

The West Broadway Area Business Committee met at Cookie Cart on November 30, 2017 to discuss priorities for the group and sessions to include in the future. Opinions were captured through a variety of formats, including small group discussion, dot preference activities, and large group conversations.

Challenges and Assets along West Broadway

Committee members wrote on Post-It notes factors that were challenging on West Broadway as well as things that make West Broadway, and North Minneapolis more broadly, great. They then placed the notes on a spectrum of either challenges or assets. Most common themes:

Challenges:

Crime and Safety: general public safety concerns, violence, and police relations

Development: vacancy rates on the corridor, lack of business mix, development without displacement

Assets:

Community pride: strong commitment to the Northside, entrepreneurial spirit

Traffic*: draws in customers, major intersections, transportation

Business and Development: growing business clusters to attract more shoppers, social enterprises

*While traffic bring more people to the area, the design of the intersections and corridor should accommodate pedestrians in the area. Broadway and Lyndale is one of the most dangerous intersections in the city, and it doesn't feel safe to walk because of the current traffic

Visioning West Broadway in 20 years

Common themes:

More development along the corridor with basic services and amenities: restaurants, diverse retail mix, arts, and entertainment. "I don't need to leave North unless I want to".

Development without displacement and local ownership of business properties

Business Resources Most Interested In (*We want to know what other types of services businesses are interested in so that we can make informed referrals*)

Expanding Business Operations

Social Media/Marketing

Applying for City of Minneapolis contract services

WBC Activities Most Interested In

Q&A with government officials

Networking

Policy discussion

Biggest Challenges Facing Business

Workforce and finding qualified employees It would be helpful to have a mentorship program for youth or better connections with business owners and existing programs

The look of the avenue Restrictions on building height and kind of development adds to chaotic feel of corridor. Would like to see more mixed-use development

Renting retail space Hard to get established businesses to move to North Minneapolis, and smaller businesses don't have the capital to move into these spaces

What can WBC do to best support businesses and the corridor as a whole?

Facilitate relationships with employers and mentorship programs

Connect business owners with City staff and resources

Market the corridor as a whole