

# State of North Minneapolis Report

## Humphrey School Capstone Report

The Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs

The University of Minnesota

Alejandro Caceres-Aranda

Justin Carlson

Monica Guendy

Shizhuo Ma

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Instructor: Jeannie Entenza

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Destination Northside Coalition



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Destination  
Northside  
Coalition

**Subject Keywords:** North Minneapolis, economic development, community development, comprehensive economic development strategy, Minneapolis 2040 Plan, Northside Forward Plan

**Abstract:** The history of North Minneapolis has influenced its current state of development and as it continues moving forward, members of the community and local stakeholders need a shared understanding of the current status of economic development in North Minneapolis. Destination Northside Coalition, a group of organizations committed to the long-term economic prosperity of North Minneapolis, empowered the capstone team to create a report that will serve as a resource to inform residents of North Minneapolis and visitors to the area that may not be aware of what economic development activity is in progress and planned within the community. The State of North Minneapolis Report explores ongoing and planned economic development projects and initiatives in North Minneapolis and identifies and evaluates what barriers are limiting further development in the area. These projects and initiatives were assessed through interviews, observation, and secondary research to determine how they align or conflict with comprehensive economic development strategies for North Minneapolis, specifically the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan* and the *Northside Forward Plan*. The degree of alignment and key barriers are captured in themes on economic development strategy, residential landscape changes, financial and economic constraints, and political and community-level challenges. The culmination of this work is presented in recommendations that focus on supporting local developers, mitigating the negative impacts of large-scale development projects, bridging the gap between resident and business needs with planning visions, and fostering cross-sector collaboration.



## **Acknowledgments**

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We were fortunate to have the support of state and local elected officials and policy aides, City of Minneapolis staff, academics, investors, business owners, community organizations, and residents. This was most evident in the willingness of these key stakeholders to share their insights with us through interviews for this project. We would not have been able to complete this work, and it would have been far less impactful without each of your contributions. Thank you for your engagement on this topic and for sharing your experiences with us.

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## **Team Profile**

**Alejandro Caceres-Aranda**, Master of Public Policy, Humphrey School of Public Affairs

**Justin Carlson**, Master of Public Affairs, Humphrey School of Public Affairs

**Monica Guendy**, Master of Development Practice, Humphrey School of Public Affairs

**Shizhuo Ma**, Master of Public Policy, Humphrey School of Public Affairs

**Natalie Johnson Lee**, Destination Northside Coalition

**Jeannie Entenza**, Instructor, Humphrey School of Public Affairs

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## **Executive Summary**

The history of North Minneapolis has influenced its current state of development and as it continues moving forward, members of the community and local stakeholders need a shared understanding of the current status of economic development in North Minneapolis. This area has received a disproportionate level of investment relative to its rate of household growth and a lack of economic activity has led to dollars being spent by community members outside of North Minneapolis rather than being spent locally. This combination makes upward economic mobility and establishing generational wealth very challenging for residents of North Minneapolis.

Destination Northside Coalition, a group of organizations committed to the long-term economic prosperity of North Minneapolis, empowered the capstone team to create a report that will serve as a resource to inform residents of North Minneapolis and visitors to the area that may not be aware of what economic development activity is happening within the community. The State of North Minneapolis Report explores ongoing and planned economic development projects and initiatives in North Minneapolis and identifies and evaluates what barriers are limiting further development in the area. These projects and initiatives were assessed through fifteen interviews, observations during a local site visit of North Minneapolis, and secondary research to determine how they align or conflict with comprehensive economic development strategies for North Minneapolis, specifically the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan* and the *Northside Forward Plan*.

From our interviews and observations emerged several key themes regarding the degree of alignment with different plans and key barriers to development including:

- Economic development strategies; cohesiveness, sustainability, and viability challenges.
- Financial and economic barriers; businesses, investors, and city planners.
- Political and community barriers; local policymakers and local residents perspectives.
- Residential landscape changes; neighboring community expansions and property values.

The culmination of this work is presented in a set of recommendations focused on fostering local development and aligning the community and key stakeholders around a shared vision. These recommendations include:

- More support for local developers
- Mitigation plans for adverse development impacts (e.g. METRO Blue Line expansion)
- Aligning community and planning visions
- Fostering cross-sector collaboration

This work matters as intentionality around economic investment and community development can prevent working in silos that leads to disparate impacts for local community members. This report provided an opportunity for the capstone team to use storytelling in the form of qualitative research that maintains a positive, yet realistic outlook that does not come from a place of

condemnation. There is so much to be proud of in North Minneapolis, and there remains many opportunities to build upon the incredible work being done to further benefit this community.

## **Introduction and Background**

***“Though home to 4% of all citywide household growth over the past ten years, North Minneapolis has captured less than 3% of all new development.”***

***- Northside Forward Community Session, January 15, 2025***

The history of North Minneapolis has influenced its current state of development and as it continues moving forward, members of the community and local stakeholders need a shared understanding of the current status of economic development in North Minneapolis. Economic development refers to “creating the conditions for economic growth and improved quality of life by expanding the capacity of individuals, businesses, and communities to maximize the use of their talents and skills to support innovation, job creation, and private investment” (Economic Development Administration, n.d.). A disproportionately low share of investment in economic development relative to the rest of the city has continued the trend of disenfranchisement and lack of economic activity in North Minneapolis. The potential for North Minneapolis is huge. The land is valuable and the location, including the ease of accessing downtown, is an asset. Even so, money continues to leave the community to be spent in surrounding areas rather than being used to support local development through economic activity within North Minneapolis.

## **Project Overview**

This capstone project is a collaborative effort between the Destination Northside Coalition and Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs graduate students to create a State of North Minneapolis Report. During our first team capstone meeting on November 19, 2024, we were challenged by our client, Natalie Johnson Lee, to each find a personal interest in this project and to make it our own. That guidance and inspiration led to the development of two research questions and the selection of specific data collection methods to create the State of North Minneapolis Report. This report serves as a resource that is designed to inform residents of North Minneapolis and visitors to the area that may not be aware of what is happening within the community of completed, ongoing, and planned economic development projects in their community. A comprehensive economic development strategy is “a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development as a result of a regionally-owned planning process designed to guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of an area or region” (Economic Development Administration, n.d.). This report identifies economic development projects in North Minneapolis and evaluates how these projects are or are not connected to comprehensive economic development strategies for the area, including *Thrive MSP 2040*, the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan*, and the *Northside Forward Plan*. As explained in the report, evaluation of the comprehensive economic development strategies was narrowed to focus on the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan* and the *Northside Forward Plan* based on research and interview responses.

The State of North Minneapolis Report has been compiled through extensive research and fifteen interviews conducted with state and local elected officials and policy aides, City of Minneapolis staff, academics, investors, business owners, community organizations, and residents, and other key stakeholders to identify and map out both major and lesser-known economic development projects in North Minneapolis. Through the research, interviews, and mapping of economic development projects in the designated geographic area, the team was able to better understand and evaluate how these efforts are aligned or conflict with the comprehensive economic development strategies. Further research and analysis were performed on identifying and evaluating barriers to additional economic development projects in North Minneapolis. We were fortunate to meet with Natalie through both in-person and virtual meetings, at multiple community sessions led by The African American Leadership Forum, and during our in-person North Minneapolis site visit. The project timeline for our capstone culminated in a final presentation on April 29, 2025, and report submission on May 5, 2025.



*Figure 1: State of North Minneapolis Report capstone team project timeline*

***Destination Northside Coalition***

Destination Northside Coalition is a group of organizations committed to the long-term economic prosperity of North Minneapolis. The founding members of the Destination Northside Coalition include Northside Economic Opportunity Network (NEON), Community Reinvestment Fund USA (CRF USA), West Broadway Business & Area Coalition (WBC), TRI-Construction, Neighborhood Development Center (NDC), Black Women’s Wealth Alliance (BWWA), Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC Twin Cities), and Nura Holistic Massage & Bodywork (NURA). These member organizations have demonstrated a deep commitment to supporting the needs of North Minneapolis businesses and entrepreneurs. Destination Northside Coalition was formed following the murder of George Floyd in 2020 to amplify their impact and strengthen the long-term viability and success of North Minneapolis (Destination Northside Coalition, n.d.).

**History of North Minneapolis**

North Minneapolis has experienced significant economic and demographic shifts over the past century, shaped by industrial expansion, transportation developments, and systemic racial segregation. As a historically working-class area, it has been home to African American communities, immigrants, and laborers who contributed to the region’s industrial growth. In the

early 20th century, manufacturing and small businesses fueled economic prosperity, but mid-century deindustrialization, disinvestment, and urban renewal projects led to widespread economic decline and job losses. The effects of discriminatory policies, coupled with shifting employment and transportation patterns, have left a lasting impact on the economic vitality of the Near North and Camden communities.

### ***Industrial and Economic Development***

The economic foundations of North Minneapolis were laid in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when the city of Minneapolis emerged as a major industrial hub. The flour milling industry, fueled by the Mississippi River, positioned Minneapolis as the "Mill City," attracting a large workforce to the surrounding neighborhoods. While much of the industrial activity was concentrated along the riverbanks and central Minneapolis, North Minneapolis developed into a vital residential and economic extension of these industries. In the early 20th century, Near North and Camden became home to many industrial workers, particularly those employed in milling, lumber, and manufacturing. Camden, in particular, developed a strong industrial presence, with factories and warehouses supporting the city's growing economy. The expansion of railroads and streetcar lines further facilitated economic growth, connecting North Minneapolis to the broader regional trade network (Minneapolis Historical Society, n.d.). However, the Great Depression of the 1930s had a profound impact on North Minneapolis. Economic downturns led to widespread job losses in manufacturing and distribution. The economic base of North Minneapolis began to weaken, and many businesses struggled to recover, setting the stage for subsequent waves of economic decline and racialized disinvestment.

### ***Business and Employment***

Throughout much of the 20th century, North Minneapolis was a working-class enclave with a mix of small businesses, industrial jobs, and local entrepreneurship. The business landscape in Near North was shaped by the presence of Jewish-owned businesses in the early decades, followed by the emergence of African American enterprises in the mid-century as the demographic composition shifted (Hankin-Redmon, 2020). Camden, in contrast, retained a more industrial character, with larger warehouses, manufacturing plants, and industrial supply businesses. However, as deindustrialization took hold in the mid-20th century, many of these employers either downsized or relocated to suburban areas, leading to economic decline and rising unemployment rates (Caples et al., 2024).

The flight of businesses from North Minneapolis accelerated in the postwar era due to racial segregation, redlining, and disinvestment. African American entrepreneurs faced significant barriers in securing loans and leasing commercial properties, limiting their ability to sustain and expand businesses in the area. By the 1970s, economic disinvestment was evident, with declining business activity along key corridors such as West Broadway Avenue, which had previously been a bustling commercial district. Despite these challenges, North Minneapolis has remained

home to a resilient entrepreneurial community. Today, organizations like the Northside Economic Opportunity Network (NEON) and the West Broadway Business and Area Coalition work to support local businesses and promote economic revitalization (MPR News, 2023). Efforts to foster Black-owned businesses and cooperative economic models continue to be a central strategy for economic renewal.

### ***Transportation Infrastructure***

Transportation infrastructure has played a defining role in shaping the economic trajectory of North Minneapolis. The early 20th century saw the expansion of the Twin City Rapid Transit Company's (TCRT) streetcar network, which connected North Minneapolis to downtown and other parts of the city (Huynh, 2024). This connectivity facilitated residential and commercial growth, allowing workers to commute efficiently and businesses to thrive along major corridors. However, the mid-century shift toward automobile transportation and the construction of major highways dramatically altered the neighborhood's landscape. The construction of Olson Memorial Highway (Highway 55) and Interstate 94 in the 1950s and 1960s had particularly devastating effects on Near North. These projects led to the displacement of hundreds of families, the demolition of homes and businesses, and the physical isolation of North Minneapolis from other parts of the city (Caples et al., 2024).

For Camden, the construction of the Camden Bridge and the expansion of I-94 reshaped mobility patterns, making it easier for residents to commute to suburban job centers. However, these developments also contributed to the decline of local businesses, as suburban shopping centers and business districts became more accessible, drawing economic activity away from North Minneapolis. The decline of public transit further exacerbated economic disparities. With the dismantling of the streetcar system in the 1950s, residents became increasingly dependent on buses, which provided less reliable and less extensive service. This lack of robust public transit infrastructure continues to impact economic opportunities for residents, limiting access to jobs and essential services (Minneapolis Public Works, 2020).

The construction of Interstate 94 (I-94) through North Minneapolis in the 1960s had profound and lasting impacts on the community. The development of I-94 displaced over 24,000 people in Minneapolis, disproportionately affecting Black residents who comprised 35% of those displaced despite representing only 3% of the city's population at the time. The freeway's route was deliberately chosen to pass through predominantly Black and working-class neighborhoods, leading to the destruction of homes, businesses, and community institutions. This disruption not only fragmented tight-knit communities but also contributed to long-term economic and social challenges that continue to affect North Minneapolis today.

The Metropolitan Council (Met Council) has begun the design phase as it moves towards construction of a proposed 13.4-mile extension of the METRO Blue Line light rail (Metropolitan Council, n.d.). The Blue Line Extension will connect downtown Minneapolis with the

communities of North Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park (Metropolitan Council, n.d.). The proposed stops in North Minneapolis include Plymouth Avenue, West Broadway Avenue, Lyndale Avenue, James Avenue, Penn Avenue, and Lowry Avenue (see proposed route maps in Appendix D). In 2024, the Minneapolis City Council unanimously approved municipal consent for the METRO Blue Line light rail expansion becoming the final city along the corridor to grant municipal consent (City of Minneapolis, 2024).

Achieving municipal consent given deep divisions between railroads, developers, community members, business owners, public officials, and many other stakeholders was not a foregone conclusion. Concerns over route accessibility, gentrification, economic impact, and landowner rights all raised doubt that a final agreement was achievable. As Council Member Ellison shared, *“the kind of impacts that come with transportation-oriented development can cause harmful displacement that is a real threat to the identity and people that live along some of these routes,”* and yet just prior to the unanimous vote, he and others praised METRO Blue Line Extension project staff for their facilitation efforts that led to this agreement (City of Minneapolis, 2024). Staff being responsive to issues raised, validating concerns, considerately responding, pivoting when needed, and patiently persevering allowed the project team to overcome differences and shepherd this municipal consent vote through to passage.

Even with this progress, concerns remain over the displacement of local businesses and negative economic impacts that may be realized during construction and along previously considered routes. The Met Council considers connectedness, reduced transit commute times, accessibility, improved public health, and investment in a corridor that has a history of systemic racism as the primary benefits of the project. Research on the planned benefits of rapid transit and light rail projects in comparison to the outcomes of those transportation investments could provide insights into the likelihood that North Minneapolis will experience these benefits.

## Project benefits

The Blue Line Extension will:

- Connect people to new opportunities and destinations.
- Link people more efficiently to educational and employment opportunities, reduce transit commute times, and increase access to goods and services in an area where building community wealth is a priority.
- Improve public health and reduce pollution by connecting people to quality health care and providing clean active transportation options.
- Make a generational and unprecedented transit investment in a corridor that has experienced a history of systemic racism and high percentage of zero-car households.

*Figure 2: METRO Blue Line Extension Project Benefits (City of Minneapolis, 2024)*

## Neighborhood Profiles

North Minneapolis is composed of two major community areas—Near North and Camden—each made up of several distinct neighborhoods that together reflect the area's rich history, cultural vibrancy, and deep community roots (see Appendix D for a map of neighborhoods in North Minneapolis). From long-standing Black churches and immigrant-owned businesses to expansive parks and community centers, these neighborhoods offer a diverse array of assets that support residents' social, spiritual, and economic lives. Despite facing systemic challenges such as concentrated poverty and historical disinvestment, North Minneapolis continues to demonstrate resilience and self-determination through grassroots organizing, cultural expression, and neighborhood pride. The following community profiles, based on data collected from Minnesota Compass as shown in Appendix A, offer a closer look at the people, places, and characteristics that define each neighborhood in North Minneapolis (MN Compass, n.d.).

### *Near North Community*

**Harrison** is home to approximately 3,245 residents, with 74.9% identifying as people of color. About 10% of the population has a disability, and 17.9% are foreign-born. The median household income is \$61,683, but despite this 38.4% of residents live in poverty.

Harrison is home to a variety of local businesses, including La Doña Cervecería Brewery, Misfit Coffee, Milda's Café, and Kasa Bryn Mawr Minneapolis (an aparthotel). The neighborhood also features public amenities such as Harrison Park and Bassett's Creek Park Playground, and it is notable for the historical landmark of Prince's childhood home.

**Hawthorne** has a population of 5,608, with a high racial diversity—80.4% are people of color. The neighborhood has relatively high rates of disability (15.7%) and foreign-born residents (23.1%). Median household income ranges between \$35,000 to \$50,000, and the poverty rate is 39.4%.

Hawthorne hosts a mix of local businesses such as Soul Body Fitness, McDonald's, and O'Reilly Auto Parts. The neighborhood is also home to several religious institutions, including Sanctuary Covenant Church, Liberty Community Church, and United Deliverance Temple. Public amenities in the area include Fairview Park, Fairview Recreation Center, and The Peoples' Garden, a community garden that supports local engagement and food access.

**Jordan** is a neighborhood of 8,548 residents, 78.9% of whom are people of color. With an 18.8% disability rate and 16.8% foreign-born population, the area has a median household income of \$57,823 and a 27.2% poverty rate.

The Jordan neighborhood features a range of community spaces and institutions, including Freedom Square: North MPLS, Glen Gale Park, Jordan Park, and the Jordan Neighborhood Drainage Pond, which contribute to local green space and environmental management. The area

is also home to FreedomWorks Recovery Community and Fellowship Minneapolis, a Baptist church supporting spiritual and social services. Local businesses such as The Lowry Café provide gathering spaces and contribute to the neighborhood's character.

**Near North** has 6,667 residents, 79.0% of whom are people of color. About 16% of residents have a disability, and 22.6% are foreign-born. The median household income is estimated between \$50,000 to \$75,000, with 25.5% living in poverty.

Near North is a vibrant neighborhood with a variety of businesses and community landmarks. Local establishments include Cub Foods – Minneapolis Northside, Soul Bowl, Micky's Liquor, Popeyes, Subway, and Dervish Mazza, offering a mix of everyday essentials and culturally rich dining options. The neighborhood also hosts the V3 Sports complex, Hall Park, and a public football field that serves as key recreational spaces. Spiritual life is supported by institutions such as the Church of the Ascension, Greater Mount Vernon Missionary Baptist Church, and the Visitation Monastery of Minneapolis. The Minnesota African American Heritage Museum & Gallery stands as a cultural anchor, celebrating the history and contributions of Black Minnesotans.

**Sumner-Glenwood** is the smallest neighborhood in this Near North Community, with 2,003 residents. It has the highest percentage of residents of color at 93.6%. The disability rate is 12.3%, and 27.3% of residents are foreign-born. The median income is \$49,860, though no poverty rate was reported.

Sumner-Glenwood features a blend of commercial, cultural, and green spaces. Businesses like Henry & Son liquor store, Gulfeagle Supply, and the International Market Square contribute to the neighborhood's economic activity, with the latter serving as a prominent design and event hub. Community life is enriched by the Minneapolis Glendale Seventh-day Adventist Church and the GGB Garden, a local green space that supports neighborhood beautification and food access.

**Willard-Hay** has a population of 8,942, with 68.1% people of color. Around 14.4% of residents have a disability, and 15.1% are foreign-born. The median household income is estimated between \$50,000 and \$75,000, and 22.3% of the population lives in poverty.

Willard-Hay is a dynamic neighborhood that blends cultural, recreational, and community-oriented spaces. Notable landmarks include the Capri Theater and North Commons Park, which offer spaces for arts, performance, and outdoor recreation. Local businesses such as Olympic Café Plus, Rusty's Tire, Pair of Dice Pizza, and Wally's Food serve the day-to-day needs of residents. The neighborhood is also home to community anchors like the Harold Mezile North Community YMCA and several parks, including Willard Park and Lorraine B. Smaller's Park. Faith communities such as New Generation Church and Spirit of the Lord Church, along with the Homewood Community Garden, further reflect the neighborhood's strong social and spiritual networks.

