

## Chapter 1

# Cultural Assets & Economic Vitality

The Loring Park Neighborhood plays an important role in the regional economy. Thousands love living in its urbanism, with a great location close to Loring Park and Downtown. It is also home to several large educational and religious institutions and the Minneapolis Convention Center. The region's highest proportion of designers, artists, entrepreneurs, writers, programmers, inventors experience the Neighborhood daily, and place Loring very much in the center of the 'Twin Cities' creative industry. In a globalized economy where retention of educated workers is paramount, The Loring Park Neighborhood has become a key economic asset.

This chapter of the *Loring Park Neighborhood Small Area Plan* addresses ways these unique cultural & economic assets shall be supported, strengthened and leveraged through the provision of *Recommendations & Actions* for each of the following:

**Affirming Neighborhood Identity**

**Investing in Creative Businesses & Residents**

**Activating Public Places**

**Strengthening Organization & Promotion**

**Diverse People, Places & Opportunities**

Leadership for implementation of the policy actions in this chapter will be vested in The Citizens for a Loring Park Community with community stakeholders and assistance from the City of Minneapolis, neighborhood institutions, and other implementation partners. Their participation is implied although not stated in each action.

I  
Nurture our  
role in the  
regions's  
creative  
economy.

This chapter addresses  
one of the five major  
strategic goals of  
**The Loring Park  
Neighborhood  
Master Plan.**

II

Guide infill  
development  
and strengthen  
mixed use  
corridors.

III

Protect,  
preserve and  
enhance  
historic  
character and  
unique  
architecture.

IV

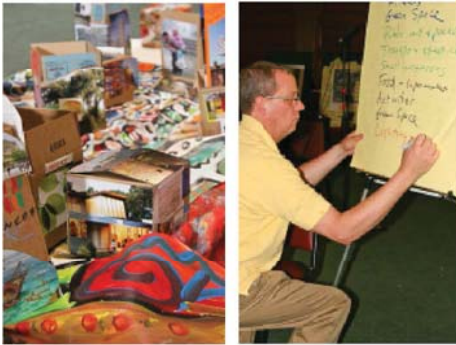
Cultivate an  
exceptional urban  
pedestrian  
experience and  
enhance connections  
to destinations in  
surrounding  
neighborhoods.

V

Achieve  
sustainable  
buildings and  
infrastructure.



PDF files of this chapter and the entire master plan can be found at the City of Minneapolis Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED) webpage dedicated to approved city plans and at Citizens for a Loring Park Community (CLPC) webpage: [www.loringpark.org](http://www.loringpark.org)



*The neighborhood driven planning process included a creative visioning session at Wesley Center (Wesley Church) in November 2010. Building on the foundation of the discovery phase, values of community members were documented, then translated into twenty year visions for the neighborhood.*

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## A Creative Neighborhood in a Creative Economy

In addition to extensive community input regarding creative sector, arts & culture, a key basis for the policy in this chapter is the ***Discovery Report on Cultural Assets & Economic Vitality*** developed by the master plan consultant team in collaboration with the Loring Park Master Plan Steering Committee. The scope of the report is described as:

*“The report traces the discovery and visioning around the culture and the cultural assets of the Loring Park Neighborhood. We define culture broadly to go beyond the creative expression of people and organizations. The culture of the Loring Park neighborhood includes the sense of identity of its people and their shared values, the wide range of reasons people gather for mutual interests, and the ways people function as a community. This report provides an inventory of the breadth of cultural resources in the neighborhood and on its periphery, including a demographic and a psychographic profile of residents. The character of the people, places, cultural activities, and creative enterprises profiled and compared with three other urban residential and institution-rich neighborhoods that are similarly located adjacent to their city’s downtown business cores (Saint Paul, Denver, Seattle).”*

The Loring Park neighborhood has served as a major cultural hub for Minneapolis and the surrounding area throughout the City’s history. It is located geographically and in relation to civic infrastructure as a central and connective place. Its center is the Park itself, and on the edges of that Park are most of the City’s major arteries, beginning historically with Hennepin Avenue, Nicollet Avenue, Nicollet Mall, Interstate-94 and 394, and soon the Southwest Corridor Light Rail. Through its public spaces and institutions – and those on its immediate periphery – the area within neighborhood boundaries arguably represents the most significant, heavily visited, and diverse gathering place in the State of Minnesota and the region. For example:

- Loring Park itself is a major gathering place for celebrations and recreation ranging from the Twin Cities Pride Festival, to informal family picnics, participatory sports, political protests, and the Loring Park Art Fair



- Census data reveal a highly educated local resident with 91% of people graduating high school and 53% going on to achieve a bachelors degree compared with just 24% nationally.
- Data based on IRS reports show 265 tax-exempt nonprofits within the 55403 zip code area.
- The largest annual event in Loring Park and one of the largest gay pride events in the U.S., the Twin Cities Pride Festival attracted over 400,000 people during one weekend in 2010.<sup>1</sup>
- Co-sponsored by the Walker Art Center and Minneapolis Park Board, *Movies and Music in the Park* has been a tradition since 1973.

