

Lowry Hill East Neighborhood Association Strategic Plan 2019-2020 DRAFT

****The final draft will include visuals, plan development explainer,
an appendix of survey data, and updated formatting.****

The Lowry Hill East Neighborhood Association mission is to provide a structure for neighborhood leadership and participation to promote shared resources and a vision for the neighborhood.

The Neighborhood

The Lowry Hill East Neighborhood is named after Thomas Lowry, a leader in the development of rapid mass transit who installed the horse-drawn street cars that first ran along the neighborhood in the 1880s. The neighborhood is most often referred to as The Wedge because of its boundaries – Lyndale, Hennepin, and Lake – forming the shape of a wedge.

The Wedge began as one of the first suburbs for the expanding downtown in the 1880s and 1890s. Many of these original Victorian homes still exist as both single and multi-family homes. Renters and homeowners alike cherish the beauty and history of these original buildings – one stretch along Bryant Avenue is a historic district and provides a glimpse into the enduring legacy of famed architect T.P. Healy. Over time, modern apartments have replaced some of the older mansions; most recently, there has been significant expansion of the residential housing along the business corridors and the Greenway that has enlivened these areas. At the heart of the neighborhood lies Mueller Park, named after brothers Robert and Herbert, residents and environmental stewards who served as natural historians of the neighborhood. The park was the result of the dedicated efforts of residents organized through LHENA who moved into the neighborhood in the 1970s to restore the aging, though still beautiful, housing stock and who raised their children alongside college students, artists, and musicians (most famously, The Replacements).

Today, the neighborhood remains a hub for mass transit options, as well as a home to bicycling enthusiasts who make use of the Bryant Ave bicycle boulevard and the Greenway that runs along the southern border of the neighborhood. The Wedge is among the most densely populated neighborhoods in the city of Minneapolis with nearly 7,000 residents living inside one square kilometer (87% of these renters), and business-lined corridors along its borders. This densely compact built environment makes the neighborhood a magnet for people who value the ability to walk or bike to businesses, schools, grocery stores (including the iconic Wedge Co-op, which was started in this neighborhood), medical and veterinary services, restaurants, and nightlife. The Wedge continues to be an exciting and dynamic neighborhood at the forefront of progressive urban living.

Who We Are:

- 4,473 housing units, 84% of which are renter occupied
- 14% of residents are foreign-born
- 34% of residents take public transit, walk, or bike to work
- 58% of residents have a bachelor's degree or higher
- 43% of residents are 25-34 years-old

Source: MN Compass, www.mncompass.org

The Lowry Hill East Neighborhood Association

The Lowry Hill East Neighborhood Association, or LHENA (pronounced 'Lee-Nah'), can trace its history back to the 1970s. At that time, neighbors came together to form an organization to build community, plan home tours, and host ice cream socials. As LHENA was the hub of neighborhood activity, it even started one of the city's first neighborhood newspapers. *The Wedge* was a multi-page newspaper fielding advertisements from local businesses and stories from volunteer writers. The success of this paper and the founding of a neighborhood association inspired the creation of many others in the city. Though the last paper was published in 2012, LHENA continues to evolve in the age of social media and is still the center of neighborhood news and activities.

Today, all residents, property owners, and business owners in Lowry Hill East are considered LHENA members and can take part in official association acts such as board member elections and committee votes. Lead by a volunteer board of 11 members, the association helps communicate goings-on around the neighborhood and city, provides resources to members, facilitates civic forums, and assists members in championing projects. A majority of the work occurs in dedicated committees where members brainstorm, design, and execute initiatives.

As funding and asks of LHENA have changed, so to have the foci of the organization. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the neighborhood developed Neighborhood Revitalization Program priorities, and throughout the 2010s, it created Community Participation Program priority plans. Noting the strengths and weaknesses of these previous plans and processes, the LHENA board has decided to undergo a strategic planning process that will carry us through the end of 2020.



Strategic Plan Development

To be added.