## ***Camden Community***

**Cleveland** is home to 3,139 residents, with 62.0% identifying as people of color. About 13.2% of residents have a disability. While data on foreign-born residents and poverty is unavailable, the neighborhood has a relatively high median household income of \$78,750.

Cleveland is a small but active neighborhood featuring a mix of local businesses and community spaces. Notable establishments include Quick Stop convenience store, Union Liquor Store, Tooties on Lowry, TAP IN Kitchen & Cocktails, and Cut it Out Salon. Cleveland Park serves as a key recreational space for residents, providing green space and opportunities for outdoor activities.

**Folwell** has a population of 6,030, with 61.0% identifying as people of color. Around 11.9% of residents have a disability, and 11.9% are foreign-born. The median household income is \$78,035, and 12.2% of residents live in poverty.

Folwell is a vibrant neighborhood with a strong mix of recreational, cultural, and commercial assets. Folwell Park and Northside Boxing Club are key recreational spaces that support youth and community wellness. The area is also home to a variety of businesses and services, including Good Deal Oriental Foods, Fremont Market, and The DREAM Shop gift store. Faith institutions such as True Love Church Ministry of Art and Proverbs Christian Fellowship contribute to the neighborhood's spiritual life, alongside the Washburn-McReavy Swanson Chapel. Folwell also supports families through multiple early childhood centers like New Horizon Academy, Home Away From Home Child Care, and Butterfly Learning Center. The Vivid Black Paint Community House further enhances community connection through art and cultural engagement.

**Lind-Bohanon** has 5,175 residents, with 64.7% identifying as people of color. The neighborhood has a 13.0% disability rate and 15.3% of residents are foreign-born. It has the highest median household income in the Camden community at \$84,524, and a relatively low poverty rate of 9.8%.

Lind-Bohanon offers a mix of natural beauty, local businesses, and community-serving spaces. The neighborhood is home to parks such as Bohanon Park, which features a basketball court, George Hill and Alice Rainville Park, and the expansive North Mississippi Regional Park with its Carl W. Kroening Nature Center. Lind Bohanon Ice Rink and the Jenny Lind Community Garden add to the area's recreational and environmental offerings. Local businesses include Dairy Queen, McDonald's, Pantry Food Market, and The Camden Social, providing food and dining options for residents. The neighborhood also includes places of worship such as Hope Lutheran Church and Gethsemane Lutheran Church, which contribute to community connection and support.

**McKinley** is home to 3,184 residents, with 76.3% identifying as people of color—the highest in Camden. It also has the lowest disability rate at 8.6%, and 20.9% of residents are foreign-born. The median household income is \$67,104, and 16.8% of the population lives in poverty.

McKinley is a culturally rich and community-oriented neighborhood with a mix of spiritual, commercial, and recreational amenities. It is home to several places of worship, including Fellowship Minneapolis (Baptist Church), Liberty Community Church, Morrison Baptist Church, and the Minnesota Buddhist Vihara, reflecting its religious diversity. Local businesses such as Northside Food Market, Gold Star Foods, Burger King, and the unique Djembe Goat Skins drum store offer a range of goods and services. Outdoor and green spaces include Perkins Hill Park, which features a popular pump track for biking, and the McKinley Community Garden, which provides residents with opportunities for urban gardening and connection.

**Shingle Creek** has a population of 3,351, with 66.9% people of color. About 9.4% of residents have a disability, and 26.0% are foreign-born—the highest share in the community. The median household income is \$79,821, with 17.4% of residents living in poverty.

Shingle Creek is a family-friendly neighborhood centered around parks, recreation, and community services. Key public amenities include Shingle Creek Park, Creekview Park, and Creekview Recreation Center, offering ample green space and activity options for all ages. Frank Quilici Field, summer home of the Minneapolis Grays Baseball Club, adds a layer of local sports tradition. The neighborhood is also supported by several childcare centers such as Dream Achievers, Garden Childcare, and Laugh, Love and Learn Child Care. Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church serves as a spiritual and community anchor in the area.

**Victory** has 4,669 residents and the lowest percentage of people of color in Camden at 44.7%. About 12.3% of residents have a disability, and only 3.9% are foreign-born. The median household income is \$78,757, and 10.8% of the population lives in poverty.

Victory is a diverse and active neighborhood blending local businesses, faith communities, and recreational amenities. Popular spots include Victory Park and the Victory Prairie Off-Leash Recreation Area, which offer green space and outdoor fun for residents and their pets. The Lincoln Monument stands as a notable historical landmark. Unique local businesses like One Love Tarantulas, Dancing Bear Chocolate, Hot Comics and Collectibles, and The Pickles Café & Catering give the neighborhood a distinctive charm, alongside clothing and beauty shops such as Sonorous Love, Reflections Barbershop, and Bintou Professional African Hair Braiding. Faith institutions such as United Christian Fellowship Church, Miracle Redemption Christian Center International, New Oil Christian Center COGIC, and Corner Coffee Camden support both spiritual life and community connection. Early childhood services are available through providers like CIB Day Care and It Starts With Luv Child Care, rounding out Victory's strong family-oriented character.

**Webber-Camden** has 5,744 residents, with 69.1% identifying as people of color. It has the highest disability rate in Camden at 14.1%, and 13.6% of residents are foreign-born. The median household income is \$63,478—the lowest in the community—and 18.0% of residents live in poverty.

Webber-Camden is a lively and resource-rich neighborhood that blends natural beauty with a strong network of local businesses and community institutions. The area features Webber Park, home to Shingle Creek Falls and Webber Pool, along with the Camden Central Pond—offering residents access to serene outdoor spaces. Local food and drink favorites include The Get Down Coffee Co., Wendy’s House of Soul, C’s Kitchen, Super USA, and Thirsty Whale Bakery. North Market stands out as a combined grocery, wellness, and community hub. Additional services and shops such as Subway, Camden Liquors, Northside Auto, and Wookie the Barber contribute to daily convenience. The neighborhood also supports wellness and creative expression through Embody Yoga and Expression and the Webber Community Center. Faith institutions like Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church and United Faith Pentecostal Church provide spiritual grounding for many residents.

### ***Cultural Districts***

The City of Minneapolis, as part of the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan*, recognizes seven cultural districts to highlight the cultural and linguistic identity of the community, specifically those populated by people of color, indigenous people, and immigrants (Districts, n.d.). Two of these cultural districts are located in North Minneapolis: Lowry Avenue North and West Broadway (see a map of the northside cultural districts in Appendix D). The small area plans and cultural districts identified in North Minneapolis demonstrate the focus for investment within those specific portions of the larger North Minneapolis community beyond the northside specific policy of the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan*.

### ***Federal Government Designated Zones***

The federal government has categorized areas within North Minneapolis under three different government designated zones: Promise Zone, Green Zone, and Opportunity Zone (see a map of the three zones in Appendix D). These designations are directed towards communities that have historically been disenfranchised and marginalized. This federal designation provides benefits and incentivizes investment, but also raises concerns about the displacement of community members that can result from gentrification (O’Keefe, K. & Saadeh, C., 2019).

#### **Promise Zone**

Federally designated Promise Zones are “high poverty communities where the federal government partners with local leaders to increase economic activity, improve educational opportunities, leverage private investment, reduce violent crime, enhance public health and address other priorities identified by the community” according to the U.S. Department of

Housing and Urban Development (HUD) (HUD Exchange, n.d.). The Promise Zone receives benefits from the partnership through the work of AmeriCorps VISTA members, federal liaison support in navigating federal programs, federal grant program and technical assistance access, and Congressionally enacted tax incentives (HUD Exchange, n.d.). The Minneapolis Promise Zone received its designation in 2015 and includes the majority of North Minneapolis, including nine neighborhoods. Promise Zone designation lasts for ten years. Six goals were adopted to improve the quality of life and accelerate revitalization: reduce racial inequities, create jobs, increase economic activity, reduce serious and violent crime, improve educational outcomes, and support stable housing for all (HUD Exchange Promise Zone Fact Sheet, n.d.).

### **Opportunity Zone**

Five low-income census tracts in North Minnesota were designated as Opportunity Zones by former Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton in 2018 (O’Keefe, K. & Saadeh, C., 2019). Opportunity Zone designation incentivizes private sector investment through tax incentives for local development projects. While this designation can lead to increased economic development, it can contribute to gentrification as investments from outside investors lead to displacement.

### **Northern Green Zone**

The 2012 City of Minneapolis Climate Action Plan established the Northern Green Zone in North Minneapolis. This effort draws attention to climate action and sustainability initiatives that are intended to remedy environmental injustice in historically under-resourced communities (O’Keefe, K. & Saadeh, C., 2019). The primary focus of the Northern Green Zone is air pollution, lead in the water, and asthma. The Northern Green Zone Task Force partnered with Representative Fue Lee (59A) on legislation at the state level to advance the priorities of the Northern Green Zone (O’Keefe, K. & Saadeh, C., 2019).

### **Perceptions of North Minneapolis**

Historical policies, redlining, segregation, and racialized disinvestment have all contributed to the economic downturn of North Minneapolis. These conditions have drawn the attention of researchers seeking to understand the area’s economic and social disparities. While such studies aim to promote solutions, they have also contributed—intentionally or not—to framing North Minneapolis primarily as a community of poverty and discrimination. The media has further shaped and amplified this narrative. As a result, a particular image of the community has taken hold—one that associates it with crime and poverty. This stigmatized perception continues to limit investment in North Minneapolis, reinforcing a cycle of disinvestment and underdevelopment in the community.

## ***North Minneapolis: A Systemic Perspective***

Over the years, North Minneapolis has been the subject of extensive scholarly research, with academics examining various socio-economic and structural challenges that have shaped the community. Studies have explored issues such as racial prejudice, as documented by the Mapping Prejudice Project, and the patterns of gentrification, as analyzed by CURA (CURA, 2019). Additionally, research has investigated the availability and accessibility of affordable housing (Olson, 2025) as well as the long-standing effects of housing discrimination and urban disinvestment (Lewis & Calhoun, 2020). These and many other studies highlight the complex intersection of equity, development, and socio-political dynamics that continue to influence the landscape of North Minneapolis.

Researchers have also highlighted the economic development scene in North Minneapolis and the challenges it faces. A paper by Emily Carr titled “Promoting Economic Development in North Minneapolis through Land Use Policy” explores economic isolation and disinvestment in North Minneapolis, specifically addressing the decline of manufacturing jobs. Carr explores potential industries that are compatible with North Minneapolis and identifies high-tech manufacturing, computer and electronic manufacturing, transportation support and educational services as prime for North Minneapolis. To advance these industries and economic development in North Minneapolis, it is preferred to achieve mutual benefit between the local residents and regional industries to promote a sustainable development relationship (Carr, 2012).

## ***North Minneapolis: Public Perception***

North Minneapolis has faced many challenges with how the media perceives it. Oftentimes it is depicted in a negative light that highlights more of the crime, disinvestment, and violence. A lack of investment in a community may lead to higher crime rates as a byproduct. While it is important to acknowledge crime rates, especially in regard to economic hardships, our team seeks to balance the intense focus on public safety concerns with the stories and highlights of positive economic activity going on in North Minneapolis that doesn't receive as much attention.

### **Negative labels and the power of the private sector**

North Minneapolis is a historically Black community and has faced economic challenges that are amplified by the media. A 2016 MinnPost article by Gilyard titled “Why North Minneapolis struggles to attract businesses- and why that may be changing” touched on some of the hardships around North Minneapolis that make it hard on business owners. This article amplifies the perspective of North Minneapolis native, Richard Copeland, CEO and founder of Thor Construction who was attempting to intervene and bring in the private sector to help with economic development in North Minneapolis. Thor Construction used to be the largest minority-owned business in the state of Minnesota and one of the largest Black-owned businesses in the country. In 2016, Copeland made the bold decision to move both of his companies into North

Minneapolis after years of standing by and seeing no economic business activity in his hometown of North Minneapolis. To provide some context and referring back to the Promise Zone designation, 9 out of the 13 neighborhoods of North Minneapolis were deemed a federal Promise Zone under the Obama administration, according to a federal overview of the north side; the area suffers from “*alarmingly high unemployment, gun violence, housing blight and poor educational outcomes.*” These issues have contributed to negative perceptions of the area.

The private sector is key to revitalization efforts in North Minneapolis, not just economically but culturally. Through many of our interviews and literature review, the name Houston White kept getting mentioned, as a key entrepreneurial spirit that represents everything that North Minneapolis exemplifies. Houston White has made a significant impact on economic development in North Minneapolis through culturally rooted entrepreneurship and community-focused investments. His work exemplifies how small business initiatives can contribute to broader neighborhood revitalization.

White began his entrepreneurial journey with FRESH by Houston White, a barbershop that quickly became a vital cultural and social space in the community. More than just a grooming service, it served as a hub for connection and dialogue among residents (Duren, 2021). Building on that momentum, White co-founded The Get Down Coffee Co. with business partner Dan Anderson. The coffee shop blends quality products with a strong community atmosphere, making it a cornerstone for local engagement and pride (Johnson, 2022). Beyond retail, White has also contributed to the housing landscape of North Minneapolis. One of his major projects is Camden Town Flats, a nine-unit, mixed-use building that includes affordable housing options and a community space funded by U.S. Bank. The development aims to provide stability while maintaining the cultural character of the neighborhood (Busche, 2022).

White's broader vision is to develop “Camden Town”, a culturally rich economic district in the Webber-Camden neighborhood. His goal is to attract Black entrepreneurs and creatives while building infrastructure that supports long-term growth. Planned expansions include a coffee roastery, taproom, and food hall—amenities designed to make Camden Town a destination while maintaining strong community roots (Johnson, 2022). Overall, White's efforts demonstrate how entrepreneurship grounded in cultural identity can lead to meaningful and sustainable economic development. By prioritizing both economic opportunity and cultural integrity, he has become a driving force in the revitalization of North Minneapolis.

### **Food Deserts and Revitalization**

The term “food desert” gets brought up significantly when talking about North Minneapolis. Food deserts are geographic areas where access to affordable, nutritious, and fresh food is limited. This is the case in North Minneapolis, especially after the Aldi’s on North Broadway and Penn Avenue shut down. This adds to the disparities in North Minneapolis; to put this into perspective Downtown Minneapolis has 56,000 people and four full-service grocery stores.

North Minneapolis has two full-service grocery stores for over 67,000 people (Medina, 2023). However, recent initiatives aim to revitalize the community, with a strong focus on community-led economic development and local empowerment.

One key effort in this revitalization process is the Northside Economic Opportunity Network (NEON), which plays a significant role in fostering economic growth and stability within the community. NEON's initiatives are centered around supporting local entrepreneurs, providing resources for small businesses, and addressing the specific economic challenges faced by North Minneapolis residents. One notable project is the development of a \$16.5 million food incubator (Collective Kitchens, 2023), which aims to provide access to fresh produce and plant-based meals, particularly in the area's food desert. By focusing on community-led solutions, NEON is looking to create long-term economic opportunities for residents and reduce reliance on government sources of support.

### **Local Media**

Local media outlets, such as North News, provide grassroots journalism that offers a more positive perspective of North Minneapolis, going against the dominant narratives. This provides a refreshing take on important positive activity occurring in North Minneapolis tailored to its residents.

One article titled "A Northside street gets a new name to honor a Queen" perfectly exemplifies the bright and exuberant community that is North Minneapolis (Pierini, 2024). Patricia Anderson was a hero to her family and community; she was an advocate for youth and civil rights issues all her life beginning in the 1960s. She is known as the mother of the Minneapolis sound that offered housing and a sense of community to young musicians while supporting her son and musician Andre Cymone. After learning one of her kids had a passion for music she opened her family's home to fellow artists and friends. One of those kids was a young Prince, who was Cymone's best friend. Anderson passed away in 2003, yet the street renaming ceremony on Sept. 13 was an effort from her family who wanted the community to remember their beloved mother's legacy. This article exemplifies North News' mission to deepen understanding and empathy for North Minneapolis through community-sourced journalism.

In summary, while North Minneapolis faces significant economic challenges, ongoing efforts by the city, local entrepreneurs, and community organizations are actively working to transform the area. These initiatives aim to shift public perception, promote sustainable economic growth, and should be uplifted and celebrated through media platforms to counter prevailing stigmas and highlight the community's resilience and progress.

## **Research Questions and Methodology**

To capture and evaluate the current state of economic development in North Minneapolis, we employed a qualitative research methodology to identify both existing and planned economic development projects and to assess their alignment with local development policies and strategic frameworks for the area.

### **Research Questions**

This study was guided by two key research questions designed to frame the analysis and inform the evaluation of economic development efforts in North Minneapolis:

- Q1. What are the ongoing and planned economic development projects or initiatives in North Minneapolis, and what barriers are limiting further development in the area?
- Q2. How do the economic development projects identified in Q1 align or conflict with the three major comprehensive economic development strategies for North Minneapolis: *Thrive MSP 2040*, the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan*, and the *Northside Forward Plan*?

### **Methodology**

This study employed a qualitative research approach, utilizing thematic analysis of primary data gathered through key informant interviews with a diverse group of local stakeholders, alongside an observational site visit to examine current and ongoing development initiatives. This methodology was selected so that our recommendations would be based on the lived experience of community members and key informants connected to North Minneapolis. To evaluate the extent to which these efforts align with established local economic development strategies, the primary data was complemented by secondary sources, including core planning documents such as *Thrive MSP 2040*, the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan*, and the *Northside Forward Plan*. These documents served as a foundational framework for assessing the degree of alignment between present development trajectories and the strategic priorities articulated in official economic development plans. A copy of the data collection plan can be found in Appendix B and the interview guide is included in Appendix C.

### ***Interviews***

In collaboration with the Destination Northside Coalition, the capstone team developed a comprehensive stakeholder list encompassing state representatives, policy aides from the Minneapolis City Council, City of Minneapolis staff, academics, investors, community organizations, and local residents. Interview requests were sent to key informants across these groups, ultimately resulting in the successful completion of fifteen interviews with a diverse array of stakeholders. Interviews were conducted either in person or virtually, depending on the preference and availability of each participant.

The interviews followed a semi-structured format, with discussions shaped by two primary lines of inquiry tailored to the specific role and expertise of each interviewee. Conversations with state representatives, policy aides from the Minneapolis City Council, and City of Minneapolis staff focused on the current state of development efforts and their alignment with existing local planning frameworks. Interviews with investors, community organizations, and residents offered insights into ongoing projects as well as the structural barriers hindering community progress. With the consent of participants, all interviews were recorded and transcribed to ensure accurate analysis. Each capstone team member conducted thematic coding of the interviews they facilitated, identifying key themes for analysis. These emergent themes were then collaboratively reviewed by the team to identify cross-cutting patterns, which largely shaped the study's analytical findings and final report.

### ***North Minneapolis Site Visit***

On March 22, 2025, the capstone team, accompanied and guided by Natalie Johnson Lee, conducted an observational site visit across several communities within North Minneapolis as well as surrounding neighborhoods on the edge of North Minneapolis. This visit provided the team with a valuable opportunity to directly observe ongoing development efforts and gain a contextualized understanding of the area's historical, social, and geographic dynamics. Ms. Johnson Lee offered extensive insights, sharing detailed historical context and future development plans for various neighborhoods, geographic zones, and specific properties throughout North Minneapolis. The site visit began and ended at V3 Sports, serving as a central anchor for the day's activities. A list and photographic documentation of the observed economic development projects can be found in Appendix E, which includes the majority of projects visited. In addition, several planned projects already under construction—such as the NEON Food Business Incubator on West Broadway Avenue and the forthcoming renovation of North Commons Park—were also observed and are included in Appendix F. These on-site observations significantly enriched the team's understanding and served as a reference point in subsequent stakeholder interviews, where many of the same projects were further discussed.