- *Between 1980 and 2000, Loring Park's population grew at a faster pace than that of Minneapolis. This growth brought more working-age residents to the neighborhood.*

- *Twice as many people who work in creative businesses (just over 15% of all businesses in Loring Park), are self-employed, indicating that Loring Park has a sizeable population of self-employed residents.*

- *Units occupied by renters represent the vast majority, or about three-fourths of the households in Loring Park. In Minnesota, about one third of the units are occupied by renters.*

- *Just a little over 20% of Loring Park residents are married. This contrasts with Minnesota and U.S. rates of marriage of about 55%.*

- *The Loring Park Art Festival began in 2000 committed to the inclusion of local artists in contrast to other major art festivals in the city.*

- *While household average and mean incomes are considerably lower than those of Hennepin County and Minnesota, individual income in Loring Park is considerably higher reflecting smaller household sizes.*

- The historic churches are a magnet for people from far and wide for religious activities, recognition of major life events, as well as educational, cultural, and civic activities
- The Convention Center draws people regionally and internationally for cultural, social, civic, and commercial events on a major scale
- The Woman's Club of Minneapolis houses regular social and cultural events
- The Red Eye Theater, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis Sculpture Garden, Orchestra Hall, and other nonprofits bring people from far and wide for arts experiences
- Educational institutions such as Minneapolis Community and Technical College, Dunwoody Institute, and University of St. Thomas contribute to Metro Area student learning day and evening
- Popular local eateries, bars, coffee shops, and clubs bring people together daily for culinary experiences, music, and socializing

Since the 1990s urban neighborhoods that are welcoming to newcomers and that offer a lively mix of social and cultural activities have risen in prominence and importance in urban planning and in economic development strategies. Richard Florida, best-selling author and internationally-renowned economic geographer, cites as a key indicator of urban and economic vitality the presence of gays and lesbians. In fact, he considers his "Gay Index" as the single most telling measure of the likelihood of a city's competitive success in the global economy.

In light of such research, ambitious and emerging global cities such as Singapore and Dubai, known for repressive and homophobic cultures, have officially liberalized social policies, to compete for "creative class" workers and residents. Florida's three-part formula for the competitive urban economy includes a mix of "Three-Ts": Technology, Talent, and Tolerance. In order to attract the talent, he

asserts, the city has to both offer a bohemian cultural environment, and be accepting of diverse lifestyles.

The fact that Loring Park has long established itself as welcoming to the gay and lesbian community, and a center of creative cultural organizations, elevates its importance to the region's economy.

**The culture of The Loring Park Neighborhood – its welcoming urban character and its rich fabric of cultural organizations as well as formal and informal gathering places – is in no small way a driving force of the region's capacity to be globally competitive, to attract and nurture creativity and creative class talent.**

Such characteristics of neighborhoods that enhance regional economies have only recently been recognized in the public policy arena in cities around the world.

In writing about neighborhoods known as gay enclaves, cultural historian Moira Rachel Kenney (1998) writes,

*In the 1950s these neighborhoods served an important role in creating safe havens. As they were located on the edge of cities, in abandoned areas of downtown, they were easily ignored in the larger context of urban renewal efforts. In the 1970s these communities were the first open evidence that gay and lesbian culture existed. In the 1980s they became centers of urban growth and development... What may well appear to us as insignificant or marginal activity today is more likely evidence of a transformation that will openly shape our cities tomorrow.*

The other increasingly recognized factor in propelling regional economies has been the vibrancy of arts and cultural organizations and activities. Ann Markusen, internationally-known economist, recently retired from the University of Minnesota, is one of many researchers who have written on the growth of the creative economy, but one of few who have examined the positive impacts of the creative community on large, established enterprises. She asserts that an active creative community produces an “artistic dividend” by propelling innovation, enhancing marketing, and providing other stimulants to major corporations as well as to start-ups. Loring Park



*The community based master plan process in 2010-2011 included four citizen workshops focused, in order, on Discovery, Visioning, Design, and Policy.*



*Screenshot from www.visitcopenhagen.com*

sits at the intersection of robust cultural and creative activity, creative sector workers, creative start-ups, and innovative large corporations.