Our Vision

LHENA promotes a sense of belonging in the neighborhood. We continue to lead the City in adopting ideas and launching member-driven initiatives that push our community forward on the following:

- **Diversity and inclusion:** Create a welcoming environment for all, and advocate for equitable systems, processes, and policies.
- **Connecting neighbors:** Serve as a resource for community members to work together, and foster person to person connection in order to build a resilient, caring community.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Enhance and protect the physical environment to ensure a living system that is sustainable, healthy, and verdant.
- **Leadership:** Encourage diverse organizational leadership, and lifts up a multitude of interests, passions, and talents to empower through connections, projects, and partnerships.

Our vision is the lens through which we built and will implement our strategies.

LHENA Strategies for 2019-2020

Projects & Programs. We will be a support system for community-driven projects and programs that positively impact our neighborhood.

1. **Develop an event/program structure** and communications template for member-driven initiatives.
2. **Reallocate NRP funds** based on concerns and ideas raised in the 2019-20 neighborhood strategic plan survey.
3. **Promotion:** Create consistent messaging on ways to participate, the request for funding opportunity, and community ideas for new initiatives.*

Community Engagement. We will provide everyone in the Wedge community opportunities to meaningfully engage and play active roles in the stewardship of the neighborhood.

1. **Accessibility**
 - Assess need for multi-language communications
 - Refine and expand how people can plug into LHENA within every event

- Improve all kinds of diversity in active membership and input
 - Design specific outreach to engage businesses, new residents and unheard groups
2. **Partnerships**
 - Enhance new and current partnerships within and beyond our neighborhood: neighborhood organizations, not-for-profits, neighborhood businesses, educational institutions, City of Minneapolis, Ward 10 office
 - Explore and foster mentorship opportunities to develop more neighborhood leaders
 3. **Increase Organization Visibility**
 - Recruit volunteers and partners through multiple methods: canvassing, social and educational events, varied event times and places, expanded media platforms and effective messaging
 - Promote social enrichment forums: education, arts, history and entertainment
 - Develop a vision of community beyond neighborhood boundaries

Organizational Sustainability. We will seek to improve health and sustainability of the organization's structure and operations.

1. **Financial**
 - Plan and pursue a path to be able to achieve financial independence from the City, which may include seeking grants, participating in socially responsible investing, engaging donors, seeking advertising, and pursuing more fundraising opportunities
 - Engage in the Neighborhoods 2020 discussion and support the City funding of neighborhood organizations
2. **Leadership development**
 - Develop and institutionalize standard trainings for board members, committee chairs, and project leads.
 - Equip LHENA leaders with tools to encourage civil dialogue in LHENA meetings and activities
3. **Relationship management**
 - Implement chosen software platform to assist in member and volunteer contact management and recruitment; assess after six months
 - Assess current grievance policy and examine routes such as conflict mapping or restorative justice models for further conflict resolution refinement
4. **Membership management**

- Define how Jefferson Community School students, families, and teachers - who currently are not members as defined in our by-laws - can participate in LHENA

5. **Purchasing**

- Develop a sustainable purchasing policy

* Below is a list of current and proposed LHENA initiatives, events, and focus areas. The new ideas emerged from the 2019-2020 Strategic Planning listening sessions and surveying.

Current LHENA Events, Initiatives, and Focus Areas

- Feet First Initiative for the promotion of pedestrian lifestyles and safety.
- Zero-Waste Initiative, including organics recycling program for renters
- Community meals
- Seasonal clean-up events
- Neighborhood Get Out The Vote initiative
- Free landlord-tenant and tenant-tenant conflict resolution services
- Sexual assault bystander intervention training
- Haunted Halloween events
- Maud Hart Lovelace Day
- Annual safety workshops with the Minneapolis Police Department
- Native plantings garden along the Midtown Greenway
- Popsicles in the Park
- Community gatherings/socials
- Residential and commercial loan program
- Minneapolis Solar Co-op
- Community Request for Funding programs
- Ice cream social/swap meet
- Game and trivia nights
- Cafe meet-ups
- Annual meeting
- Winter holiday party
- Renters socials

Proposed Events, Initiatives, and Focus Areas

- Ride sharing
- Tree planting
- Community pantries
- Distressed low-income homeowners and renters, and homelessness
- Neighbor-to-neighbor mentorship
- Supporting and engaging local businesses
- Green space and wildlife habitat
- Public community art
- Affordable housing
- Neighborhood history
- Neighborhood conflict
- Mass transit