### ***Policy Documents Review***

As part of the literature review, the team examined three key local development plans: *Thrive MSP 2040*, the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan*, and the *Northside Forward Plan*, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the policy landscape shaping economic development in North Minneapolis. This review enabled the team to evaluate the degree of alignment or divergence between these strategic plans and the development activities identified through interviews and site observations. The *Minneapolis 2040 Plan* documents are publicly available and accessible online. The review of the timeline, topics, goals, and implementation strategies of this plan guided the assessment of project alignment along with interview responses. The *Northside Forward Plan* review was conducted by attending multiple community meetings organized and facilitated by the African American Leadership Forum (AALFTC, or “The Forum”) and Gensler.

These sessions provided valuable firsthand insight, and The Forum staff generously shared presentation materials, further enriching the team's understanding of the plan's priorities and intended outcomes.

While *Thrive MSP 2040* provided a broad regional development framework, its relevance to the specific economic development initiatives in North Minneapolis was ultimately limited. This finding, reinforced by interview responses, led the team to place less emphasis on its strategic alignment in the final analysis. This was part of the research team's strategic choices in defining or bounding the project and involved several pivots as the team considered the most effective means of understanding the problem, identifying research questions, selecting the methodology for data collection, analyzing results, and considering recommendations.

## Research Limitations

The study offers valuable insights into the current state of economic development in North Minneapolis and its alignment with local policies and frameworks; however, there are several limitations that should be acknowledged regarding the research methodology.

- **Non-random sample:** The interview sample was a sample of convenience and availability rather than a random representative sample which could result in selection bias. Stakeholders who were more accessible or willing to participate may not fully represent the broader community or all relevant viewpoints.
- **Sample size:** Efforts were made to include a diverse range of voices; however, the sample size was constrained, resulting in limited representation from each stakeholder group and the underrepresentation of certain perspectives. Consequently, some viewpoints may be less visible in the findings.
- **Subjectivity:** The use of a qualitative thematic approach introduces a degree of subjectivity where certain themes or issues may have been emphasized over others based on interviewees' expertise and interests as well as researchers' interpretation of the data.
- **Researcher bias:** Qualitative researchers often bring their own academic, professional, and personal perspectives to the research process. While reflexivity was practiced, it is important to acknowledge that these perspectives may have influenced the framing of questions, interpretation of data, and emphasis in analysis.
- **Time constraints:** The timeframe of the project was limited to one academic semester which restricted the depth and breadth of data collection and analysis, potentially affecting the comprehensiveness of the results.

## **Results and Analysis**

Drawing on interviews, observations from a site visit to North Minneapolis, and secondary research, the team gained valuable insights into the nature of ongoing and prospective economic development initiatives in the area, the barriers hindering further development, and the extent to which these initiatives align with the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan* and the *Northside Forward Plan*. Secondary research and interviews with City of Minneapolis staff offered a foundational understanding of the city's comprehensive economic development strategies, as discussed in the subsequent section on current policy frameworks. Meanwhile, interviews with the different stakeholders and site visit observations informed the development of an inventory of current and future economic development projects and guided the team's assessment of their alignment or misalignment with strategic planning documents. The degree of alignment was captured in themes on economic development strategy and residential landscape changes. Lastly, the team identified and analyzed key barriers to further development, which are presented under thematic categories of financial and economic constraints, as well as political and community-level challenges. The findings and analysis from this research are detailed in the following sections.

### **Current Economic Development Policies**

Economic policies refer to a broad range of strategies that governments use to stimulate economic activity in a specific geographic area. These policies are intended to generate this economic activity through economic development, which expands the capacity of individuals, businesses, and communities in the support of innovation, job creation, and private investment, by creating conditions for economic growth and improved quality of life (Economic Development Administration, n.d.). This is demonstrated in community development where local stakeholders are included by agencies and service providers through a participatory process to improve their communities (Economic Development Administration, n.d.). Efforts to generate economic activity through community and economic development are prescribed in comprehensive economic development strategies that include plans for regional economic development to guide economic development and improve the resiliency of a geographic region (Economic Development Administration, n.d.). North Minneapolis is included within an area covered by comprehensive economic development strategies and a local economic development plan that were considered for this project: *Thrive MSP 2040*, the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan*, and the *Northside Forward Plan*. These plans are interconnected and build upon each other as they narrow in geographical scope from *Thrive MSP 2040* to the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan* to the *Northside Forward Plan*.

#### ***Thrive MSP 2040***

*Thrive MSP 2040* was prepared in accordance with state statute by the Met Council, which is a regional policy-making body representing the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan region (Metropolitan Council, n.d.). The Met Council is composed of 17 members, each representing a

Council district, and one chair who serves at large (Metropolitan Council, n.d.). Collectively, these members represent 181 cities and townships, seven counties, other government entities, businesses, non-profit organizations, and other regional stakeholders (Metropolitan Council, n.d.). In addition to setting a comprehensive economic development strategy for the Twin Cities metro area as required by state statute (Minn. Stat. 473.145), the Met Council also provides essential services and infrastructure, including the Metro Transit bus and rail system, Metro Mobility, Transit Link, wastewater treatment services, in addition to many other services (Thrive MSP 2040, n.d.).

*Thrive MSP 2040* was adopted by the Met Council on May 28, 2014 to address issues that transcend any one neighborhood, city, or county in an effort to provide an economic foundation across the entire metropolitan area. The Met Council releases a new comprehensive plan every ten years, and the most recent plan, *Imagine 2050*, was approved on February 12, 2025, during the research phase of this project (Metropolitan Council 2050 Policy Plan Index, n.d.). As the new plan had just been approved by the Met Council and economic development projects already completed or in the early stages of development were more likely to have been considered under *Thrive MSP 2040* than *Imagine 2050*, the new plan was not reviewed.

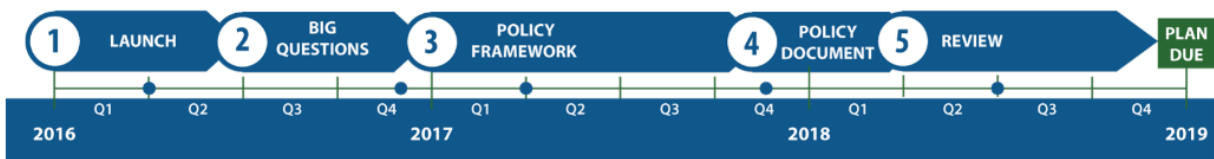
As interviews for this project were scheduled and conducted through the months of March and April, the focus of the project narrowed to the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan* and *Northside Forward Plan* with *Thrive MSP 2040* being removed from the project scope. This was in part due to limitations in team capacity to research and analyze the *Thrive MSP 2040 Plan*, the inability to schedule interviews with relevant *Thrive MSP 2040* stakeholders on a timeline consistent with the research for this project, and based on multiple interview responses that noted greater relevance of the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan* and *Northside Forward Plan* in their work relative to *Thrive MSP 2040*. Local officials and municipal government employees are not necessarily deeply involved with the *Thrive MSP 2040* documents as their role is to steward the city comprehensive plan, which is already in alignment with *Thrive MSP 2040*. Further consideration of the alignment of current and future economic development projects in North Minneapolis with the regional economic development plan could be included in future iterations of this work.

### ***Minneapolis 2040 Plan***

The *Minneapolis 2040 Plan* is the comprehensive plan prepared by the City of Minneapolis in accordance with the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, which requires that municipalities in the Twin Cities provide the Met Council with an updated comprehensive plan every ten years (City of Minneapolis, n.d.). The comprehensive plan must be consistent with the regional comprehensive economic development strategy, which for the Twin Cities metro region was *Thrive MSP 2040* at the time that the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan* was adopted (City of Minneapolis, n.d.). The municipal plan is evaluated within the regional context using three criteria: conformance, consistency, and compatibility. The *Minneapolis 2040 Plan* also includes an outline of action steps that the City will take to align City programs, policies, budgets, and

initiatives with the policies contained in this plan. Additionally, the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan* is intended to work with the City’s Strategic Plan and Racial Equity Action Plan (City of Minneapolis, n.d.).

The *Minneapolis 2040 Plan* went into effect on January 1, 2020 (City of Minneapolis, n.d.). The plan was compiled by City of Minneapolis staff following a two-year engagement process with residents, business owners, and community stakeholders. The plan is designed to guide long-term housing, zoning, infrastructure, and development policies. The planning efforts for the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan* began in early 2016 and lasted through 2018, which included five phases: launch, big questions, policy framework, policy document, and review. Community engagement efforts were designed and conducted to engage populations that have been historically disenfranchised in civic life to ensure this process was inclusive and equitable. The approach to engagement involved informing, interacting, and feedback through community workshops, community dialogues, street festivals, artist-designed engagement, online engagement, and meeting-in-a-box sessions. The planning process was led by a Steering Committee which consisted of the Mayor, two City Council Members, City Coordinator, and four City department heads. The planning efforts were supported by over 150 staff from the City and interjurisdictional partners. Data from the community engagement efforts is available on the [Minneapolis 2040 Plan website](#) (City of Minneapolis, n.d.).



**Figure 3:** *Minneapolis 2040 Plan Five Phase Planning Timeline* (City of Minneapolis, n.d.)

The *Minneapolis 2040 Plan* includes 11 topics: housing, land use and built form, transportation, economic competitiveness, environmental systems, public health, heritage preservation, arts and culture, parks and open spaces, public services and facilities, and technology and innovation. The plan includes 14 goals and has multiple implementation strategies. While the plan is intended to be comprehensive, it is not an answer to every problem facing the city, and rather than being an instruction book, instead it is a tool to frame growth, set direction, and give high-level guidance (City of Minneapolis, n.d.). As this plan is set at the municipal level, it makes it far more relevant to economic development projects in North Minneapolis than *Thrive MSP 2040* while still being aligned with the regional plan. The goals set out in the plan are not specific to geographical areas. Goals like eliminating disparities and complete neighborhoods are certainly applicable to efforts ongoing in North Minneapolis. In envisioning complete neighborhoods, the plan calls for all Minneapolis residents to have access to employment, retail services, healthy food, parks, and other daily needs via walking, biking, and public transit by 2040 (City of Minneapolis, n.d.). There are 21 policies that relate to this goal, including development near METRO Stations, food access, and freeway remediation. There are 100 policies in total that feed into the 14 goals. The

plan is implemented through public policies, regulations and ordinances, fiscal tools, capital improvements, and partnering with external entities (City of Minneapolis, n.d.).

The community in North Minneapolis is specifically addressed in Policy 87: “Northside” with a focus on reversing institutional harms caused to the northside community. The plan calls for specific actions to reverse these harms and support North Minneapolis. This policy recognizes institutional harm caused by the City of Minneapolis and other jurisdictions in addition to historical events that further compounded disparities and disenfranchisement on the northside. Public safety is also addressed as a top concern for northside residents and focuses on a public health approach to interrupt cycles of violence and crime (Northside, n.d.). At no point during the interviews with community members was Policy 87 mentioned by the informants.

 **ACTION STEPS**

**The City will seek to accomplish the following action steps to reverse institutional harms caused to the Northside community by building on the many assets of the community while also prioritizing community wealth building in the form of housing, small business, public safety, youth opportunities, and environmental justice.**

- a. Take actions to stabilize housing stock by increasing homeownership in interior residential areas with a focus on supporting first-time, first generation homebuyers, and provide “right to return” supports to homebuyers with historic ties to the community, such as those displaced by rising rents or foreclosure or returning home after completing higher education.
- b. Increase access to affordable housing options in neighborhoods, particularly multifamily housing along transit corridors.
- c. Increase access to financially-accessible youth opportunities in the neighborhoods.
- d. Support Northside entrepreneurs to become small business owners and leverage small business development as job creation opportunities.
- e. Invest in the public health approach to public safety to get to the root of violence in the home and out in the community, as well as address childhood and community trauma.
- f. Write a Tenant Bill of Rights to lower the disruptive impact of unjust evictions on Northside residents and families.
- g. Work alongside Northside community members to ensure the Upper Harbor Terminal redevelopment project is both an asset and wealth building opportunity for the community, as well as a destination for visitors to the Northside.
- h. Address environmental racism through investing in improvements in environmental health and green space on the Northside.

**Figure 4:** *Minneapolis 2040 Plan Policy 87 Northside Action Steps (Northside, n.d.)*

Following adoption of the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan*, a mutual blaming loop developed centered on increasing housing density by allowing multi-family housing units to be constructed in

neighborhoods that were previously zoned as single-family. Concerns over higher density leading to gentrification were in conflict with the desire to curb rising housing costs; consideration of eliminating single-family zoning that perpetuated racial and economic segregation competed with claims that neighborhood character would change. Public engagement sessions and community outreach efforts intended to mitigate conflict and bridge competing stakeholder interests. The future of the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan* was uncertain as litigation ensued, which resulted in a 2040 Plan injunction (Du, 2023). An appeals court reversed that decision and following a change in state law to exempt comprehensive plans for municipalities from environmental reviews, further environmental lawsuits against the City of Minneapolis have been dismissed (Du, 2024; Hughes, 2025).

### **Small Area Plans**

The *Minneapolis 2040 Plan* incorporates elements and guidance from small area plans that are targeted to designated areas and neighborhoods within the city (Small Area Plans, n.d.). There are two small area plans that include a portion of North Minneapolis: Lowry Avenue Strategic Plan and West Broadway Alive! Plan (West Broadway Alive! Plan, n.d.). The future land use and built form guidance from the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan* is informed by the small area plans. For example, the Lowry Avenue Strategic Plan, adopted in 2010 and funded with Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) funds, reflects an approach of limiting commercial development to specific key nodes as an economic development strategy with concentrated future commercial development. The *Minneapolis 2040 Plan* reverses that strategy through regulatory and zoning changes that aim to open more land for commercial development and increase access to goods and services across the area. The West Broadway Alive! Plan, adopted in 2008, was determined to be generally consistent with the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan* (West Broadway Alive! Plan, n.d.).

### **Neighborhood Organizations**

***“When neighborhoods had money to invest, they had a larger voice than they do right now”  
- City of Minneapolis Neighborhood & Community Relations Department Staff***

The City of Minneapolis has a vibrant network of neighborhoods which currently includes 67 neighborhood organizations representing 83 neighborhoods, including those described earlier in the Camden and Near North communities (see a map of North Minneapolis neighborhoods in Appendix D). The neighborhood organizations are each formed as independent nonprofits and include a volunteer board of directors, elected by neighborhood residents to lead efforts to organize and engage on issues concerning the represented neighborhood(s). As shared during an interview with staff from the City of Minneapolis Neighborhood & Community Relations Department (NCR), the NRP funds that supported work on the small area plans were replaced with a new initiative Neighborhoods 2020 and include different funding mechanisms for neighborhood organizations. This is one factor that has changed the level of engagement that neighborhood organizations have in evaluating, funding, and approving projects. As NCR staff

members noted, “when you are doing a development, you have to let the neighborhood organization know, but you do not need to get their approval, so that disenfranchised neighborhood organizations and community members” and this may cause community members to be less likely to care if projects will go forward with or without their approval.

NCR staff shared that historically, development projects “actively recruited neighborhoods to be part of the project by putting in some NRP funds, so with that the neighborhoods were able to have a seat at the table when designs were coming through... without [NRP funds] we are seeing they do not have that financial connection any longer, so they do not have a seat at the table, so they are often responding to things that have already been developed instead of being part of the development.” At the same time, NCR staff mentioned that there have been developments, specifically in Northeast Minneapolis, where neighborhoods have actively worked against the projects and have won. The neighborhood organizations generally tend to be selective on which projects, typically larger scale projects, to get involved in, with the Roof Depot project in Ward 9 provided as an example. The most common level of engagement is to amplify the message of new developments by sending it through their organization networks. The *Minneapolis 2040 Plan* takes a macro view whereas neighborhood organizations operate at the micro level. When evaluating projects, neighborhood organizations evaluate the project based on if it will help or hurt community members rather than a macro view of compliance with comprehensive economic development strategies. The *Northside Forward Plan* takes a more micro-level view to address specific community needs within more targeted geographic areas and can bridge this gap by effectively collaborating with neighborhood organizations.

### **Minneapolis 2040 Plan Analysis**

During interviews with a City of Minneapolis City Council [Ward 4] Policy Aide and with a City of Minneapolis Principal City Planner in the Community Planning and Economic Development Department (CPED), a common theme came through in the discussion of alignment or conflict between existing and planned economic development projects and the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan*. The projects are in alignment with the plan, that is not the issue. The role of the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan* is to provide regulatory guidance and a vision for where investments should be occurring. The challenge is bringing all of the relevant stakeholders together to advance a project forward and ensure it is economically viable. If a project is not in alignment with the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan*, there is an amendment process that can be used to enable its compliance. Rattana Sengsoulichanh, a Principal City Planner with CPED, shared the following related to the Upper Harbor Terminal project that is planned for North Minneapolis:

“Upper Harbor Terminal’s coordinated action plan is mostly consistent with *Minneapolis 2040*, but we have planners, along with our economic development staff, who might run into, from a regulatory perspective, that our zoning does not allow for it. And then we would say, in order for us to get to six stories for this site, we actually need to do rezoning, but our zoning is based off our *Minneapolis 2040*

*Plan*. If we are seeing that as part of a community engagement process, there may be some support to explore other types of uses or densities, we have an opportunity through a comprehensive plan amendment, which is a process to update the land use, to explore other guidance to allow for the regulatory process to build the types of things that folks want to see as part of that plan. It is important that we do the community engagement and build some consensus on why we are deviating from the guidance of *Minneapolis 2040*, including what other policies would support it.”

“There are a couple unique instances where we had to do comprehensive plan amendments to make projects happen, such as some of the Satori projects right along West Broadway because of the time that 2040 was adopted, but I don't think that's been a big barrier. That's my personal bias, that I'm not seeing zoning or *Minneapolis 2040* future land use and build form guidance as a restriction to making those happen.”

- Rattana Sengsoulichanh, City of Minneapolis Principal City Planner with the Community Planning and Economic Development Department (CPED)

There is acknowledgement that community members want to see outcomes and be part of an inclusive process where they feel like their feedback is honored and heard. The *Minneapolis 2040 Plan* is the guiding policy document for the City of Minneapolis to “set the table” for these conversations to take place as stakeholders plan and pursue economic development projects. These stakeholders all have opportunities from their different seats in the process to collectively connect the dots and reach a desired outcome. As the table is set by the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan*, the *Northside Forward Plan* is bringing these stakeholders to that table by facilitating conversation and informing them about what is going on within their community. As Sengsoulichanh shared, “with the *Northside Forward Plan*, people are talking to each other. Do you know this effort is going on? Do you know that this person had this issue? That this person can actually solve for, and they have the money and resources to make that happen. And part of that is just making the connection.” These connections are crucial for bridging gaps, breaking down silos, and fostering a collaborative approach to economic development.

### ***Northside Forward Plan***

The *Northside Forward Plan* is a community-driven plan that is centered in being just and equitable for the residents of the community. It is intended to build upon the best elements of previous plans, including the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan*, and ensure that North Minneapolis residents are the direct beneficiaries of investment and revitalization. This plan is intended to support efforts to preserve the culture and identity of North Minneapolis with a focus on Black and generational wealth. There are six pillars to the plan that have centered the strategic planning and market analysis during the creation of the *Northside Forward Plan*. The preliminary plan was released on February 26 and a final plan is expected to be completed in May 2025.

Led by the African American Leadership Forum (AALFTC, or “The Forum”), the *Northside Forward Plan* is a collaborative effort backed by partners such as U.S. Bank, Gensler, and over 100 stakeholders. AALFTC brings a bold, equity-centered vision to the initiative, operating as a “think-and-do tank” grounded in Black-Centered Design and Afrofuturism. Their mission to build radical Black futures guides the project’s goal of addressing systemic disinvestment while fostering community ownership and prosperity. The six strategic pillars of the plan—ranging from economic development and education to health and leadership—reflect a comprehensive approach to creating generational wealth and cultural sustainability in North Minneapolis.