*The community based master plan process in 2010-2011 included four Thursday evening panel discussion, called Community Gatherings, focused on History of Loring, the Creative Economy & Multi-modal Transportation. Pictured above are panelists from Creative Neighborhoods in the Creative City, held at the Loring Theatre in November of 2010. (Pictured from left to right: **Tom Borrup**, Creative Community Builders, planning consultant & moderator, **Phillip Bahar**, Chief of Operations and Administration, Walker Art Center, **Jay Coogan**, President, Minneapolis College of Art and Design, **Miriam Must**, Co-founder and Managing Director, Red Eye Theater, **John Foley**, 4Front. Not pictured: **Mike Christenson**, Director of Community Planning and Economic Development, City of Minneapolis)*

At a November 4, 2010 panel discussion convened to discuss the creative character of Loring Park, advertising executive John Foley cited that 20 of 22 Fortune 500 companies based in Minnesota were home grown enterprises.

**As a hub of creative people, gathering places, cultural and educational facilities, and a large and active gay and lesbian population, Loring Park may in fact be a key driver of the region's economic success.**

#### **Creative Enterprises and Creative Class Workers Defined**

Creative enterprises or businesses include nearly every kind of artist, but more broadly include products and services in which *creative intelligence is applied to produce work that is novel and useful.*

One of the most widely-used definitions is: *Enterprises and people involved in the production & distribution of goods and services in which the aesthetic, intellectual & emotional engagement of the consumer gives the product value in the marketplace.*

Creative class workers include those people commonly considered fine artists, but incorporates people involved in a much broader range of professions and businesses. Typically, they include: advertising, architecture, art, crafts, design, fashion, film, music, performing arts, publishing, R&D, software, toys and games, TV and radio. In addition, products that have historic or symbolic meaning in a given place, or are created by hand using skills, knowledge, or natural materials related to a particular place, are also included.





## Affirming Neighborhood Identity

Whether or not Loring Park advocates have chosen to adopt or project a specific image, it has earned one. Because of its many assets, the Loring Park Neighborhood has acquired a very distinctive identity in the region. In fact, its assets are so numerous, it has several identities. The beautiful Park and pond on the edge of the city's downtown clearly serve as a *refuge of green* in the urban core. It is

**Loring Park residents identified among its strengths and desired characteristics its welcoming and inclusive nature, diversity of housing types, and centrality as a place that millions visit each year. The high value placed on green space, and the presence of one of the finest urban parks in the region, are also a big part of the neighborhood's identity. Perhaps the characteristic that most distinguishes Loring Park is its long history of welcoming gay and lesbian residents and visitors.**

a highly valued residential area, arguably the region's *best urban living experience*. Major institutions and informal gathering spots draw millions each year giving Loring Park the title as *Minnesota's gathering place* as well as a *welcoming community*. Its long history as residential and social enclave for gay and lesbian populations – in addition to the site



of the massive annual pride celebration, identify Loring Park as the city’s most prominent *gay neighborhood*. As described in this plan, it is also a highly *creative community* – not in the way other artist enclaves might be identified - yet creative, entrepreneurial, and a magnet for those who value creative experiences. This embarrassment of riches should be embraced and built upon.

Community events held in Loring Park are an important way for the neighborhood to express community identity (*see this chapter: Activating Public Places*).

## Recommendations

**1.1 Expression of Cultural Identity and Community Purpose** - Commission a branding process to determine whether there is merit in providing the Loring Park Neighborhood with a focused or more clearly defined identity that promotes its unique role in the region. Labels such as *Minneapolis’ Rainbow Neighborhood & Minnesota’s Gathering Place* could be appropriate concepts. The following statement of identity and community purpose received support in the 2010-2011 Master Plan public process by participants:



*Basilica of St Mary*

### **Minnesota’s Gathering Place and Minnesota’s Best Urban Living Experience**

The Loring Park Neighborhood provides diverse residents, workers, and visitors a welcoming environment that is historic and contemporary, public and private, appealing and sustainable, walkable and transit-friendly.

This is achieved by celebrating and leveraging the remarkable qualities and aesthetics of Loring Park Neighborhood’s urban and natural setting, its diverse array of urban living choices, and its opportunities for interaction, learning, and enjoyment of cultures.

