and better walk signal timing**.
- **Changing the scale of the street from a freeway zone to a neighborhood zone**;
- Creating a **“Grand Terrace” at Vineland Place/Oak Grove** that includes adding, enhancing, and better maintaining green space and possibly **incorporating public art** into the design;
- **Incorporating green buffers for the sidewalk and bikeway along the length of the project**; and
- **Coordinating with MnDOT on enhancing the fencing and greening around the I-94 tunnel embankments and the pedestrian realm at the Dunwoody and Hennepin underpass**.
- **Contributing to a more extensive active, green connection from the Mississippi River to the Walker Art Center and beyond** as articulated in the concept design by James Corner Field Operations for reconstructing Nicollet Mall.

We look forward to working with you further as the details of traffic studies and design concepts are finalized. We are encouraged to hear that a variety of options will be presented at the second public meeting. If you have any questions, you can contact us through Craig Wilson (representing Lowry Hill Neighborhood Association) or John Van Heel (representing Citizens for a Loring Park Community).

Sincerely,

Lowry Hill Neighborhood Association
Phillip Hallaway, LHNA President

Citizens for a Loring Park Community
Christopher Hoffer, CLPC President

Walker Art Center
David Galligan, WAC Deputy Director, COO

St. Mark’s Episcopal Cathedral
Mary Pagnucco, St. Mark’s Representative

Hennepin Ave. United Methodist Church
Keith Sjoquist, HAUMC Representative

Minneapolis Downtown Council
Ben Shardlow, Downtown Council Representative

Minneapolis Bicycle Coalition
Ethan Fawley, Executive Director

Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee
Jenny Edwards, MPAC Representative

510 Groveland
Barbara Slade, 510 Groveland Representative

The Groveland Condominiums
Tom Fidam, President

Christopher Sanders, CLPC Board representative

Janis Clay, LHNA board representative

Adam Moore, CLPC Board representative

Siri Engberg, Walker Art Center representative

Dan Aronson, LHNA board representative

Janet Hallaway, The Bridge for Youth/LHNA representative

Janne Flisrand, LHNA representative

Cedar Phillips, LHNA representative

Mark Nelson, CLPC board representative

Joe Polacek, CLPC guest representative, Stevens Square resident

David Goldstein, Walker Art Center representative

Dylan Cole, Walker Art Center representative

Scott Engel, Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee representative

Neil Reardon, CLPC representative

Craig Wilson, LHNA board representative

John Van Heel, CLPC board representative