## SIX PILLARS



Image Source: North News

 NORTH MINNEAPOLIS FORWARD | JAN 15, 2025

Gensler

**Figure 5: Northside Forward Plan Six Pillars**  
*Northside Forward Community Session, January 15, 2025*

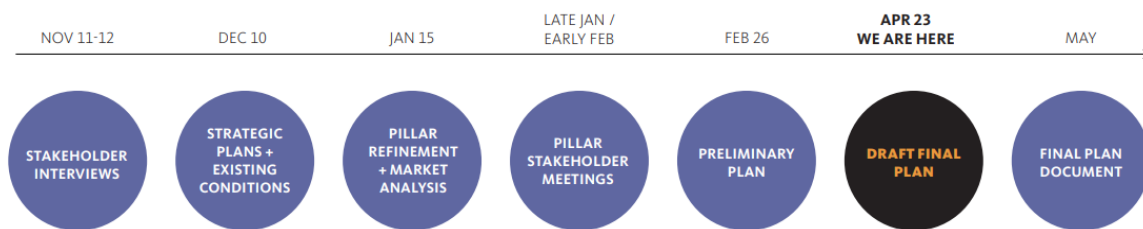
The project responds to long-standing challenges, including a disproportionately low share of investment, retail and job leakage, and a lack of neighborhood capital. According to a 2020 report, North Minneapolis loses over \$80 million annually in retail, food, and beverage spending to areas outside the neighborhood (Northside Forward Community Session, January 15, 2025). The *Northside Forward Plan* aims to reverse this trend through catalytic corridor reinvestment and coordinated, community-based strategies. With the right interventions, North Minneapolis has the potential to capture nearly half of the city's future development share (46%+), making this a critical moment for equitable reinvestment (Northside Forward Community Session, January 15, 2025).

Even before the final plan was completed or made available for distribution, there was already growing attention from local and state officials. In a recent panel on economic development in North Minneapolis, and also shared directly with the capstone team, City Council Member LaTrisha Vetaw emphasized the importance of the *Northside Forward Plan* that is being unveiled soon under the leadership of the AALFTC, along with a coalition of over 100 stakeholders. There is also strong alignment between the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan* and the *Northside Forward Plan* in its current state of development as recognized by City of Minneapolis Principal City Planner Rattana Sengsoulichanh:

“I think that the *Northside Forward Plan* led by the African American Leadership Forum and Adair Mosley and Gensler is in total alignment with *Minneapolis 2040*. ... [T]he work that continuously needs to happen here is connecting the vision and aspirations from all these different stakeholders... how do we ensure that revenues that are coming in are being able to pay for the debt servicing and the financing.”

Sengsoulichanh added in regard to the *Northside Forward Plan*: “They are able to bring together all these different actors and community. There’s an opportunity to build that network up. I don’t know if that’s a formal, concrete objective of that process, but that’s definitely a, if not an immediate product and outcome, and at least it’s a byproduct of the process.”

- Rattana Sengsoulichanh, City of Minneapolis Principal City Planner with the Community Planning and Economic Development Department (CPED)



**Figure 6:** *Northside Forward Plan Timeline*  
*Northside Forward Community Session, April 23, 2025*

## Emerging Themes

The site visit to North Minneapolis, supplemented by interviews with key stakeholders—including investors, non-profit organizations, state representatives, City Council policy aides, municipal staff, academics, and residents—provided valuable insights into the range of development projects currently existing, recently initiated, or planned within the neighborhoods

(see Appendix E and Appendix F). Interviewees repeatedly emphasized that there are numerous promising development initiatives underway in North Minneapolis, yet many lack adequate visibility. However, they also identified several factors constraining the community's full development potential. From these discussions, four key themes emerged: (1) Economic Development Strategies, (2) Changes in the Residential Landscape, (3) Financial and Economic Barriers, and (4) Political and Community Barriers. The following sections explore these themes in greater detail, drawing on insights shared by participating interviewees.

### ***Economic Development Strategies***

Comprehensive and well-articulated strategies are critical to the economic advancement of any community. As the *Northside Forward Plan* continues to take shape, interviewees expressed a renewed sense of optimism. However, they also underscored the longstanding absence of a cohesive and intentional strategy to guide investment in North Minneapolis. They also noted that ongoing development tends to occur in fragmented pockets, rather than through a coordinated, community-wide approach—an issue that not only constrains broader economic progress but also heightens vulnerability in the event of disruptions to these isolated economic corridors. In addition, concerns regarding the economic viability of North Minneapolis emerged as a recurring theme. Perceptions related to safety and long-term viability continue to pose significant barriers to investment. For many stakeholders, the central concern is not the availability of commercial space, but whether new businesses can attract and retain customers. Community skepticism, fears surrounding crime, and uncertainty about sustainability deter both local entrepreneurs and external investors. Despite these challenges, the ongoing development of the *Northside Forward Plan* has fostered a sense of cautious optimism for a more coordinated and community-centered strategy moving forward. The following section draws on direct quotations from interviews, observations from the site visit, and illustrative examples of key development projects to further contextualize this theme. These insights serve to ground the analysis in lived experience and reinforce the claims presented above.

#### **Lack of a cohesive and intentional economic development strategy**

The absence of a cohesive and intentional strategy continues to constrain the ability of North Minneapolis to achieve sustained and inclusive economic progress. Development in the neighborhoods within North Minneapolis is quite sporadic and spread out which was visible during the site visit and underscored in interviews.

**Site Visit Observation:** V3 Sports complex is a health and wellness facility that is an asset for the community. In its current capacity, and with future expansion, V3 could draw in people and economic activity from outside of North Minneapolis. The development has already generated additional investment, as evidenced by the presence of the Boys & Girls Club and Soul Bowl on-site, the latter providing a locally owned dining option for visitors. However, the facility currently lacks key complementary amenities, such as full-service restaurants and lodging

options, which limits its ability to retain and recirculate economic benefits within North Minneapolis. For example, the nearest hotels are located in downtown Minneapolis, thereby diverting potential revenue to surrounding areas. More intentional investment in the area surrounding V3 Sports is crucial to fully capture the economic benefits of such a facility.



**Site Visit Observation:** There is a lack of revenue generating economic development throughout North Minneapolis. There is a high rate of non-profit organizations, affordable housing, churches - in addition to many liquor stores and gas stations. There was no area, even West Broadway Avenue, that felt like a one-stop-shop for meeting resident needs. Transportation and time are two constraints on being able to access amenities that are scattered throughout North Minneapolis. The absence of revenue generating development projects also exacerbates the lack of wealth generation opportunities within the community.

**Site Visit Observation:** Economic development along Lowry Avenue, which is identified as an economic corridor, feels sporadic and spaced out. There was a daycare, auto repair shop, funeral home, liquor store, church, gas station, Chinese food restaurant, chiropractor, deli, and meat market spaced out across several blocks. Plymouth Avenue development, similar to Lowry Avenue, felt sporadic and spaced out without intentionality behind the placement of businesses. Four businesses had been converted into the University of Minnesota engagement center. The Thor building includes a gym and non-profit organization. The City of Minneapolis Fourth Precinct is located nearby a VFW, Avivo worksite, Twin Cities Rise, and lots of subsidized housing units.

**Interview:** In reference to the *Northside Forward Plan*, “I think they are doing a good job of recognizing North Minneapolis as more than West Broadway. That is the impression that I got, and it is also good that they are from North Minneapolis, and they really understand what is going on. I am really excited about that. That seems like the most promising to me, to really get things moving in a more cohesive effort.”

- City of Minneapolis City Council [Ward 4] Policy Aide

Without coordinated development that strategically clusters retail, dining, housing, and recreation, economic momentum risks stalling. Future development in this area could be

modeled after the City of Blaine, which is planning a large-scale redevelopment project around the National Sports Center. The collaborative effort between elected officials, the local economic development authority, existing business owners, investors, and residents is leading towards a new entertainment district to boost the city’s economy and enhance its community. Coordinating development of parks, restaurants, office and commercial spaces, sports and recreational facilities, hotels, and other amenities centralized under a single plan could increase the likelihood of sustained economic growth in a specific area (105th Avenue Redevelopment, n.d.).

**Interview:** *“You can’t just throw money at the problem, there needs to be intentionality tailored to the culture of North Minneapolis.”*

- Dr. Samuel Myers, Director of the Roy Wilkins Center for Human Relations and Social Justice, University of Minnesota

### **Focus on comprehensive plans fades**

Over the years, various development plans, initiated either by the City of Minneapolis or community stakeholders, have been introduced to advance economic growth in North Minneapolis. While some of these plans initially gained traction, they ultimately failed to sustain momentum or were not fully implemented.

**Interview:** Plans are often shelved and forgotten. We would like to see the completion of a masterplan and for public representatives and officials to take a serious stand. The Forum is working on a masterplan for the whole northside, and we need people to champion it.

- West Broadway Business and Area Coalition

N.B. *Not a direct quote, paraphrased from a phone interview with WBC*

**Interview:** *The economic development projects are very aligned with the Minneapolis 2040 Plan, the misalignment is with community support for the projects. The focus on the comprehensive plan fades as the importance is placed on community engagement, lining up financial support, and ensuring economic viability. “What we have found is that people will shape their development plans to the funding that is available.”*

- City of Minneapolis City Council [Ward 4] Policy Aide

N.B. *Portions are not a direct quote, paraphrased from an interview with City of Minneapolis City Council [Ward 4] Policy Aide*

### **Fragmented development pockets**

Economic development in North Minneapolis is often perceived as fragmented and unevenly distributed, which constrains the community’s capacity to retain and recirculate local wealth.

Current development efforts are largely concentrated in specific “development pockets,” such as the West Broadway Avenue corridor. Such concentrated investment is undoubtedly valuable and some of it is not as visible and does not take the credit it deserves; however, stakeholders emphasized the need for a more geographically balanced approach that extends to other parts of the community. Broader distribution of development efforts would not only promote more inclusive growth but also reduce the risks associated with over-reliance on a limited number of commercial corridors. For instance, the planned METRO Blue Line light rail expansion along West Broadway Avenue, if implemented, is expected to displace several local businesses—highlighting the vulnerabilities that can arise when development is not spatially diversified.

**Site Visit Observation:** West Broadway is considered an economic corridor and has been designated as a cultural district by the City of Minneapolis. There are some large corporations located there including Cub Foods, Taco Bell, McDonalds, Dollar General, Wells Fargo, and Auto Zone. This is the only commercial corridor of its size in North Minneapolis, and it is dwarfed in the level of economic development by surrounding communities including Robbinsdale and Brooklyn Center - as well as the Northeast and North Loop areas within Minneapolis. This economic corridor is a focus of both the City of Minneapolis and the *Northside Forward Plan*, which may come at the expense of other areas of North Minneapolis. The Blue Line light rail expansion is planned to run along this corridor and will have impacts on current and future development. It shows signs of sporadic development along this primary economic corridor for North Minneapolis.

**Interview:** *“There are pockets of really compelling work going on in North Minneapolis and some of it flies under the radar.”*

- Local Initiatives Support Corporation

### **Challenges with economic viability**

Perceptions of safety and economic viability remain significant barriers to investment in North Minneapolis. For many stakeholders, the concern is not whether space is available, but whether new businesses will attract and retain customers. Community skepticism, fears of crime, and doubts about long-term sustainability can discourage both local entrepreneurs and outside investors. Getting the community on board is essential, yet difficult, without visible success stories or assurances of safety and support. Some officials suggest a phased approach to rebuilding confidence—starting with the revitalization of existing commercial properties, followed by targeted new construction, and finally addressing underperforming or neglected sites. Building excitement and trust through incremental, visible wins may be key to overcoming these entrenched challenges.

**Interview:** *In response to what is the largest barrier to additional economic development in North Minneapolis, “I think it is getting the community on board. That is the biggest barrier. I think it is also the perception of safety. And the perception of economic viability, if they do put in*

*a business, will people come? Will they have security issues? That is the biggest barrier, the perception and then also getting the community on board.”*

- City of Minneapolis City Council [Ward 4] Policy Aide

**Interview:** In order to move the needle, the first area that can build excitement on what the low hanging fruit is, which is the existing parcels of commercial stock that can be redeveloped. The second tier is about new construction on vacant parcels, and then the third is working on those bad actors that are disinvesting in their buildings.

*N.B. Not a direct quote, paraphrased from the interview with Rattana Sengsoulichanh, City of Minneapolis Principal City Planner with the Community Planning and Economic Development Department (CPED)*

**Interview:** *“The reality is, construction costs are often higher on the northside because it's not as safe, or perceived to be as safe, as doing construction and development in other areas of the City.”*

- The Ackerberg Group

## ***Residential Landscape Changes***

North Minneapolis has been undergoing gradual changes in its residential landscape, as development from surrounding communities begins to extend into its outer edges. While new residential projects introduce greater economic diversity into the area, concerns about gentrification are simultaneously emerging. Despite these changes, much of North Minneapolis continues to be dominated by affordable housing developments, highlighting ongoing disparities in investment and development patterns across the city.

### **Nearby community expansion**

Compared to the Warehouse District (Northeast) and North Loop, North Minneapolis is one of the last areas to develop. Other areas are running out of space, pushing development in from Brooklyn Center, Robbinsdale, and Minneapolis Ward 7, as adjacent houses mimic nearby ones.

**Site Visit Observation:** The Sumner-Glenwood and Harrison neighborhoods, located in the Near North community on the south side of North Minneapolis and adjacent to the Bryn Mawr neighborhood in Ward 7, are undergoing significant transformation marked by substantial economic development—particularly in the form of new housing, much of which consists of apartment complexes. These developments are gradually altering the shape of the community. However, there remains a noticeable lack of surrounding amenities. This is especially evident along Van White Memorial Boulevard, where residential development has occurred but promised amenities have yet to materialize. A notable exception in the area is La Doña Cervecería, an upcoming location near the Minneapolis Farmers Market, not far from downtown Minneapolis. Overall, expansion from nearby communities that are running out of space is

undeniably spilling into North Minneapolis and the types of new development is mirroring those existing in adjacent communities.

**Site Visit Observation:** Shingle Creek neighborhood, in the Camden community and adjacent to Brooklyn Center on the northside of North Minneapolis, presented a distinct difference in the feel of the community passing over the railroad tracks into the Shingle Creek neighborhood and then again when crossing Highway 100 into Brooklyn Center. Each time, the density of housing development felt lower with more space between homes and more green space. There is also a large commercial area entering Brooklyn Center and the quantity of grocery stores and restaurants was far greater than anywhere in North Minneapolis, including West Broadway. Residential development is expanding into Shingle Creek where a large development of homes was identified as home ownership opportunities when they were built, which can lead to generational wealth building for community members. As residential development expands into North Minneapolis, commercial development is crucial to support the community.



### Housing property value appreciation at the edges

As neighboring communities become saturated and development extends into North Minneapolis, land becomes more valuable, leading to increased market values and growing concerns about gentrification. Glenwood ([Sumner-Glenwood, CURA report](#)) particularly reflects this tension. Many people don't realize this is happening in their own community, and the face of the neighborhood is changing. As property values rise in North Minneapolis, this also leads to a greater increase in property taxes and higher shift of the property tax burden onto the northside wards. Based on estimated property taxes payable in 2025 and an estimated 8% increase in the property tax levy, the median tax increase in Ward 4 is 15.66% and in Ward 5 is 12.36%, both of which are higher than the citywide median increase of 10.96% ([Levy Impact Estimator Dashboard - City of Minneapolis](#)). This can price out local residents and further contribute to the gentrification of the community.

**Interview:** *“Do people feel like the investments that are being made in developments are actually going to serve the communities that are here today. And I think part of that is*

*northsiders, black and brown community members, and people with modest household incomes are afraid of being priced out in their community. So, it's part of the conversation about gentrification, displacement, and especially around cultural place keeping, which is preserving the feel and identity of their home and feeling safe to walk around their community, feel businesses that are opening up are actually serving their community's needs. There's the strategic piece about the regulation side of development, but then it is also trying to understand what the community's aspirations are as part of outcomes and seeing if the plan is feasible.”*

- Rattana Sengsoulichanh, City of Minneapolis Principal City Planner with the Community Planning and Economic Development Department (CPED)

### **Affordable housing proposals**

Residential development is taking over the edges of North Minneapolis; however, the community still has a higher rate of affordable housing projects than any other part of the city and is still receiving more proposals for affordable housing. While affordable housing is key to ensuring housing justice, purely affordable projects limit the economic diversity in the community and its capacity to grow. More mixed-development projects and market rate units are desirable and will still allow for a more inclusive and just development.

**Interview:** *“We are getting inundated with affordable housing proposals, even though we already have more affordable housing than in other parts of the city. The challenge is that it doesn't create enough economic diversity.”*

- Northside Residents Redevelopment Council (NRRC)

### ***Financial and Economic Barriers***

One of the biggest challenges to economic development in any community is the presence of financial and economic barriers—and North Minneapolis is no exception. Interviews and observations identified key economic and financial barriers in the area.

### **Investor fatigue and small business burnout**

North Minneapolis has a history marked by pivotal moments, and while some plans and investments have gained momentum over the years, that momentum has often been disrupted by events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the murder of George Floyd. As a result, both investors and business owners have grown discouraged, feeling that each time progress is made, it is quickly undermined by unforeseen setbacks.

**Interview:** *“You think you have a plan, and then something changes, it's always a moving target until it isn't. You have a funder on the line, and then they fall through. You have a tenant on the*

*line and they fall through. Nothing is ever simple, and it can lead to funder and investor fatigue.”*

- Local Initiatives Support Corporation

**Interview:** *“North Side, was gaining some momentum, and had 125 million dollars of development underway. There were a lot of good things happening and it was development without displacement. There was a lot of homegrown development happening, local developers solving local problems which aligned with the community vision. Then a lot of these resources just kind of came to a halt, and everything got steered towards recovering after the pandemic and civil unrest following George Floyd’s murder in 2020.”*

- Local Initiatives Support Corporation

### **Access to low-cost capital**

Accessing affordable capital remains a significant barrier to economic development in North Minneapolis, especially for emerging developers and small business owners. While funding programs like the Ownership and Opportunity Fund, DTAP, and BTAP exist, the resources available often fall short of demand. For new developers, the challenges are multifaceted: forming legal entities, navigating financing, and assembling development teams without established networks or technical guidance. Larger firms have long standing relationships with service providers, but newcomers often don’t know where to begin. This lack of access to financial and social capital creates a cycle of exclusion. Interviewees highlighted that one of the most critical missing links is a supportive ecosystem that connects developers with trusted experts—from environmental consultants to legal counsel. The *Northside Forward Plan* may help fill this gap by fostering connections between community members, institutions, and development professionals, offering an opportunity to build relationships that are essential for long-term success.

**Interview:** *“While there are several funding opportunities available at the city, like the Ownership and Opportunity Fund, the Developer Technical Assistance Program (DTAP), and the Business Technical Assistance Program (BTAP), the problem is there is just never enough money. No matter what we get it is not enough.”*

- Council Member LaTrisha Vetaw [Ward 4]

**Interview:** We need more opportunities and support for existing businesses who don't have clear access to access capital to renovate, market, and obtain property. They have what is needed to succeed but they need the funding and planning to make everything work.

- West Broadway Business and Area Coalition

N.B. *Not a direct quote, paraphrased from a phone interview with WBC*

**Interview:** Improving lending and financing for potential homeowners in North Minneapolis requires a comprehensive and intentional approach that goes beyond traditional banking practices. The current system has largely failed residents by creating barriers that make homeownership seem impossible. Major banks need to change their approach by establishing physical offices directly in the neighborhood, which would allow loan officers to understand the unique economic challenges faced by residents. These local offices shouldn't just be transactional spaces, but community resources where potential homeowners can receive personalized guidance, credit counseling, and support throughout the complex home buying process.