**1.2 Priority Locations for Public Art & Public Art Plan** – As a means to further improve the visual beauty and interest, walkability and attractiveness of the neighborhood, and as a means to express neighborhood’s overall depth of culture, history and neighborhood identity (see this chapter: *Affirming Neighborhood Identity*), the CLPC, working with the City, should commission a community based *public art plan* for the neighborhood to coordinate and prioritize way-finding and public art investments. In such a plan, give priority to the locations and emerging themes identified in this master plan (*see list and map below*). Public art investments may include a strategic diversity of works, including permanent and temporary installations, activity and event-based work, and artist commissions incorporated within infrastructure such as public buildings, bridges or streetscape improvements. Opportunities abound in conjunction with various neighborhood and Loring Park festivals and goals to create more family-friendly areas and more lively public spaces (see in this chapter: *Activating Public Spaces*). Based on themes that reinforce the goals within this plan, public art, and the processes through which it is created, can help bring greater cohesion to the neighborhood. The following locations have been identified as priority locations (see map following on page 13:

- a. **Southeast corner of Loring Park** – HIV/AIDS memorial has long been planned with assistance of Forecast Public Artworks.
- b. **Berger Fountain** – upgrades and a larger plaza with other water features to enlarge the experience and draw all ages.
- c. **Nicollet Bridge over Interstate 94** – a prominent installation can serve as a gateway welcoming visitors, as well as better connecting Loring Park Neighborhood to Eat Street. (*See also Public Realm Chapter: Activity Center in Loring Village*)
- d. **Southeast corner of 16<sup>th</sup> Street & 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue** – similar to location (c) and (j) this is a site seen from some distance along westbound Interstate 94. This is where a larger scale installation may help mark Loring Village, or signal an entrance to the Loring Park Neighborhood, communicating to passers-by and passers through that they are near a distinct, interesting and sophisticated place worth visiting.



*Berger Fountain*



*Convention Center Plaza*



*Harmon Place*

- e. **Grant Street & Convention Center** – local public artists should be involved in imagining stronger connections with the larger Neighborhood, in particular to the west. Convention Center Plaza and Grant Street can serve as sites for temporary, thematic installations or live street art, welcoming visitors, drawing them to other amenities. Improvements should also include adequate way-finding to help Convention Center visitors find comfortable walking and biking routes to and through Loring Village (Nicollet Avenue/Eat Street south of the Mall), Loring Park, and onward to the Walker and Sculpture Garden.
- f. **Loring Park** – way-finding, interpretive & interactive public art, landscaping and/or street vending at common entry points/street terminations. (*See also Public Realm Chapter.*)
- g. **Harmon Place** (between Spruce & Tenth Street, connecting downtown and residential areas with the campuses of MCTC and the University of St. Thomas.) Possible themes that emerged from focus groups include “four wheels to two wheels” portraying Harmon’s evolving role as home to automobile showrooms for well to do residents – to a place served by advanced multimodal transportation infrastructure (i.e. biking, walking and access to transit for residents, students and workers.) Students and residents also expressed strong interest in expressing sustainable values in both functional and artistic elements including but not limited to community gardens, green walls, executed with local materials by local artists.
- h. **Loring Village**
  - New Streetcar Station(s)** – opportunities to express Loring Park’s identity (perhaps its history of diversity and social tolerance) to visitors and commuters.
  - 15<sup>th</sup> & Nicollet** – Perhaps integrated into or near redevelopment of the municipal parking lot at 15<sup>th</sup> & Nicollet Avenue (aka “The Meter Farm”), support installations or public realm infrastructure that celebrates the cultural heritage and/or the evolving identity of the Loring Park Neighborhood.

- i. **Northern Gateway to Loring Village** (on Nicollet Ave) – signaling transition from downtown to the residential, cultural and entertainment area in Loring Village.
- j. **Western entry of Lowry Tunnel** – short-term opportunity for public art work to signal identity of Loring Park, as well as longer-term opportunities in a major re-design of roadways.
- k. **Western wall of Convention Center along 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South** – opportunity for green wall, lighting, or larger ‘Loring Village’ murals. This would enhance the arrival and departure of visitors on buses stacking along 1<sup>st</sup> Street, 300 ft stretch, a chance to express the history of Minneapolis while turning a kinder face to the west, forming an excellent ‘backdrop’ for folks traveling north-south through Loring Village. This is also a major opportunity for green wall installations, contributing to the neighborhood wide goal of adding significant new greenery elements to the neighborhood. *(See Chapter 4: Public Realm)*
- l. **Avenue of the Arts** – complete the long range vision for 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue connecting Minneapolis Institute of Art to Downtown.
- m. **The Loring Greenway** – opportunity for art and creative lighting to enhance the pedestrian experience along the Greenway, including underneath the LaSalle Avenue overpass. This would complement Loring Greenway Associations intent to complete landscape, lighting and furniture improvements. *(See Chapter 4: Public Realm)*
- n. **Groveland Avenue Bridge** – through public process, utilize public art to establish a unique and inviting sense of transition/gateway connection form Loring Hill to Loring Heights. *(See also Public Realm Chapter)*
- o. **Willow St. & Grant St. Cul-de-sac** –explore unique streetscape & public art opportunities such as pavement painting.
- p. **Hennepin Avenue & 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue** *(at Basilica of St Mary’s & Fawkes Block)* – explore public art opportunities that further define the foreground of the Basilica as prominent public space.