- Dr. Samuel Myers, Director of the Roy Wilkins Center for Human Relations and Social Justice, University of Minnesota

N.B. *Not a direct quote, paraphrased from an interview with Dr. Myers*

**Interview:** High barrier: *“how do you become bankable? What those partnerships look like to form an organization or LLC to be able to access some of those financial tools. This comes back to financing. It’s the capacity building for being a developer. Again, access to the financing and then site control is really important. And then the fourth piece is the network, the network of putting together a development team. As we focus on North Minneapolis, our vision for the northside is to support emerging developers and entrepreneurs and they're not going to be big developers with big firms and all these different arms within like attorneys and legal counsel, development, architecture, engineering. It's about how do you build the relationship piece - these big firms tend to work with the same individuals over and over again because they have familiarity with that. When you're new and you're trying to develop, who do you go to for services? [For example] if you're doing environmental studies on the soil, you have a contaminated site, who do you talk to? As an emergent developer, you don't know who to call. If there's a network as part of building a social ecosystem to support emerging developers on the north side, I think that would go a long way.”*

- Rattana Sengsoulichanh, City of Minneapolis Principal City Planner with the Community Planning and Economic Development Department (CPED)

## **Development uncertainties**

Many development projects in North Minneapolis remain stalled in early stages due to a combination of resource constraints, regulatory complexity, and limited community awareness. Numerous ideas are circulating in the ideation or feasibility phases, but without sufficient investment or technical support, they fail to move forward. Navigating Minneapolis’s regulatory landscape poses additional challenges, especially for emerging developers unfamiliar with the system. Barriers like lack of developer capacity, site control, and understanding of ownership dynamics—particularly in communities historically excluded from commercial property

access—further hinder progress. These uncertainties often leave promising concepts unrealized unless supported by strong networks, funding, and institutional guidance.

**Interview:** *“Unless you're in the space, you are a developer or you're working with community developers, you have something in the works, you're building, you're getting partners at another ground level, I don't know if community knows how many ideas are just floating around that just need a little bit of investment. That's going to tip, can move the needle or move the dial to get to the next stage, unless you're really connected. Part of this is building awareness about what projects are in the ideation phase that are going through feasibility analysis. When people interact with the city they don't have fully baked plans yet on what they want and they're just at step one, trying to figure out what the possibilities are and that's when they come to our business development staff they need more money. We need more money.”*

- Rattana Sengsoulichanh, City of Minneapolis Principal City Planner with the Community Planning and Economic Development Department (CPED)

Major development projects like the METRO Blue Line light rail extension also bring a great deal of uncertainty. While such projects may offer long-term benefits, they often cause disruption in the short term—particularly the displacement of local businesses. The METRO Blue Line light rail extension has remained in the planning phase for years, with its proposed route shifting multiple times. This prolonged uncertainty has left investors hesitant to commit resources to an area where they risk future displacement. Similarly, existing local businesses are struggling to secure funding for expansion, and many are actively exploring relocation options.

**Interview:** In reference to the METRO Blue Line light rail expansion: *Getting financing is impossible for current projects as there is no clarity on what's happening.*

- West Broadway Business and Area Coalition

N.B. *Not a direct quote, paraphrased from a phone interview with WBC*

### **Infrastructure and amenities**

As previously discussed, much of the development in North Minneapolis has not followed a cohesive or intentional plan, resulting in significant gaps in essential amenities. For example, the area is served by only two full-service grocery stores, effectively making it a food desert. Many everyday needs remain unmet within the community, forcing residents to spend their money elsewhere and further limiting the circulation of wealth within North Minneapolis.

**Interview:** *“We live in a food desert. We're adding more people, but we're not adding more food options, more grocery store options. There are very few dry cleaners. There's no baker.”*

- Northside Residents Redevelopment Council

Infrastructure also plays a critical role in either advancing or hindering community development. In the case of North Minneapolis, historical segregation shaped the construction of I-94, which effectively walled off the neighborhood and reduced its accessibility. This physical barrier has had long-term consequences, deterring potential investors who view limited access and reduced client traffic—especially compared to neighboring communities—as a significant disadvantage.

**Interview:** *“Given the “fear” of the northside, a “ghetto” was intentionally created from the development of Interstate 394 on the south and Interstate 94 to the east, which are effectively walls. In fact, if you’re leaving downtown Minneapolis and going north, you can’t get off the freeway at Broadway. You are forced to travel further north.”*

- The Ackerberg Group

### **Business needs vs. planner’s vision**

A recurring tension in North Minneapolis is the disconnect between immediate business needs and the long-term planning vision advanced by policymakers and government agencies. Community members and small business owners often express urgent concerns—rising housing costs, limited access to affordable food, and persistent public safety issues—problems that demand short-term solutions and immediate relief. However, from the perspective of planners, development timelines often extend five to ten years into the future. This mismatch in urgency can create frustration among residents who feel overlooked or underserved by processes that are too slow or abstract to address their daily challenges.

Government officials recognize this disconnect and describe their role as "setting the table" for broader investments by public, private, and nonprofit actors. Major infrastructure projects like the METRO Blue Line light rail extension and Bus Rapid Transit lines are designed to bring energy and focus to targeted corridors, sparking interest and potential economic opportunities. Yet concerns persist—particularly about who will benefit from these investments. Community fears of gentrification and displacement remain strong, and there is often skepticism that promised benefits will reach current residents.

This dynamic highlights the importance of transparent communication and cross-sector collaboration. Local government cannot tackle economic development alone; philanthropic organizations, community-based nonprofits, developers, and residents all play critical roles. Still, when immediate improvements are not visible, communities can feel forgotten. This is especially true in areas where multiple actors—such as private developers, city departments, and county agencies—must coordinate to move a project forward. Without a unified approach and responsive planning that balances long-term vision with short-term needs, distrust and disconnection can deepen.

**Interview:** *“People are just sharing their frustrations of what they’re experiencing today, which is they need relief with paying for housing costs. They need to be able to access food in the food desert, they’re having concerns about crime and safety, which requires the immediate response.”*

*And from a community planning perspective, we work at a longer timeline than that. That's not going to provide that instant gratification. And so it's trying to balance between things that need an immediate response, maybe there's some near term, midterm actions that need to be happening to set up for that long term success of that five or ten year vision.”*

- Rattana Sengsoulichanh, City of Minneapolis Principal City Planner with the Community Planning and Economic Development Department (CPED)

**Interview:** *“The role of government in this is: how do you help set the table for all these actors to do their work. Having these big capital projects, METRO blue line extension, the Metro Transit bus rapid transit along Emerson, Fremont, they are bringing focus and energy to these geographic areas, that gives people some sort of excitement as part of investments and opportunities. I want to name the fear as gentrification, displacement, and concern that the investments are not going to benefit the people here today. Communication is really important. It is really important to communicate expectations of all this work and then also acknowledging that there's a shared role of everyone, government can't do it alone. There is a role in philanthropy in this. There is a role in community organizations, and there is a role in developers. As public stewards, we are trying to communicate what we know and what we don't know, and I think community members get frustrated when they're not seeing improvements or change right away and feel like really slow because we can only move so fast and we have a specific role that so there's of course like Upper Harbor Terminal, we as a city were able to lead that because that was our project but then for example on West Broadway, you will see the collection of property owners, including Hennepin County and City, but there is also other private actors and private property ownership.”*

- Rattana Sengsoulichanh, City of Minneapolis Principal City Planner with the Community Planning and Economic Development Department (CPED)

**Interviews:** *“The business standpoint considers the practical usability of a neighborhood. They have to think about their current needs. Planners are really thinking about what the future needs are and how we develop our communities for the needs of tomorrow, how we can best develop our communities for everybody, for all ages, and for all physical needs and uses.”*

- Local Initiatives Support Corporation

## **Vacant lots**

The presence of vacant lots across North Minneapolis is not due to a lack of physical space for development, but rather a deeper issue of fractured investment, uneven attention, and diminished confidence in long-term economic viability. As noted by a City Council [Ward 4] Policy Aide, over 40 vacant parcels have recently been released for single-family housing, and larger lots near

Lowry Avenue and Penn Avenue have been offered for mixed-use redevelopment. Many of these parcels are now owned by the City, demonstrating a readiness for action—but meaningful investment remains uneven and slow-moving.

During our site visit, vacant and underutilized parcels were visible even along West Broadway Avenue—the most recognized economic corridor in North Minneapolis. Promising businesses like Pizza and Wings now stand shuttered. Closures of larger retailers such as Walgreens and Aldi further illustrate the fragility of commercial activity in the area. Although there are positive signs, including the construction of the NEON Food Business Incubator, many residents and stakeholders feel that the focus on West Broadway Avenue overshadows other important corridors like Lowry Avenue and Penn Avenue.

**Interview:** There are 40 vacant lots going for RFP for single family homes and along Lowry and Penn, there are larger lots for mixed use buildings (commercial and residential) that just had an RFP close. *“There is space available, not a lack of space for development in North Minneapolis. There is a lack of sense of community and confidence in the economic viability of economic development projects that can be sustainable in North Minneapolis.”*

- City of Minneapolis City Council [Ward 4] Policy Aide

**Interview:** In reference to converting vacant lots *“It takes a long time, we have been working on it for over three years through Request for Proposals (RFPs), yet it is a slow-moving process.”*

- City of Minneapolis City Council [Ward 4] Policy Aide

**Interview:** *The Northside Forward Plan intends to fill vacant storefronts on West Broadway Avenue. In response to acknowledgement that West Broadway Avenue gets a lot of attention, “That is part of the problem. Our problem is when people think of North Minneapolis they just think of the West Broadway corridor. And they do get a lot of the resources, and the attention and people focus on West Broadway more. And we have Lowry Avenue, we have Penn Avenue. We have areas that need that kind of attention and excitement, and we are not seeing that. It is a push on our part to get people to really focus on those areas.”*

- City of Minneapolis City Council [Ward 4] Policy Aide

### ***Political and Community Barriers***

North Minneapolis is represented by only two of the thirteen members on the Minneapolis City Council, creating a political barrier that makes it difficult for local leaders to build coalitions and secure the votes needed to advance actions that support their community. Without majority backing, it becomes challenging to push for policies or allocate resources that address North Minneapolis’s specific needs. This underrepresentation is compounded by community-level barriers, as many residents feel unheard or disconnected from city decisions—contributing to a broader loss of trust in local governance.

## Unheard community voices

Part of the disconnect between policymakers and the community stems from community voices going unheard. Residents and local businesses are often either excluded from key discussions or, when invited to planning sessions and focus groups, feel that their input is not genuinely considered or acted upon. This perceived disregard leads to frustration, burnout, and a diminishing willingness to participate in future engagement efforts.

**Interview:** Unheard voices come from decades of systemic marginalization, where residents have been treated as passive recipients rather than active participants in economic development. To truly address this, community stakeholders must create transparent, inclusive platforms where residents can openly discuss their economic challenges and goals without fear of judgment.

- Dr. Samuel Myers, Director of the Roy Wilkins Center for Human Relations and Social Justice, University of Minnesota

*N.B. Not a direct quote, paraphrased from an interview with Dr. Myers*

**Interview:** Historically, the people who make these plans don't live in the community. They either don't talk to businesses to understand their needs and inform them about major plans or they hold hundreds of engagement sessions, but don't actively listen to feedback or take any real action.

- West Broadway Business and Area Coalition

*N.B. Not a direct quote, paraphrased from a phone interview with WBC*

## Lack of trust

Lack of trust also emerged as a critical barrier to economic development in North Minneapolis, echoing through community conversations, project outcomes, and resident engagement. This trust deficit appears in multiple forms—fatigue from extractive engagement practices, fragmentation among community-based organizations, and deep-rooted historical trauma stemming from systemic marginalization.

**Interview:** A recurring theme in interviews was the deep fatigue experienced by community members after decades of being “engaged” by outside researchers, planners, and institutions—without meaningful follow-up or results. When residents are asked to share their experiences repeatedly, but see no tangible improvements, a sense of futility takes hold. Participation drops, and skepticism hardens into disengagement. *“People would say they were tired of being studied. They're tired of being asked questions in focus groups, only to be forgotten afterward.”*

- North Minneapolis Resident

**Interview:** The lack of trust is not limited to resident-government relations. Mistrust among community organizations themselves also undermines collaborative action. Despite shared goals for economic development, nonprofits and neighborhood groups sometimes operate in silos, reluctant to align or share resources. In this environment, it becomes difficult to coordinate large-scale or long-term development efforts across the Northside. *“Outside organizations trying to do good are often viewed as the enemy—even small nonprofits.”*

- North Minneapolis Resident

**Interview:** The foundation of this mistrust is not anecdotal—it is systemic. The history of redlining, disinvestment, mass incarceration, and government abandonment in North Minneapolis has created layers of generational trauma. These structural harms shape how residents interpret new development efforts, particularly when led by outsiders or developers perceived as disconnected from community needs. *“There’s historical trauma—generational trauma—and cyclical poverty.”*

- North Minneapolis Resident

*N.B. These are a mix of paraphrasing and direct quotations from an interview with a North Minneapolis Resident*

Rebuilding trust in this context requires more than outreach. It requires a radical reimagining of power and partnership—one where community residents are not just consulted but empowered as co-creators. It means investing in long-term relationships, delivering on promises, and ensuring that development efforts are rooted in the lived realities of the people they are meant to serve.

**Interview:** Lack of trust stems from historical disinvestment and predatory practices, so any economic development strategy must prioritize community ownership and local decision-making power.

- Dr. Samuel Myers, Director of the Roy Wilkins Center for Human Relations and Social Justice, University of Minnesota

*N.B. Not a direct quote, paraphrased from an interview with Dr. Myers.*

### **Lack of “North Minneapolis” community**

Residents of North Minneapolis have experienced a loss of connectivity and a weakened sense of community belonging. Many identify more strongly with their specific neighborhoods than with North Minneapolis as a whole. Reweaving these community connections—through efforts such as increasing homeownership and expanding inclusive social spaces—is crucial to building a cohesive and resilient community that can move forward together.

**Site Visit Observation:** There is a lack of a “North Minneapolis” community mindset and more focus on specific neighborhoods and communities. For example, street banners and monuments

designate areas such as Camden and Victory Memorial rather than creating a sense of a larger North Minneapolis community. This was reinforced by qualitative interview responses reflecting a sense of connection to a part of North Minneapolis and not the whole. Residents refer to living in Camden or Shingle Creek rather than defaulting to stating they live in North Minneapolis. While this is not unique to North Minneapolis as other areas of the City demonstrate strong neighborhood and community ties, it weakens efforts in creating a unified approach to development throughout North Minneapolis.

**Interview:** *“There is a lack of sense of community because there are not a lot of places to go eat and sit down and be around people. There are some, but not as many as other areas in the city. We do have community space, but there are not a lot of grocery stores, pharmacies, or just areas where people can go.”*

- City of Minneapolis City Council [Ward 4] Policy Aide

**Interview:** The ultimate goal isn't just to give out loans, but to help residents build generational wealth and community stability. Increasing the homeownership rate to 70% would transform the neighborhood's economic landscape, providing residents with a sense of investment and ownership in their community. This requires a collaborative approach where banks, real estate companies, local government, and community organizations work together to break down systemic barriers and create meaningful pathways to homeownership.

- Dr. Samuel Myers, Director of the Roy Wilkins Center for Human Relations and Social Justice, University of Minnesota

N.B. *Not a direct quote, paraphrased from an interview with Dr. Myers*

## **Competing agendas**

Politics play a major role in shaping economic development, influencing both funding decisions and investment priorities. Competing agendas—between local politicians, investors, developers, and residents—often create tensions that complicate efforts to implement cohesive and equitable development strategies.

Interviews with two state representatives—one representing a section of North Minneapolis and the other representing neighboring Brooklyn Park—highlight the competition for resources based on differing priorities. Representative Fue Lee has been actively championing economic development in North Minneapolis with a focus on food insecurity. *“We wanted to address the food desert concerns we have on the north side,”* Lee explained, highlighting the critical need for access to fresh produce in underrepresented neighborhoods. Rep. Lee is also focused on support for local entrepreneurs, small business recovery, transportation infrastructure, and environmental challenges. On the other hand, Representative Momanyi Hiltzley is focused on systemic barriers faced by immigrant and BIPOC entrepreneurs and families. *“We wanted to address both the*

*African American and African immigrant community populations,” she explained, recognizing the complex historical challenges of homeownership for these communities. Momanyi is also focused on youth engagement and housing. Each representative has their own priorities that reflect the specific needs of their communities, and they are working to secure funding for these competing priorities.*

**Interview:** Only two of the thirteen City of Minneapolis City Council Members represent North Minneapolis. This makes it difficult to build coalitions and get enough votes to achieve a majority of seven Council Members to pass an action. This may lead to a disparate amount of resources being directed to North Minneapolis.

- Natalie Johnson Lee, Destination Northside Coalition

**Interview:** *“I don't think there's misalignment with what the developers are looking to do. I think the misalignment is with the community, specifically our residents want more businesses, they want more options. However, when it comes down to it, they don't like change, they have sentimental connection to these buildings that are now decrepit or they are just like not working for what is needed specifically like with The Warren, the six story affordable housing unit, the neighbors, they say that they want, they do want affordable housing and they recognize that it's needed in our area, however, they are concerned about having more people in the neighborhood and what that means for parking, the power grid, they are concerned about the environmental impacts, the safety impacts. As a concept, people are supportive of these plans and increasing density, but when it comes down to it, the change is scary for them. And that's kind of where we are at with what stops development. Because there is a lot of community engagement, they have to do a lot of community engagement and then once they start doing that some people get scared away like developers get scared away because it just seems like it is too much to get the community on board. That's where the misalignment is.”*

- City of Minneapolis City Council [Ward 4] Policy Aide

**Interview:** The main issue isn't just about money, but about rebuilding trust and creating intentional community engagement. The competing agendas between investors, developers, and long-term residents create natural tensions that can only be resolved through genuine dialogue and shared goal-setting.

- Dr. Samuel Myers, Director of the Roy Wilkins Center for Human Relations and Social Justice, University of Minnesota

N.B. *Not a direct quote, paraphrased from an interview with Dr. Myers*

## Impact from the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly affected North Minneapolis, deepening existing disparities and testing the resilience of its communities. Prior to the pandemic, the area was gaining momentum, with significant investments beginning to take shape. However, the onset of COVID-19 halted that progress and diverted resources away from North Minneapolis, disrupting its development trajectory. Many residents, employed in sectors like hospitality, retail, and personal services, faced job losses and reduced income. The Building Together capstone project found that systemic disinvestment in the community prior to COVID-19 left residents especially vulnerable to these disruptions, as many relied on low-wage jobs and lacked access to economic safety nets (Caples et al., 2023). Small businesses—particularly Black-owned businesses along West Broadway Avenue—struggled to stay afloat due to limited capital, restricted access to federal relief funds, and reduced consumer traffic.

The situation was further exacerbated by preexisting disparities. North Minneapolis, among other predominantly Black communities, experienced disproportionately high rates of COVID-19 infections and related complications (Andraska et al., 2021). This pattern reflects longstanding disparities linked to social determinants of health—including income, housing, and employment patterns—that increased exposure risk and worsened health outcomes in BIPOC neighborhoods across the country, including areas like North Minneapolis (MPR News, 2025).

According to the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, businesses in historically marginalized neighborhoods experienced slower recovery rates due to these preexisting structural barriers (Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, n.d.). These economic strains highlighted the need for targeted recovery investments and a rethinking of economic development strategies rooted in community ownership and inclusion.