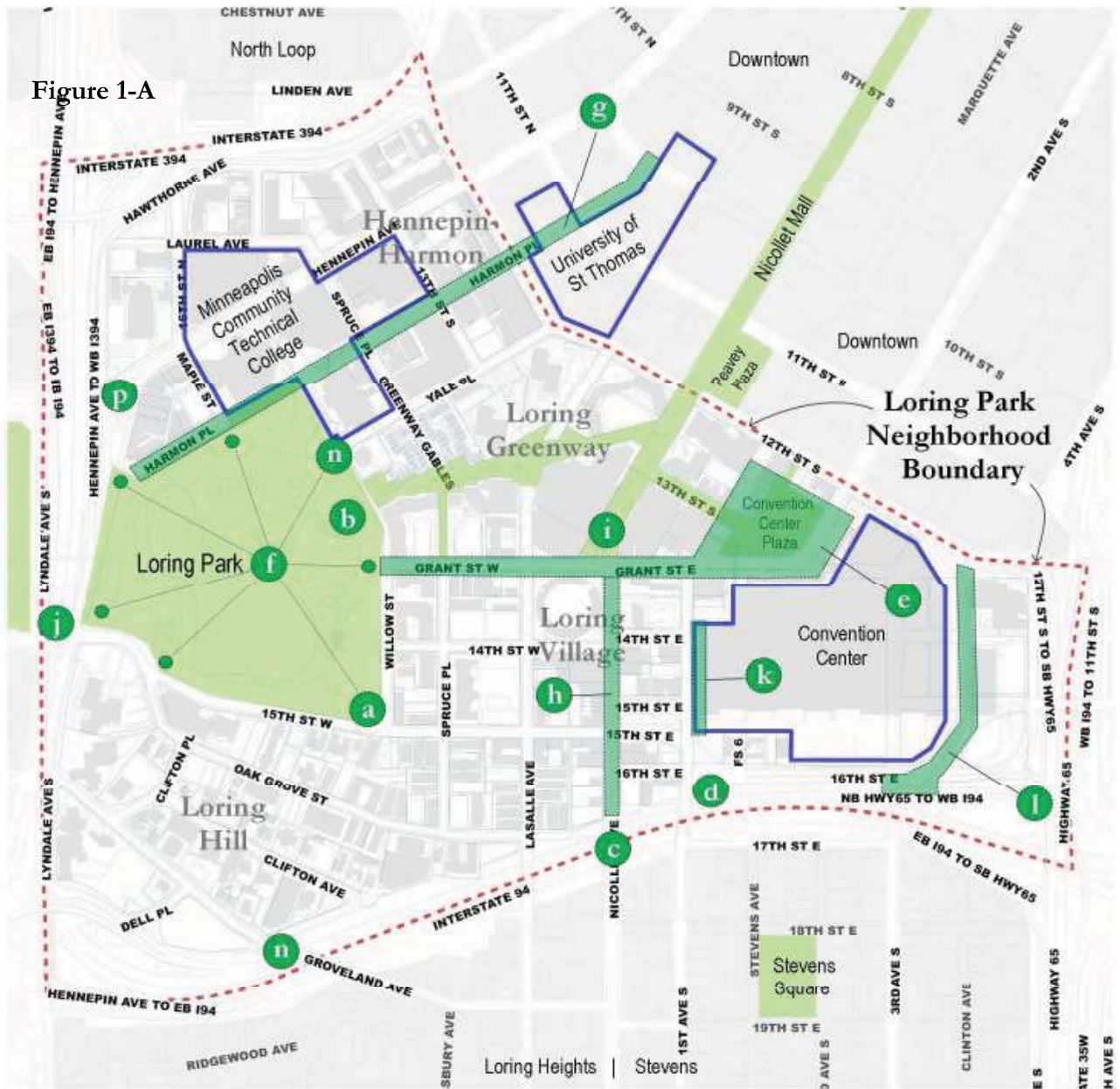


*Hennepin-Lyndale Corridor, above western entry to Lowry Tunnel*



*Loring Greenway over LaSalle Avenue*

Figure 1-A



## Priority Locations for Public Art

- a. Southeast corner of Loring Park
- b. Berger Fountain
- c. Nicollet Avenue Bridge
- d. Southeast corner of 16<sup>th</sup> Street & 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue
- e. Grant Street to Convention Center Plaza
- f. Loring Park
- g. Harmon Place
- h. Loring Village
- i. Northern Gateway to Loring Village
- j. Western head of Lowry Tunnel
- k. Western wall of Convention Center along 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue S.
- l. Avenue of the Arts
- m. LaSalle Avenue under Loring Greenway
- n. Groveland Avenue Bridge
- o. Willow Street & Grant Street Cul-de-sac
- p. Hennepin Avenue & 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue (at Basilica of St Mary's & Fawkes Block)