**Interview:** *“Historically, North Minneapolis has probably been our largest area concentration of investment. Out of all the neighborhoods that we've invested in in the Twin Cities, it probably had the most persistent economic disparities and challenges. There was a lot of momentum Pre Covid and Pre George Floyd's murder. In 2020, there were a lot of projects that already had a lot of momentum and were underway. There were a lot of good things happening in North Minneapolis. And then, Covid became a big challenge, a setback.”*

- Local Initiatives Support Corporation

Despite these challenges, residents of North Minneapolis demonstrated remarkable resilience. Grassroots mutual aid networks, such as Northside Mutual Aid, mobilized to distribute food, hygiene supplies, and protective equipment. The Building Together report documented how local leaders, churches, youth organizations, and small businesses worked together to share accurate health information and coordinate resource delivery, often more effectively than formal systems (Caples et al., 2023). These efforts illustrate the community’s capacity for self-organization and the strength of social ties forged through shared adversity. Rather than viewing mutual aid as a

stopgap, many participants saw it as a foundation for reimagining public systems to be more equitable, responsive, and locally accountable.

## **Recommendations**

The results and analysis from our interviews, observation, and policy document review led to emerging themes that provided the foundation for our recommendations. Below are four essential areas of opportunity to address the disproportionate amount of investment in North Minneapolis relative to its rate of household growth and the lack of economic activity that has led to dollars being spent by community members outside of North Minneapolis rather than being spent locally. These recommendations serve as a means to reduce barriers limiting further economic development and to ensure upward economic mobility and generational wealth building is achievable for the residents of North Minneapolis.

### **Supporting local developers**

As discussed, investing in North Minneapolis is not an easy endeavor—it requires sustained commitment, a nuanced understanding of community needs, and the patience to navigate complex social and political dynamics. For this reason, prioritizing homegrown developers—those with established roots, trust, and a long-term stake in the community—is key to unlocking the area’s potential. These local actors are more likely to be attuned to the challenges residents face and to design projects that reflect the community’s values and aspirations.

However, many of these developers face barriers in accessing capital, navigating regulatory processes, and scaling their operations. Investing in robust capacity-building programs—such as technical assistance, mentorship, access to financing, and support with zoning and permitting—can equip emerging local developers with the tools they need to succeed. Moreover, providing consistent and sustained support throughout all phases of development—from planning and pre-development to construction and post-completion—ensures that these efforts are not just symbolic but that they make an impact. Supporting local developers in this way not only helps build wealth within the community, but also fosters a development process that is more inclusive, resilient, and reflective of the long-term vision for North Minneapolis.

### **Mitigating the negative impacts of large-scale development**

The allure of light rail expansion through a neighborhood can prompt optimism of increased economic activity and growth for a community. This new transportation option often brings promised benefits, but additional research should be conducted on the deliverance of those benefits to the impacted community. As North Minneapolis prepares for the planned METRO Blue Line light rail expansion, these same promises of economic development benefits are being suggested specifically for West Broadway Avenue. There is acknowledgement of a period of difficulty during construction of the light rail, yet future benefits are intended to compensate for

the inconvenience. The Twin Cities has seen investments in light rail, including the Green Line, that can be studied to determine if increased economic activity that was promised, was delivered and who benefited most from this investment. Anti-displacement efforts should be expanded, not only for those businesses and community members impacted along the route to mitigate the impacts of construction, but also along planned routes that are no longer being used. For example, the METRO Blue Line light rail expansion was proposed to run along Olson Memorial Hwy before moving to West Broadway Avenue. Investments made along this planned route in anticipation of receiving future benefits of the light rail expansion will not realize that intended future compensation.

The Anti-Displacement Community Prosperity Program Board (ACPP) was established in 2024 for this purpose and efforts like the Blue Line Extension Anti-Displacement Initiative led by CURA explored the extent to which displacement is or will occur as a result of this transportation project (ACPP Board, 2025; Anderson, C.T. & Guekguezian, L., n.d.). Funding was included in the City of Minneapolis 2025-26 Adopted Budget to be partial matching funds with state funding overseen by the ACPP to mitigate impacts to residents disproportionately harmed due to the abandonment of the proposed Blue Line Extension route along Olson Memorial Highway (City of Minneapolis 2025-2026 Adopted Budget, 2024).

In addition to the specific work being done around anti-displacement efforts for former and planned routes of the Blue Line extension, additional research should be considered on how promised benefits of light rail expansions are ultimately realized within impacted communities and best practices on ensuring anti-displacement efforts are successful. This is a significant transportation investment that will impact North Minneapolis and as identified during our interviews, there is a high level of uncertainty around the likelihood that intended benefits will be realized by the community. As transportation is a frequently identified barrier that is limiting further economic development, additional research and assessment on the value of light rail and planned benefits can be valuable in providing residents with more information on this topic.

### **Bridging the gap between resident and business needs with planning visions**

The disconnect and distrust between the community and local government remains one of the key barriers hindering development in North Minneapolis. Rebuilding this trust must be a priority. A renewed focus on strengthening relationships between residents, businesses, and local officials can create the foundation for more collaborative and inclusive development efforts. Trust not only facilitates smoother project implementation but also helps mobilize community support and ensures that initiatives are grounded in local needs.

For trust and collaboration to truly take root, it is essential to strike a balance between long-term city planning goals and the immediate, day-to-day priorities of local communities. Without this alignment, even well-intentioned plans risk being perceived as disconnected or top-down, further eroding confidence in public institutions.

The *Northside Forward Plan* appears to be a promising opportunity for North Minneapolis, and ensuring its sustainable implementation should be a top priority. This plan brings in a wide range of community voices through an intentional and strategic approach. However, the community must remain engaged and vigilant to ensure that this initiative does not meet the same fate as previous plans—shelved and forgotten before it can make a meaningful impact.

*“All this is trying to get to a yes, as part of getting electeds on board, getting the city and leadership on board, getting community to say yes and the deal making that needs to be made as part of putting all your financing in order from all the banks and funders, you have to get to yes with all those different things.”*

- Rattana Sengsoulichanh, City of Minneapolis Principal City Planner with the Community Planning and Economic Development Department (CPED)

## Fostering cross-sector collaboration

Economic development is fostered by the public sector, yet it may rely on investment and coordinated efforts across the three sectors: private, public, and non-profit. Cross-sector collaboration can be a force multiplier as the strengths and resources of each sector can be leveraged. The need to engage across the sectors is particularly important when addressing what Rittel and Webber define as “wicked” problems.

- Ten properties of wicked problems**
1. There is no definitive formulation of a wicked problem: *problems and solutions are inextricably linked.*
  2. Wicked problems have no stopping rule: *work terminates based upon outcomes such as running out of time or money, or upon subjective criteria such as 'that's good enough'.*
  3. Solutions to wicked problems are not 'true-or-false', but 'good-or-bad': *there are no criteria to judge whether an outcome is 'correct', and outcomes will often be ambiguous and contingent upon group or personal interests.*
  4. There is no immediate and no ultimate test of a solution to a wicked problem: *solutions will generate 'waves of consequences' which may outweigh the benefits of the solution, and which may not be fully appreciated until the repercussions cease.*
  5. Every solution to a wicked problem is a 'one-shot operation': *because there is no opportunity to learn by trial and error, every attempt counts.*
  6. Wicked problems do not have an exhaustively describable set of potential solutions: *there are no criteria to prove that all solutions have been identified and considered.*
  7. Every wicked problem is essentially unique: *despite similarities between previous problems and current ones each has a 'one-of-a-kind' quality.*
  8. Every wicked problem can be considered to be a symptom of another problem: *the higher the level of problem formulation the broader and more general it becomes.*
  9. The existence of a discrepancy representing a wicked problem can be explained in numerous ways: *there is no rule to determine the 'correct' explanation of a problem.*
  10. The planner has no right to be wrong: *the consequences of actions matter, and responsibility has to be taken.*
- (Rittel and Webber 1973, pp161-166)

**Figure 7:** Ten properties of wicked problems, Rittel and Webber (Coffey, M. & Hannigan, B., 2010)

Comprehensive economic development strategies are directed at public policy issues that are nearly all considered wicked problems, not because their properties are themselves ethically deplorable, but because they are inherently vicious and tricky (Rittel, H. & Webber, M., 1973). The ten properties of wicked problems identified by Rittel and Webber illustrate their complexity and demonstrate the importance of cross-sector collaboration in addressing them.

Cross-sector collaboration arises out of necessity due to societal circumstances in an effort to bring together a coalition across sectors that approach a public policy issue with different experiences, motivations, and resources. Each sector will define the problem in relation to their own interests, so problem redefinition through the recognition of constraints or limitations of the initial problem definition is important to bridge any gaps that exist between the sectors. If these gaps are properly addressed through an iterative approach, there is an opportunity for innovation and making a collective impact. Addressing wicked problems by pursuing cross-sector collaboration can unveil the seductive nature of making it big by solving grand challenges. Individuals compelled by these challenges and drawn to cross-sector leadership may search for a legacy enshrined for generations as a compelling motivation not to start small or seek an interactive approach. A mindset that *if you are going to fail, why not fail at trying to actually do something* can seduce individuals and organizations into not starting small. This can lead to what Laird, Quick, and Shaver describe as “getting stuck in the overwhelm” as the size of the problem can leave organizations mired in the complexity of the issue with highly ambitious action plans seeing little progress (Laird et al., 2024). These risks can be mitigated by aligning stakeholder interests, leveraging the strengths of each sector, and understanding the advantages of evaluation and pivoting. At the municipal level, approaches to economic development can seek to bring the three sectors together to address wicked problems in public policy.

*“Everyone comes at the community development table at a different perspective, but [in terms of what I think is clearly needed] ... is one: developer capacity. Understanding how you develop within the City of Minneapolis. Minneapolis, in terms of regulation and going through the regulatory process, it's different than other communities within the Twin Cities. Understanding and investing in developer technical assistance and capacity. The second piece is understanding site acquisition and site control as we talk about the history and challenges around home ownership and the segregation of black and brown communities in Minneapolis; there's also a similar dynamic around site control and site ownership of commercial properties. That's also a barrier of entry. If you don't have a site, you don't have a box to work in. It's hard to build. The third piece is as part of running a business, the level to be bankable.”*

- Rattana Sengsoulichanh, City of Minneapolis Principal City Planner with the Community Planning and Economic Development Department (CPED)

## **Conclusion**

North Minneapolis has seen a lot of development and struggled with many setbacks. It is important to recognize the ongoing and planned projects that are helping to move the community forward. At the same time, it is crucial to understand the barriers that continue to hinder progress—including the absence of a cohesive, actionable plan, a lack of community trust, and financial constraints, among others. This report highlights key development initiatives and examines both current and historical challenges, while offering recommendations to support ongoing efforts to tell the true story of North Minneapolis and promote economic development.

These projects and initiatives that were identified were assessed through interviews, observation, and secondary research to determine how they align or conflict with comprehensive economic development strategies for North Minneapolis, specifically the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan* and the *Northside Forward Plan*. All of this information has been presented in this State of North Minneapolis Report and it is summarized as a handout in Appendix H. The timing of this project was fortunate as it allowed capstone team members to be engaged during the planning process for the *Northside Forward Plan* as it has moved through stages of being developed this spring.

We appreciate the acknowledgement at our first capstone team meeting with Ms. Johnson Lee that this work is intended to be ongoing and future iterations will be considered. As we conclude our current portion of the State of Minneapolis Report, we will evaluate how each of us on the capstone team can best support these continued efforts for further research and the eventual implementation of these recommendations. There is so much to be proud of in North Minneapolis, and there are many opportunities to build upon the incredible work that is being done to further benefit this community.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Demographic Information by North Minneapolis Neighborhood

<b>Near North Community</b>						
<b>Neighborhood</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Race (% of Color)</b>	<b>Disability Statues</b>	<b>Foreign-Born Residents</b>	<b>Median Household income (2023 dollar)</b>	<b>Income Poverty rate</b>
Harrison	3,245	74.9%	10%	17.9%	\$61,683	38.4%
Hawthorne	5,608	80.4%	15.7%	23.1%	Est.\$ 35- 50k	39.4%
Jordan	8,548	78.9%	18.8%	16.8%	\$57,823	27.2%
Near North	6,667	79.0%	16.0%	22.6%	Est. \$50-75k	25.5%
Sumner-Glenwood	2,003	93.6%	12.3%	27.3%	\$49,860	n/a
Willard-Hay	8,942	68.1%	14.4%	15.1%	Est. \$50-75k	22.3%

<b>Camden Community</b>						
<b>Neighborhood</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Race (% of Color)</b>	<b>Disability Statues</b>	<b>Foreign-Born Residents</b>	<b>Median Household income (2023 dollar)</b>	<b>Income Poverty rate</b>
Cleveland	3,139	62.0%	13.2%	n/a	\$78,750	n/a
Folwell	6,030	61.0%	11.9%	11.9%	\$ 78,035	12.2%
Lind-Bohanon	5,175	64.7%	13.0%	15.3%	\$ 84,524	9.8%
McKinley	3,184	76.3%	8.6%	20.9%	\$67,104	16.8%
Shingle Creek	3,351	66.9%	9.4%	26.0%	\$79,821	17.4%
Victory	4, 669	44.7%	12.3%	3.9%	\$78,757	10.8%
Webber-Camden	5,744	69.1%	14.1%	13.6%	\$63,478	18.0%

Source: [MN Compass](#)

## Appendix B: Data Collection Plan

**Problem/Opportunity Statement:** This project addresses what economic development projects are happening in North Minneapolis and how these projects are or are not in alignment with comprehensive economic development strategies for the area, including *Thrive MSP 2040*, the *Minneapolis 2040 Plan*, and the *Northside Forward Plan*.

*As the project pivoted through the research and data collection phases, the problem statement and research questions evolved. Specifically, the Thrive MSP 2040 Plan was deemphasized and barriers to additional economic development projects became a focal point based on interview responses.*

<b>Research Question #1: What are the ongoing and planned economic development projects and initiatives in North Minneapolis, and what barriers are limiting further development in the area?</b>	
<b>Data Source:</b> Where or from whom might information be located to answer this question?	Interviewees Local community development organizations North Minneapolis site visit
<b>Method:</b> What method of data collection will be used to obtain the data?	Semi-structured interviews Secondary data analysis In-person observation

<b>Research Question #2: How do the economic development projects identified in Research Question #1 align or conflict with the three major comprehensive economic development strategies for North Minneapolis: (<i>Thrive MSP 2040</i>, the <i>Minneapolis 2040 Plan</i>, and the <i>Northside Forward Plan</i>)?</b>	
<b>Data Source:</b> Where or from whom might information be located to answer this question?	Regional and local plans Interviewees
<b>Method:</b> What method of data collection will be used to obtain the data?	Documents review Semi-structured interviews

## Appendix C: Interview Guide

**Introduction and consent language:** Thank you for agreeing to speak with me today about the State of North Minneapolis Report. As I mentioned, this interview is part of a capstone project for my [insert degree program] at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. I would like to record the interview, so that I can more fully give my attention to this conversation instead of quickly typing notes and I can then share the interview with the other members of my capstone team. Our capstone team are the only ones who will listen to the recording. Do I have your permission to record this interview to make it easier for me to refer to your responses as we complete our capstone project? *(If yes, start the recording. If no, proceed with notetaking and remember to do a personal recorded debrief after the interview.)*

I would like to confirm that you are providing your consent and permission to participate in this interview and that your responses may be used in the State of North Minneapolis Report. *(If no, end the interview and thank the participant for their time).* Do I also have your consent and permission to attribute any quotations used in the project to you or do you prefer to remain anonymous?

If I ask a question that you would prefer not to answer, please let me know and we can move along, or we can stop the interview at any time. Your participation in this research will have no bearing on your relationship with me personally, Destination Northside Coalition, the City of Minneapolis, the University of Minnesota, or any other individuals or entities associated with this research.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

### Questions Guide:

#### *Goals of the Interview*

- Get insights into initially identified projects: [Bring Back the 6th](#), [MnDOT Hwy 55 / Olson Memorial Hwy](#), [Metro Blue Line Extension](#), [Upper Harbor Terminal Redevelopment](#), [V3 Sports Center](#), [North Commons Park Redevelopment](#).
- Identify additional projects that we are not considering (specifically lesser known projects) throughout North Minneapolis.
- Evaluate the degree of alignment of the projects with the three comprehensive economic development strategies (CEDS) ([Thrive MSP 2040](#), [Minneapolis 2040 Plan](#), [Northside Forward Plan](#)) and get general insights into the effectiveness of the three CEDS.

#### *Introduction*

1. Basic information about the interviewee (ex. current or past legislation supported relevant to economic development in North Minneapolis, information related to the business, position within organization, connection to North Minneapolis).

#### *Current and Future Projects*

2. Are you aware of specific economic development projects that are currently underway or that are planned to start in North Minneapolis?
3. Are there any lesser-known economic development projects in North Minneapolis that may not get as much attention that you could highlight for our report?

4. Are you familiar with these projects: [Bring Back the 6th](#), [MnDOT Hwy 55 / Olson Memorial Hwy](#), [Metro Blue Line Extension](#), [Upper Harbor Terminal Redevelopment](#), [V3 Sports Center](#), [North Commons Park Redevelopment](#)?
  - a. If yes, what is your awareness level and/or involvement in these projects?

*Alignment with CEDS*

5. What is your awareness level or involvement in the comprehensive economic development strategies (CEDS) that impact North Minneapolis ([Thrive MSP 2040](#), [Minneapolis 2040 Plan](#), [Northside Forward Plan](#))?
6. For each identified economic development project:
  - a. What is the level of need for this project in North Minneapolis? (Significant, Important, Desirable)
  - b. How many years until the project will be completed?
  - c. What is the degree of alignment with each of these CEDS?
    - i. *Thrive MSP 2040*
    - ii. *Minneapolis 2040 Plan*
    - iii. *Northside Forward Plan*
  - d. Are there other benefits from this project for North Minneapolis, including impacts on equity, sustainability, leveraging financial resources, neighborhood livability?
7. Have the three CEDS encouraged, hindered, or had no impact on economic development in North Minneapolis?

*Barriers*

8. What are the barriers to initiating economic development projects in North Minneapolis that if overcome could drive the outcomes desired by the CEDS?

*Conclusion*

9. Is there any additional information you would like to share that could be relevant as part of a State of North Minneapolis Report?