## Investing in Creative Businesses & Residents

In the Loring Park Neighborhood, economic development means supporting local creative entrepreneurs and self-employed creative professionals, including artists. It also involves creating an environment conducive to creative lifestyles, and building infrastructure to support creative enterprise. This attracts residents, new housing, new business and more visitors. The neighborhood is full of creative voices in search of a venue, and brimming with creative ideas in search of investment. Loring Park is not the kind of artist enclave with old industrial buildings that can house working artists and start-up enterprises. It is a neighborhood where creative professionals prefer to live and where entrepreneurs work at home and in local coffee shops.

### Recommendations

**1.3 Develop Professional Networks** – Acknowledge the high proportion of self-employed people and smaller creative enterprises in the Loring Park Neighborhood (and in nearby neighborhoods). Foster social and support networks among creative sector professionals living and working in Loring Park. Such activities can also support goals related to activating the public realm by making

social events visible to the street and using store fronts and other underutilized and available space.

#### 1.4 Connect Loring Entrepreneurs to Other Resources –

Work with the City of Minneapolis and other private efforts to support creative sector entrepreneurs. While some specific programs and incubator spaces are not located in Loring Park (such as the CoCo incubator downtown, or Matter Worldwide in the Warehouse district), enterprising Loring Park residents will benefit from connection with these networks and other entrepreneurial development resources.

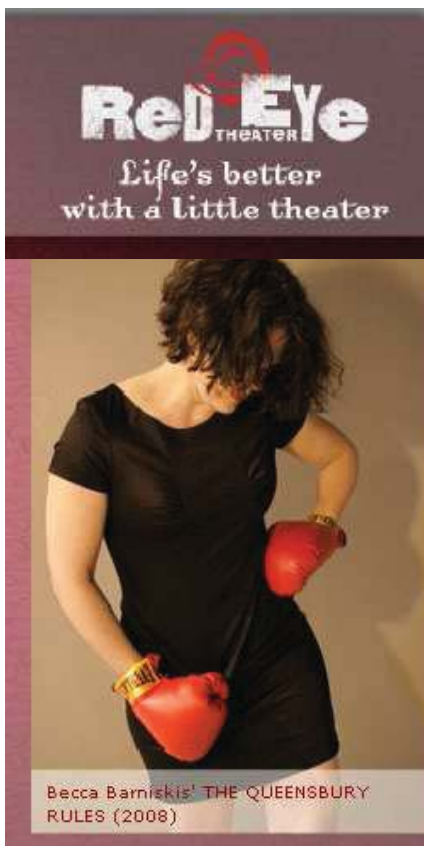
#### 1.5 Identify Funding for Creative Enterprises -

Outline an investment plan to guide efforts to support economic development activities. Other innovative incubators and micro-venture financing programs have started up in the city. These need to be easily available to Loring Park residents, entrepreneurs and students.

#### 1.6 Develop Infrastructure for Creative Enterprise -

Take steps to welcome and support creative people and enterprises, especially creative professionals, through the comprehensive development of amenities and services that support their lifestyles and creative enterprises. This includes:

- a. **Incubator Space.** Incentivize the development of “third places” for working, meeting and networking. With a wealth of institutions that support the development of creative talents such as MCTC, Dunwoody, University of St. Thomas, and others, an area such as Harmon Place would be ideal for development of an active hub or incubator for creative enterprises.
- b. **Housing and Home Office Options.** Provide a range of housing options that are affordable and attractive to self-employed creative sector workers and for those that work in creative professions within major downtown businesses.
- c. **Conducive Working Environment.** Sustain efforts to attract a specific set of daily services that support home-based businesses and gathering places with walkable retail and dining areas. A local grocery and extended hours among



casual dining establishments also support the self-employed. Continue to support private and public efforts to provide universal internet access for all community members that is seamless, wireless, fast, reliable and affordable.

**1.7 Serve and Connect Students** - Foster more presence and traffic of MCTC, St. Thomas, Dunwoody, and other students as local business customers in the Harmon and Hennepin Avenue areas of Loring Park. These include inexpensive take-out and dine-in establishments, convenience stores, coffee shops, and copy shops. Programs or events that network students with professionals will support both local retail/restaurant development and longer-term entrepreneurial activities.