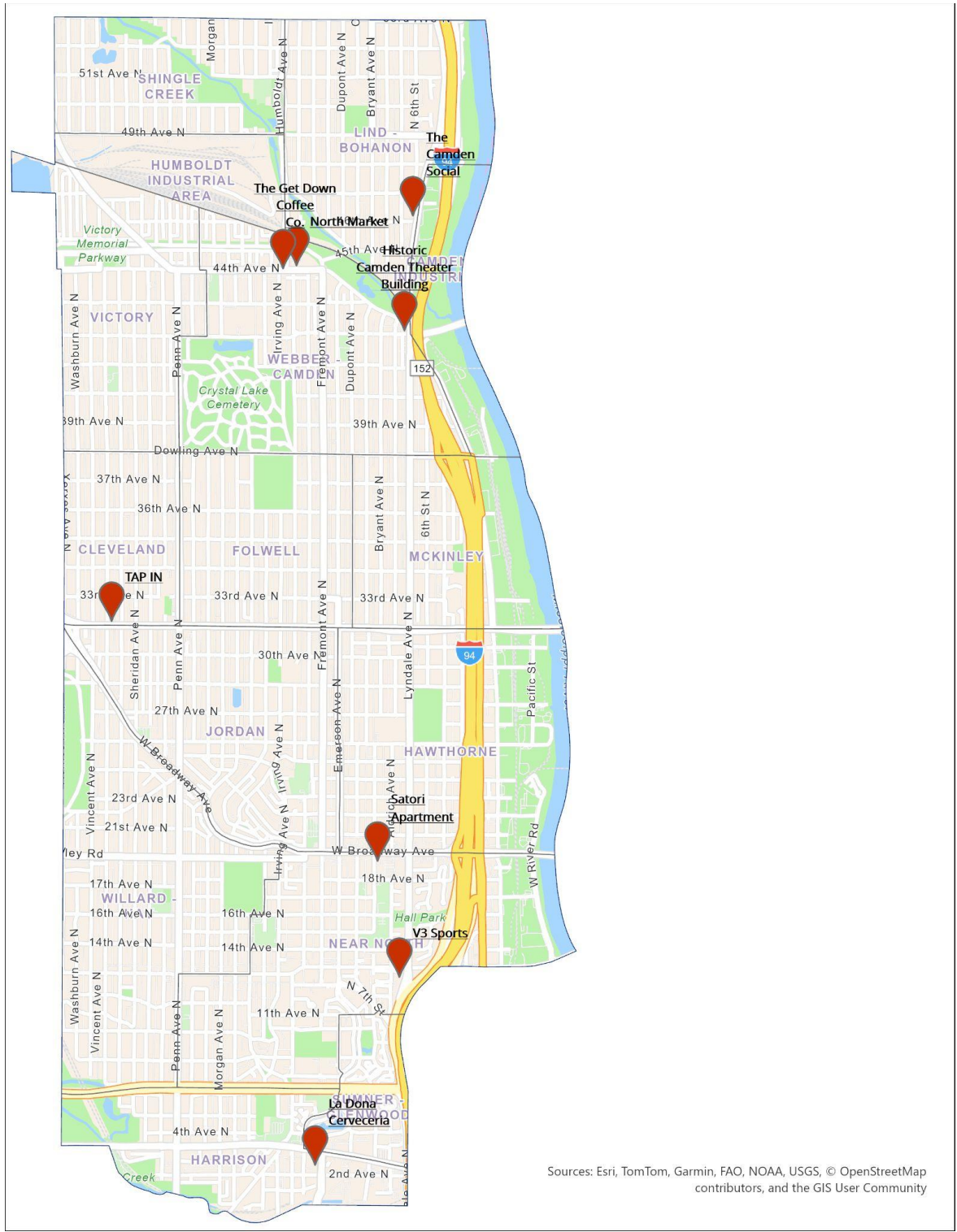
**Interview Subgroups:**

- Elected officials and Legislators
- City of Minneapolis City Council policy aides
- Local Small Business Owners
- Local Government Agencies and Community Organizations (Met Council, City of Minneapolis, Minneapolis Park Board, African American Leadership Forum)
- Investors and developers (Economic development & real estate)
- Social Service Providers
- Academics
- Residents (Long-term, newer)

**Conclusion:** Thank you for your time today and I appreciate your insights on this topic. Your responses will become part of our State of North Minneapolis Report capstone project. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments for me later.

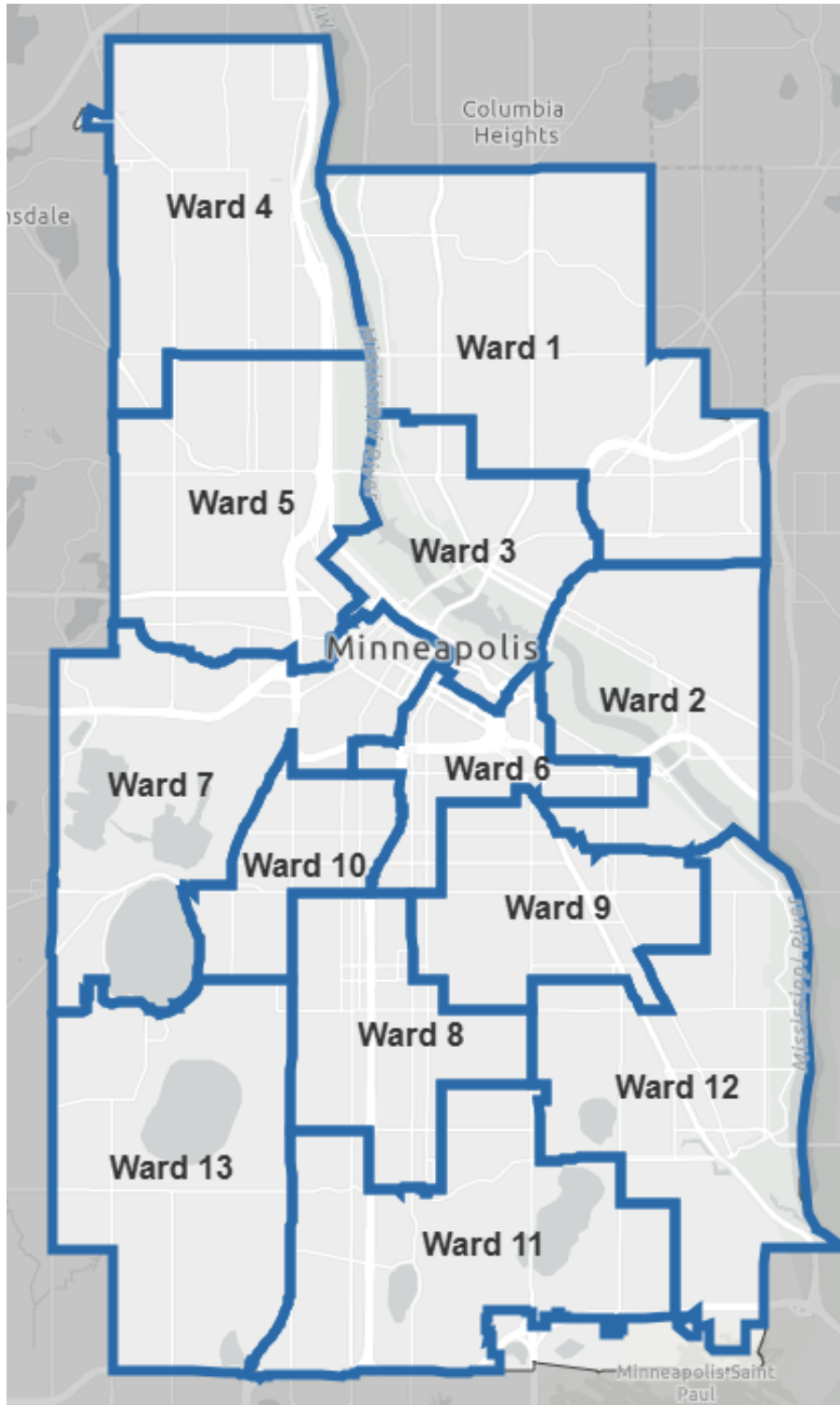
# Appendix D: Maps

## North Minneapolis Economic Development Projects Map



Capstone team member created map showing projects observed during local site visit

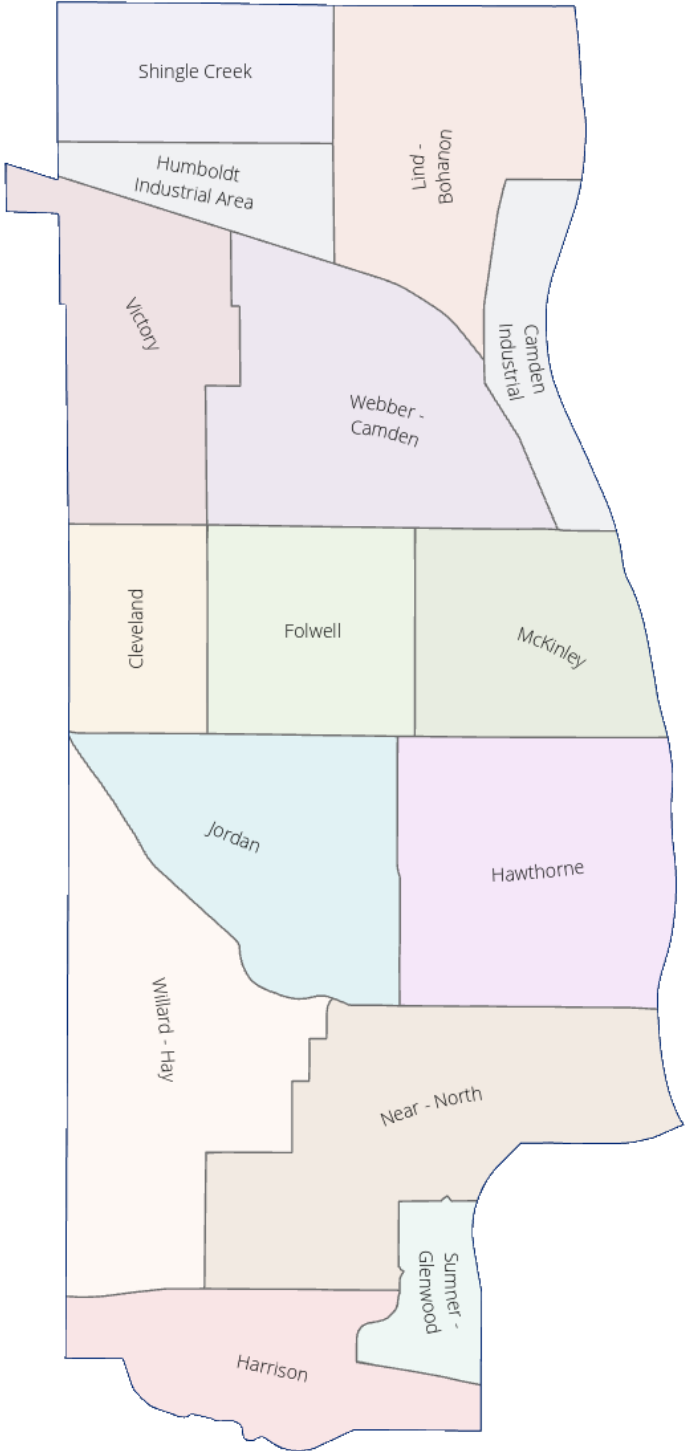
**City of Minneapolis Wards - North Minneapolis (Ward 4 and Ward 5)**



University of Minnesota, City of Minneapolis, Metropolitan Council, MetroGIS, Three Rivers Park District, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTe... POWERED BY **esri**

Source: [City of Minneapolis website](#)

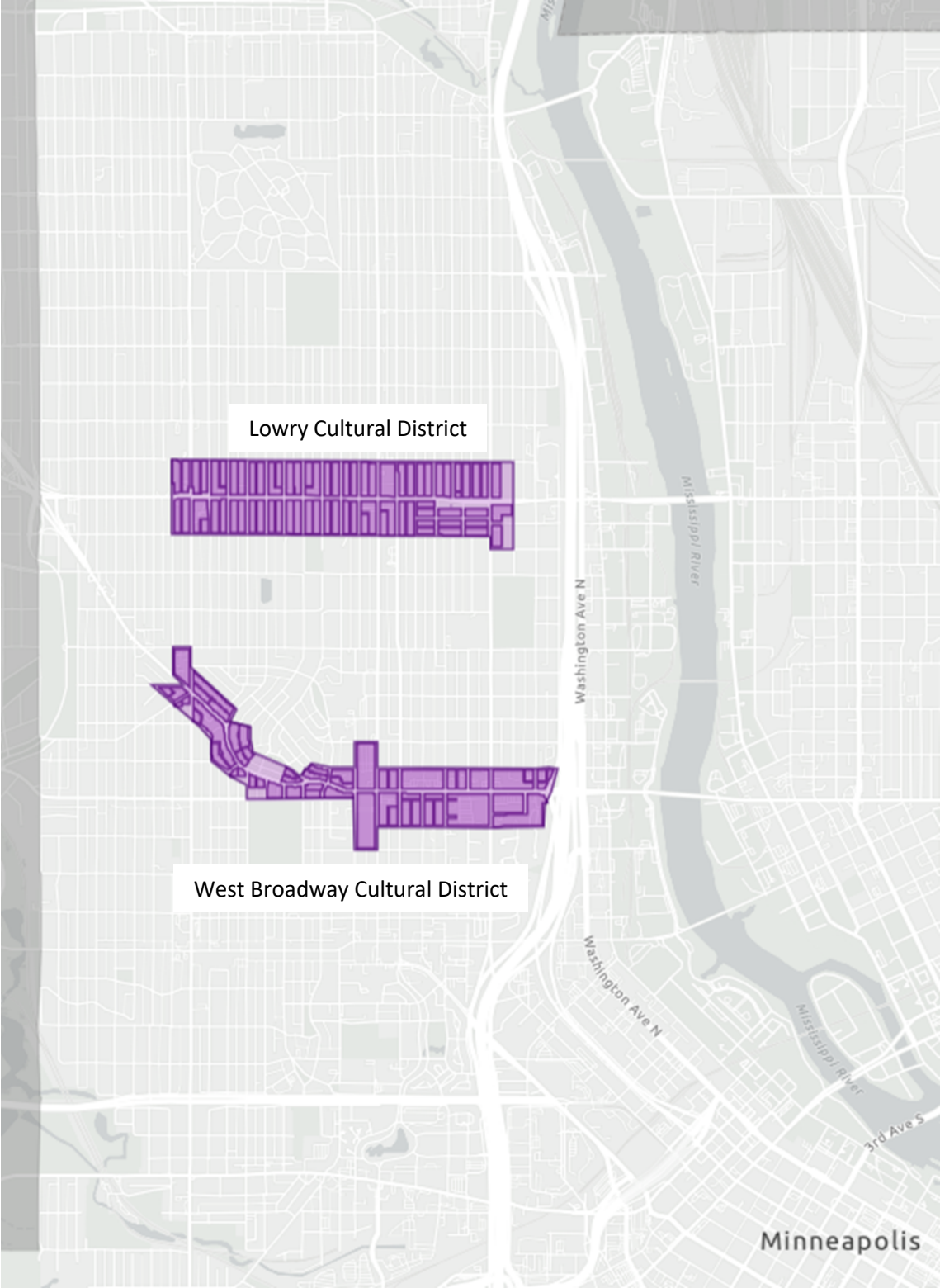
# North Minneapolis Neighborhoods



Neighborhood Boundary Data from Minnesota Geospatial Information Commons

Map Created by Capstone Team Member

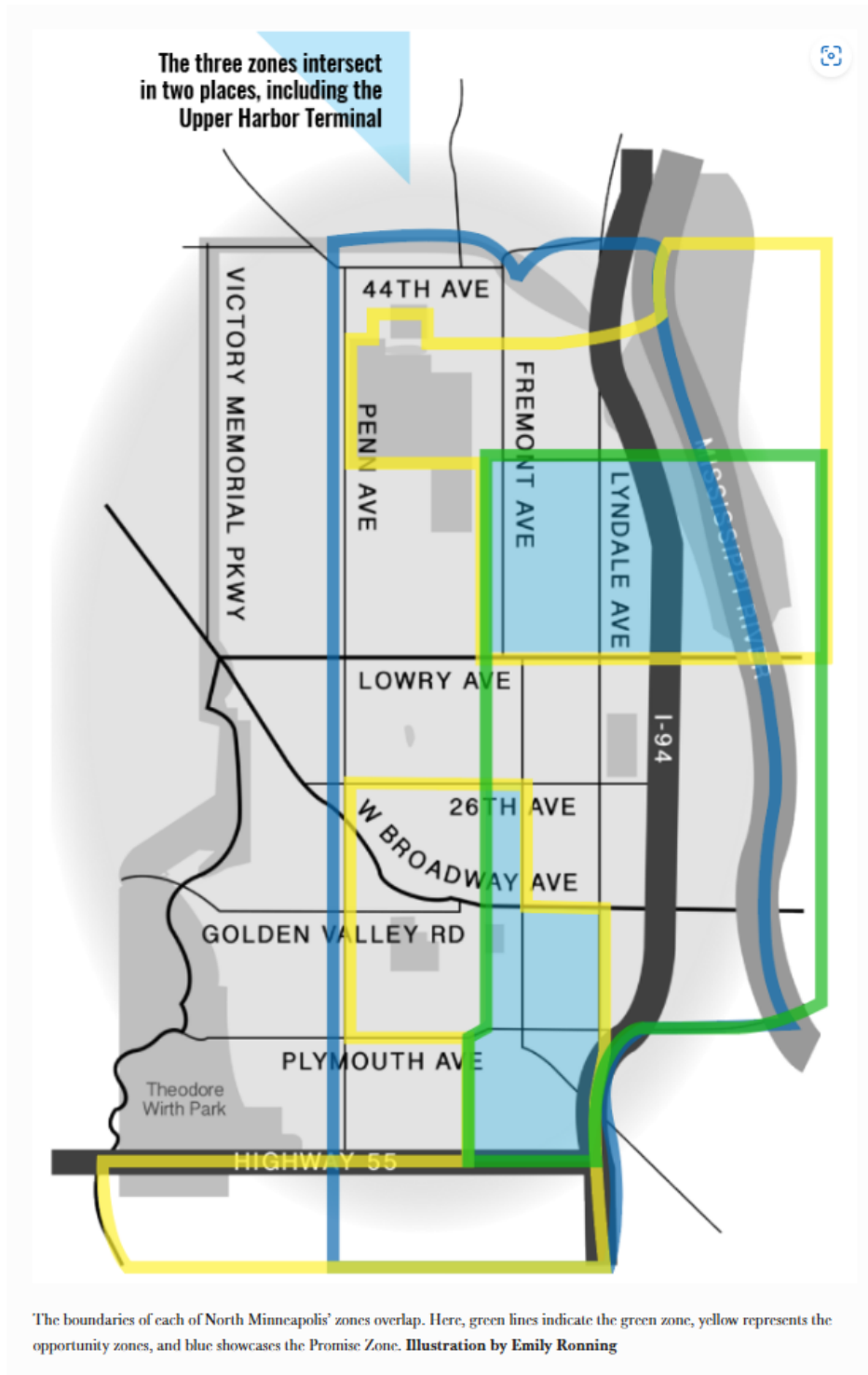
**North Minneapolis Cultural Districts - Lowry and West Broadway**



Source: [City of Minneapolis website](#)

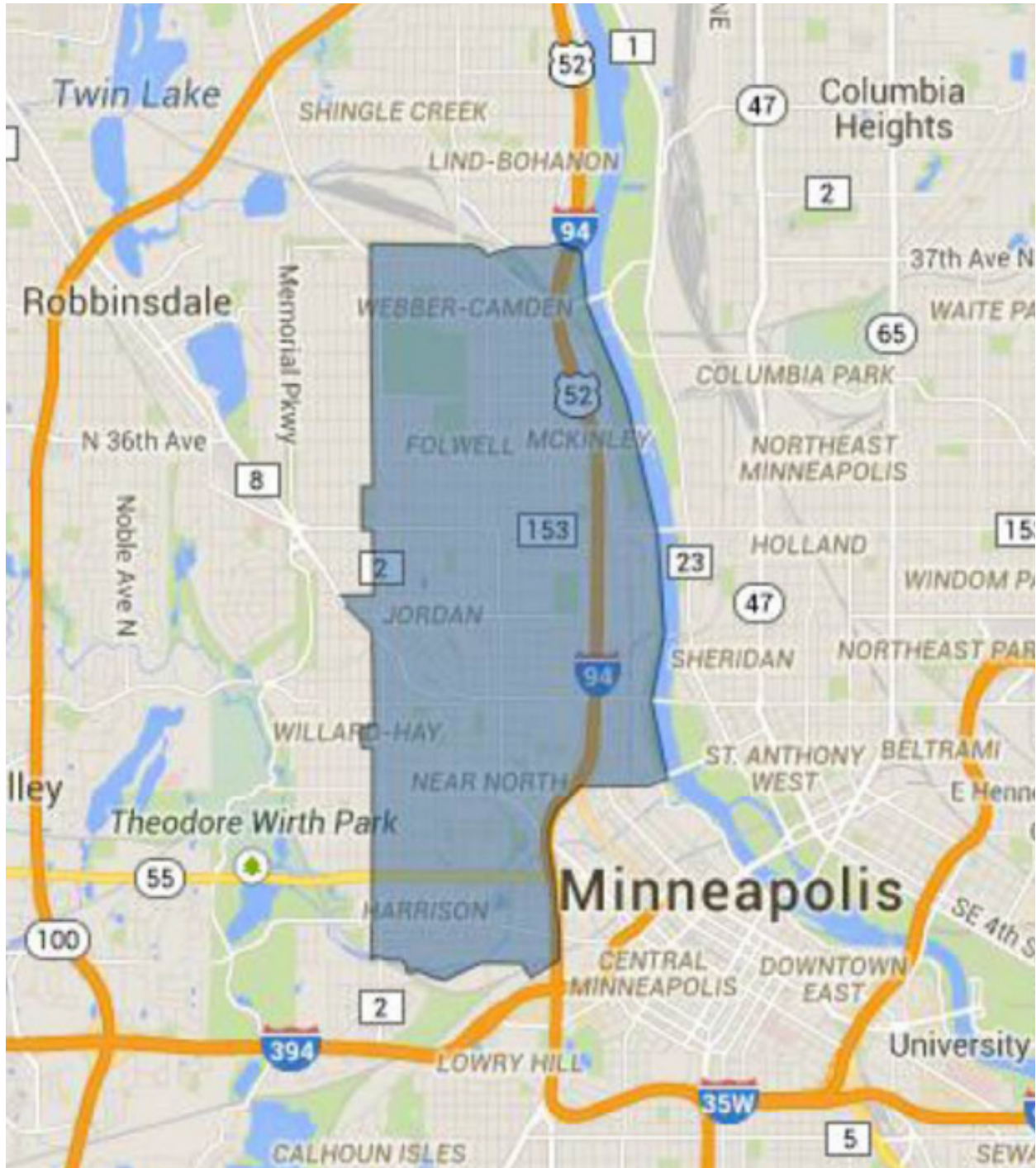
## Federal Government Designated Zones

**Blue** - Promise Zone; **Green** - Green Zone; **Yellow** - Opportunity Zone



Source: [North News Article, April 25, 2019](#)