## Activating Public Places

Loring Park Neighborhood is unique, but also holds within it the storied heritage of Minneapolis and critical lessons about our diverse and developing culture. Loring Park provides a range of indoor and outdoor spaces for virtually every celebration and major life transition. Cultures of the world are represented, and educational opportunities extend horizons for many. Marketplaces are both macro and micro. Tens of thousands gather for art fairs in the Park and for boat shows in the Convention Center. Client and designer meet at a Loring Park coffee shop as well as do the broker, retired investor and student.

Connecting the many major regional cultural institutions within and around Loring Park neighborhood, along with the multitude of activities within the Park, is more of a challenge than it might seem. They each draw well-established or specialized clientele who most often visit for a singular purpose. The significant assets of these many institutions and events have not been fully leveraged towards enhancement of Loring Park's economy, safety, livability, and reputation.

## Recommendations

### 1.8 Promote a Culture of Walking and Interaction in Public Spaces

– In accordance with *Chapter 4: Public Realm*, the promotion of activities that encourage walking, such as the tours (below) and professional and social groups that sponsor lunch-time or after-work outings, can increase traffic in public spaces. In turn, greater pedestrian activity increases public safety and promotes good health. Campaigns that encourage people to greet passersby or to have ambassadors present in high traffic areas can create positive momentum towards a safe and friendly environment. Walking can be both a convenience and an enjoyable pastime. Portions of Loring Park on Hennepin, Harmon, or Nicollet may become future extension areas for the D.I.D. and their street ambassadors. Coordinating activities with the Convention Center and public information center can encourage more pedestrian activities in Loring (See *Chapter 4: Public Realm*). Likewise, Walker Art Center’s Open Field program during the summer months may bring people and activity across Hennepin Avenue.

**1.9 Develop and Implement Way-finding Master Plan** – In support of the activities listed above, develop a unified plan for improved way-finding throughout public spaces. (see also related policy 1.2 *Priority Locations for Public Art & Public Art Plan*) This could be executed in collaboration with efforts to coordinate Hennepin Avenue cultural organizations or other entities to achieve goals of bringing downtown and Convention Center visitors through Loring Park Neighborhood to the Walker /Sculpture Garden, and is consistent with the goals of Downtown 2025. This will also assist in focusing commuters such as bicyclists from points south and west through desired routes.

**1.10 Support and Grow Community Events** - Major defining events such as the Twin Cities Pride Festival and the Loring Park Art Festival provide opportunities to connect people with the wide range of assets in and around Loring Park. Events organized by local residents, businesses, and nonprofits are very important for building social bonds within the neighborhood, introducing visitors to the area through safe and enjoyable activities, and building business for



*Citizens on their walkabout, discussing issues during the Discovery Workshop in October of 2010. Citizens were asked to record and report important issues in one of four focus areas: Loring Park Edge, Neighborhood Perimeter, Harmon Place, and Nicollet Avenue.*



*Dog Parade during National Night Out on the Loring Greenway, 2010.*

local merchants and restaurateurs. An Eat Street Chef's Challenge or other cooking events would strengthen the Nicollet area. Other annual events, including National Night Out, Community Sings, Love Loring, and more, make it an active place to live and visit. Stronger ties between local organizations, such as those described in following sections (*see section Strengthening Organization & Promotion later in this chapter*), can bring more crossover audiences and create safer pedestrian connections.

**1.11 Step up Walking Tours** – Utilizing emerging smart phone technologies pioneered locally in places such as the Walker Art Center, establish an array of group or individual (self-guided) walking and/or bike tours. Possibilities include...

- i. Loring Park & Gardens
- ii. The Churches of Loring
- iii. Historic Harmon Place (Four Wheels to Two Wheels)
- iv. GLBT Heritage/Pride
- v. Loring Park History
- vi. Native American Heritage
- vii. Mansions/Loring Hill

**1.12 Coordinate Institutional Open House(s)** – Develop annual or perhaps seasonal community-wide open houses. They could be themed to allow community members a chance to see the full richness of the great interior architecture, variety of activities, and important art housed throughout the neighborhood in civic and religious institutions, businesses and homes – while simultaneously getting people out and about in their neighborhood. These could be marketed regionally as a means to promote the experience of living or visiting the neighborhood. An open house could be timed for the Loring Park Art Festival, to cross-promote Loring to the audiences of its multiple institutions, and may be in connection with specific events planned with the Convention Center.