## Minneapolis Promise Zone



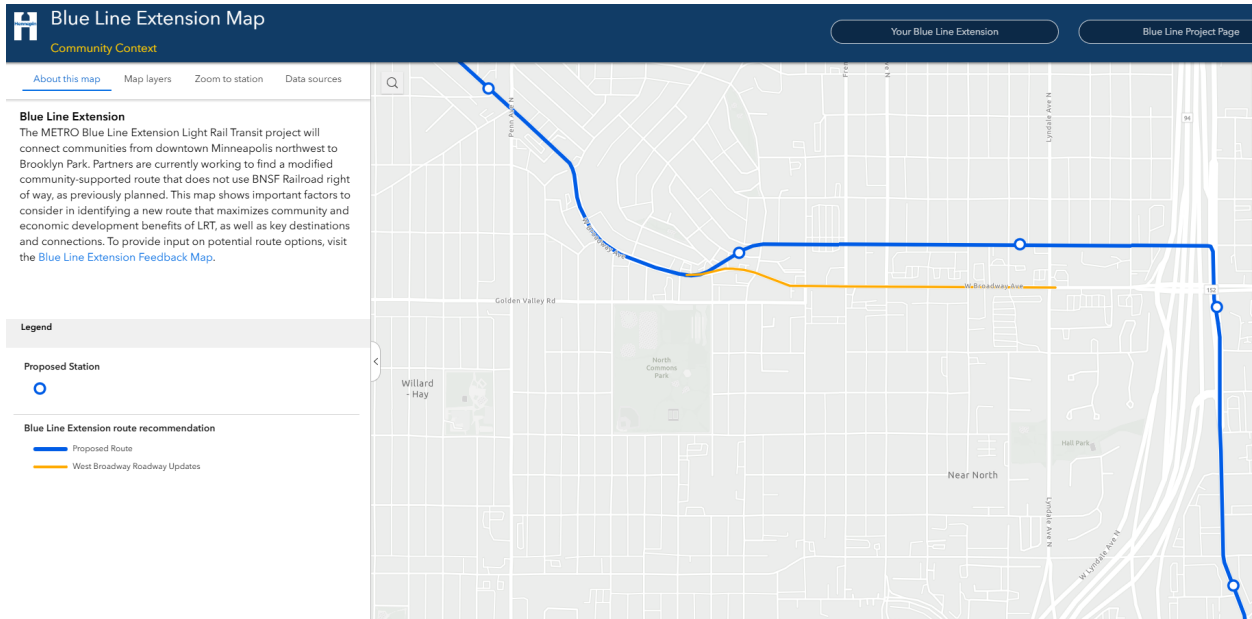
Source: [HUD Minneapolis Promise Zone Fact Sheet](#)

# METRO Blue Line Extension Proposed Route



Source: [Metropolitan Council website](#)

# Blue Line Extension Route Options



Source: [Hennepin County website](#)

# Appendix E: North Minneapolis Economic Development - Existing Projects

This appendix includes existing economic development projects seen on the local site visit, discussed in interviews, and researched by the team as part of this capstone project. All photos were taken by capstone team members.

## V3 Sports

701 Plymouth Ave N

Community inspired health and wellness facility driven to elevate the community through wellness, fitness, and education as a model for communities to be thriving and well. This is where we started our local site visit. There is a Soul Bowl restaurant located inside the facility. Planning is underway for future expansion of the V3 Sports facility.



## The Camden Social

4601 Lyndale Ave N

A full-service, North Minneapolis family-owned restaurant situated in the Camden neighborhood connecting the community through great food, delicious cocktails, and premium cigars, equally suited for business and pleasure. The former Camden Tavern and Grill was purchased by Akfibi and Kathryn Mayfield, a Ward 4 family, in April 2022. The Mayfields established The Camden Social as a new restaurant and completed a major renovation before reopening in August 2023.



## TAP IN

2618 Lowry Ave N

A community built, innovative hub with shared workspaces, a gathering space for events, and a fast-casual restaurant offering delicious food that brings people together. TAP IN is a New Rules project created by Chris Webley and Sophie Weber. It opened in June 2024 and is located on the former site of a SuperAmerica gas station, next to Tootie's and a NAPA auto parts store.



## North Market

2618 Lowry Ave N

A full-service grocery store, center for wellness, and community gathering place built with the community, for the community. North Market is one of only two major grocery stores offering fresh produce and healthy food options in North Minneapolis. As a food desert with limited options and transportation challenges, accessibility of these locations may be difficult for many residents of North Minneapolis.



## The Get Down Coffee Co.

1500 44th Ave N

This patch of economic activity is widely attributed to Houston White and U.S Bank. Houston White founded The Get Down Coffee Co. in North Minneapolis. He is a local entrepreneur and community leader. He opened it to bring people together and celebrate Black culture, style, and excellence. The shop is part of his bigger mission to uplift the neighborhood and create spaces that reflect and support the Black community. U.S Bank is involved in the financing of the project; however, there is no actual U.S Bank branch or ATM at this location.



## La Dona Cerveceria

241 Fremont Ave N

Family-owned brewery for community events that raises awareness and provides support to social, economic, and environmental issues. Surrounded by new development and housing projects, including several apartment complexes.



## Satori Apartments

835 West Broadway Ave

Satori Apartments are newer apartment buildings located at 835 West Broadway Avenue in North Minneapolis. Developed by JADT Development Group, the project opened in spring 2022. The development includes 112 units, with a mix of studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom apartments. Out of the 112 units, 20% are rent and income restricted for households earning 50% or less of the area median income (AMI). The remaining 80% are market-rate units, catering to a broader range of income levels.



## **Historic Camden Theater Building**

4201 Webber Parkway

The historic Camden Theater building now hosts a Joy Luck restaurant, daycare, Ward 4 City Council Member office, Subway, and North Memorial Clinic. Across the street off Lyndale Avenue N is an Ecuadorian restaurant Casa Ecuador, Camden Dollar, and Camden Liquors.



# Appendix F: North Minneapolis Economic Development - Planned Projects

## DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

# RECENT PLANNED DEVELOPMENT



1 Harrison Park



5 The Miller



9 Northside Greenway



2 V3 Sports Center - Phase 2



6 Zarah



9 Upper Harbor Terminal



3 NEON | Food Business Incubator



7 Satori Apartment Phase II



10 Camden Town



4 North Commons Park



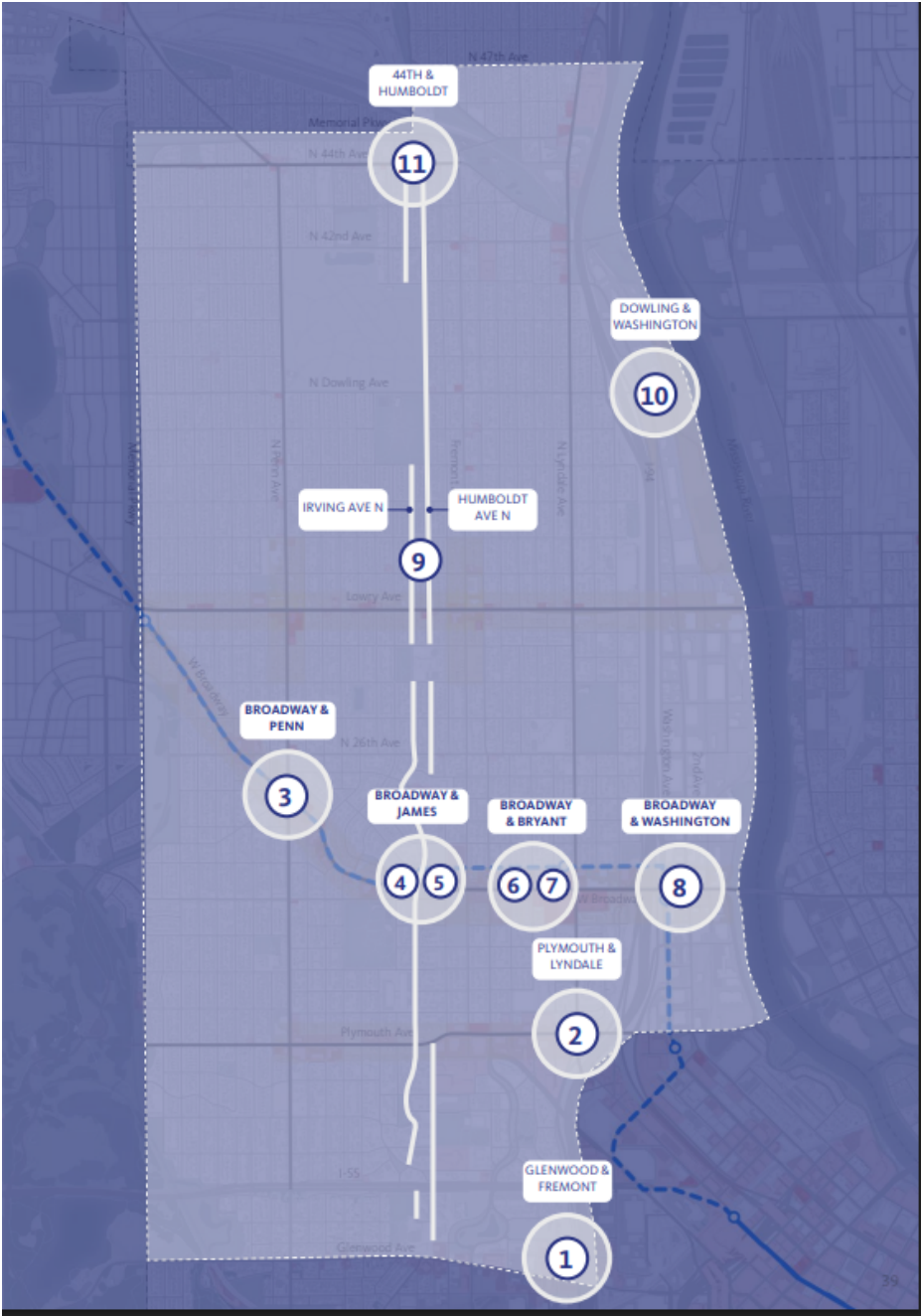
8 Swank Eatery

Image Source: V3 Sports, NEON, Zarah, JADT Development Group, Wilson's Image, City of Minneapolis, United Properties, Houston White, The Miller



Source: Northside Forward Community Session, April 23, 2025

# Map of Recent Planned Development Projects



Source: Northside Forward Community Session, April 23, 2025

# Appendix G: North Minneapolis Residential Landscape Change Photos

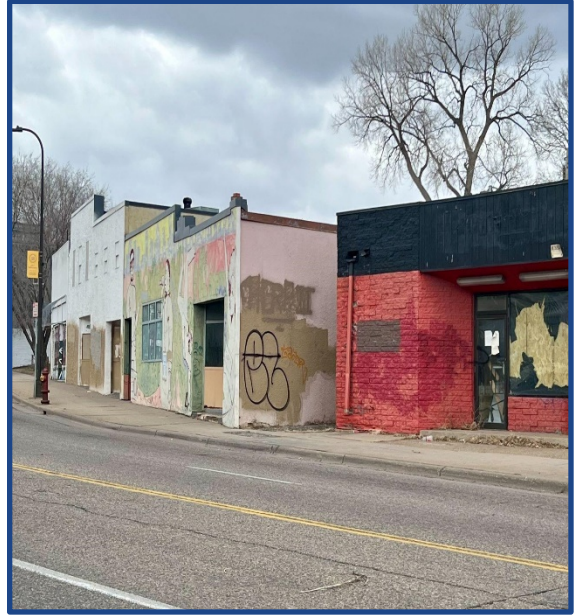
## Victory Memorial Parkway



## West Broadway Avenue







Sumner-Glenwood / Harrison Neighborhoods

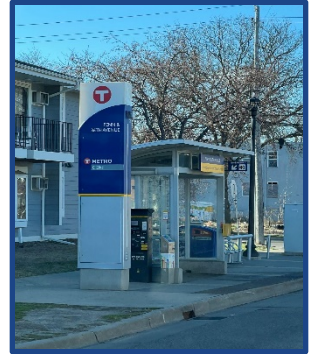


**Shingle Creek Neighborhood in Camden**



**Additional photos from the North Minneapolis local site visit**





**Appendix H: State of North Minneapolis Report Handout**

# State of North Minneapolis Report Handout



## Key Themes Development Project Highlights Recommendations

*“Though home to 4% of all citywide household growth over the past ten years, North Minneapolis has captured less than 3% of all new development.”*

- Northside Forward Community Session, January 15, 2025

April 29, 2025

## Key Themes

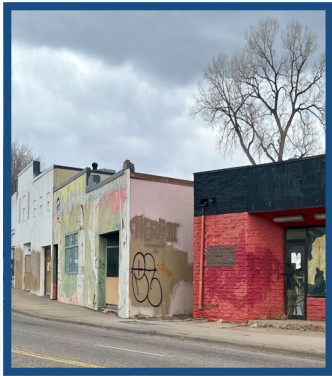
### Economic Development Strategies

- Lack of a cohesive and intentional economic development strategy
- Focus on comprehensive plans fades
- Fragmented development projects
- Challenges with economic viability

*“It takes sustained and committed investment to get these projects and the developers to the finish line and these things don't happen overnight. Community development is a long game, projects change, they evolve and developers have to pivot to meet the needs of the community in different ways.”*

- Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)

### Barriers to Development



#### Financial and Economic:

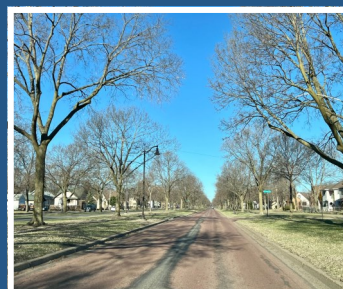
- Investor fatigue
- Small business burnout
- Access to low-cost capital
- Development uncertainties
- Business needs vs. Planner's vision
- Vacant lots

#### Political and Community:

- Unheard community voices
- Lack of “North Minneapolis” community
- Competing agendas
- Lack of trust
- Impact from COVID-19 pandemic

### Residential Landscape Changes

- Nearby community expansion
- Housing property value appreciation at the edges
- Affordable housing proposals



# Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies



## Thrive MSP 2040 Plan

- Adopted by the Metropolitan Council (Met Council) in 2014
- Addresses issues that transcend any one city or county



## Minneapolis 2040 Plan

- Adopted by the City of Minneapolis in 2020
- Consistent with Thrive MSP 2040 Plan
- Updated every ten years



## Northside Forward Plan

- Led by The African American Leadership Forum (AALFTC)
- Collaborative effort with over 100+ community stakeholders
- Community Driven + Systematic Perspective

*“All this is trying to get to a yes, as part of getting electeds on board, getting the city and leadership on board, getting community to say yes and the deal making that needs to be made as part of putting all your financing in order from all the banks and funders, you have to get to yes with all those different things.”*

- City of Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development Staff



# Existing Development Project Highlights

## V3 Sports 701 Plymouth Ave N

**North Minneapolis project intended to both benefit community and lead to increased development and economic activity in the area.**

Community inspired health and wellness facility driven to elevate the community through wellness, fitness, and education as a model for communities to be thriving and well. Soul Bowl restaurant located on site. Planning is underway for future expansion of the V3 Sports facility. This may lead to more economic development in the area and increase economic activity within North Minneapolis.



## The Camden Social 4601 Lyndale Ave N

**Local residents investing in their North Minneapolis community.**

A full-service restaurant situated in the Camden neighborhood connecting community through great food, delicious cocktails, and premium cigars, equally suited for business and pleasure. Formerly the Camden Tavern and Grill, it was purchased by a Ward 4 family and underwent a major renovation before reopening in August 2023.



## North Market 2618 Lowry Ave N

**As a food desert with limited options, North Market is filling a gap.**

A full-service grocery store, center for wellness, and community gathering place built with the community, for the community. North Market is one of only two major grocery stores offering fresh produce and healthy food options in North Minneapolis. As a food desert with limited options and transportation challenges, accessibility of these locations may be difficult for many residents of North Minneapolis.



## TAP IN 2618 Lowry Ave N

**Former gas station redeveloped to create a new community space.**

A community built, innovative hub with shared workspaces, a gathering space for events, and a fast-casual restaurant offering delicious food that brings people together. TAP IN is a locally owned and operated New Rules project which opened in June 2024, located on the redeveloped site of a former SuperAmerica gas station.



DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

# RECENT PLANNED DEVELOPMENT



1 Harrison Park



5 The Miller



9 Northside Greenway



2 V3 Sports Center - Phase 2



6 Zarah



9 Upper Harbor Terminal



3 NEON | Food Business Incubator



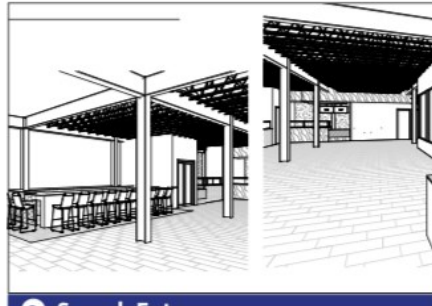
7 Satori Apartment Phase II



10 Camden Town



4 North Commons Park



8 Swank Eatery

Image Source: V3 Sports, NEON, Zarah, JADT Development Group, Wilson's Image, City of Minneapolis, United Properties, Houston White, The Miller



- Northside Forward Community Session, April 23, 2025

# Recommendations

## Supporting Local Developers

- Prioritize homegrown developers with long-term commitment to the community.
- Provide consistent and sustained support through all project phases.
- Invest in capacity-building programs to grow emerging local developers.



## Mitigating Negative Development Impacts

- Support small businesses during light rail construction to minimize disruptions.
- Develop and implement community-informed mitigation plans to prevent displacement.

## Aligning Community & Planning Visions

- Rebuild trust between the residents, businesses, and local officials.
- Balance long-term city planning with the immediate needs of local communities.
- Implement the Northside Forward Plan in a sustainable way.

## Fostering Cross-Sector Collaboration

- Encourage investment and coordination across public, private, and non-profit sectors.
- Align stakeholder interests and leverage the strengths of each sector.
- Innovate through flexible, community-driven partnerships to make a collective impact.



# State of North Minneapolis Report

## Humphrey School Capstone Project

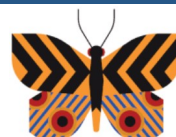
The Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs  
The University of Minnesota

Alejandro Caceres-Aranda  
Justin Carlson  
Monica Guendy  
Shizhuo Ma

PA 8081 Capstone Workshop  
Leadership and Social Policy  
Instructor: Jeannie Entenza  
Destination Northside Coalition: Natalie Johnson Lee



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Destination  
Northside  
Coalition