**1.13 Create Interactive Map(s)** – In support of all activities listed above, and based on the coordinated calendar (*See related policy 1.15*), publish through smart phones and online platforms an illustrated and interactive map with descriptions of the neighborhood



*View from southwest corner of Loring Park of Walker Art Center across the Hennepin Lyndale Civic Corridor.*

and upcoming activities. This would augment themed tours and provide a way for community members and visitors to learn about the neighborhood and to orient visitors to important locations. Coordinate this work with the City, Convention Center, Hennepin Avenue Cultural Corridor, and other downtown organizations.

The buildings and properties shown in color below illustrate the diverse range of public and cultural amenities, gathering places and commercial destinations already in place within and immediately adjacent to the neighborhood. The development of policies and tools that strengthen and connect these assets is of great importance to the community.

**Figure 1-B**

## **Map of Existing Cultural Assets**





## Strengthening Organization & Promotion

Loring Park is full of cultural, social, religious, and educational organizations and venues of all sizes. Each is fully engaged with its own audiences, constituents, and members. And, while most participate in CLPC and significant events such as Pride, they lack a network among them to coordinate activities, engage in joint promotions, or discover other mutual benefits. Some report that safety concerns or lack of familiarity with the area prevent their visitors from taking advantage of other resources nearby.

### **Recommendations**

**1.14 Develop Inter-Organizational Network** - Support a network of cultural/event presenters to coordinate, information-sharing, joint marketing, and possible development of new neighborhood-wide activities. Leverage this planning network to form the basis of a Loring network that produces events, such as Open Houses (*See policy 1.12 Coordinate Institutional Open House*), to encourage visitors to take advantage of more activities and services in the neighborhood on a more 18/7 or 24/7 basis.

**1.15 Produce a Calendar of Programs for Loring’s Public Spaces** – Develop a twelve-month schedule for public spaces to better serve and connect festivals and events with business corridors, parks and open spaces. Such a coordinated planning tool could include a matrix of neighborhood-wide events taking place in public spaces, to help reduce overlaps, increase community participation and to increase the level of activity during winter months. This should list *passive* activities, such as street vendors, and *organized* activities such as concerts, art exhibits and major events at the convention center.

**1.16 Continue Support for CLPC Organizational Activities** – Develop and fund prioritized action steps, led by CLPC, in support of implementation of the recommendations outlined in this chapter.



**1.17 Consider Formation of an Arts Business District in Loring Village** – Explore development of an arts, culture and heritage-focused business district with support from the City’s CPED and possibly in conjunction with the Convention Center, Eat Street, and Hennepin Avenue. Work with the City to distinguish the nature and focus on the Loring arts business district from those in other parts of the city such as Northeast, Lyn-Lake, 38<sup>th</sup> and Chicago, Prospect Park, and others.



## Diverse People, Places & Opportunities

The hallmark of many stable American communities is diversity. Loring is no different: diversity of lifestyle, place of worship, taste in food, places to gather. Loring Park's diversity is a critical element of its success and is repeatedly voiced as a reason people often stay in the neighborhood once they move here. Loring Park is a temporary place for some, but a long-time or lifelong home for many. As family sizes, ages, and ethnicity change over the next twenty years, one aspect of the Neighborhood people wish to remain the same is its welcoming, inclusive nature, its diversity.

### **Recommendations**

**1.18 A Place for All Individuals & Families** - Continue to explore ways to make the Neighborhood more marketable and affordable to families of all types, sizes and income levels by supporting the development of a full range of housing choices, services, schools, and institutions in the neighborhood (or within a convenient distance) to serve its diverse residents.

**1.19 Retail Opportunities** – Food, clothing, and specialty items familiar to immigrants and diverse cultures are important in a welcoming community. Small storefronts affordable for start-ups

and small family-owned retailers are important infrastructure for a vibrant neighborhood. Mixed-use retail spaces like many ethnic enclaves on Lake Street, for instance, are a way to accommodate diverse offerings. Create synergies between Loring arts organizations and local retail through marketing partnerships.

**1.20 Religious Institutions** – Established religious institutions increasingly share space with newer congregations serving diverse cultural groups or immigrant communities. Some meet in alternative public or private spaces. Accommodating new groups who seek space for religious activities is in keeping with Loring Park’s long-established identity.



*The sanctuary of Central Lutheran Church, located at the east end of the Loring Park Neighborhood adjacent to the Minneapolis Convention Center.*

**1.21 Modes of Transportation** – Access to other parts of the city via public transportation for work, shopping, and recreation is a promising attribute of Loring Park and important for supporting an affordable environment for families and people without cars.

**1.22 Public Spaces** – Safe sidewalks and street crossings that provide access to a full range of street-level retail, work places, gathering places, entertainment, gathering, parks and green spaces are a unique characteristic of the neighborhood that can be made even stronger.

