

**Excerpt from the  
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
Minneapolis Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED)  
Planning Division**

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**MEMORANDUM**

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DATE: June 4, 2008

TO: Steve Poor, Planning Supervisor – Zoning Administrator, Community Planning & Economic Development - Planning Division

FROM: Jason Wittenberg, Supervisor, Community Planning & Economic Development - Planning Division, Development Services

CC: Barbara Sporlein, Director, Community Planning & Economic Development Planning Division

SUBJECT: Planning Commission decisions of June 2, 2008

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The following actions were taken by the Planning Commission on June 2, 2008. As you know, the Planning Commission's decisions on items other than rezonings, text amendments, vacations, 40 Acre studies and comprehensive plan amendments are final subject to a ten calendar day appeal period before permits can be issued:

Commissioners present: Huynh, LaShomb, Nordyke, Norkus-Crampton, Schiff, Tucker and Williams – 7

Not present: President Motzenbecker (excused)

Committee Clerk: Lisa Baldwin (612) 673-3710

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**6. The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth (Ward: Citywide), ([Karin Berkholtz](#)).**

**A. Plan:** Considering adoption of The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth, subject to the review of the Metropolitan Council.

**Action:** The City Planning Commission recommended that the City Council adopt and **approve** submittal of the City's new comprehensive plan, The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth, to the Metropolitan Council for review, including the following changes:

1. Staff is to continue revising the growth projections.
2. Accept the TMP Modifications to Complement New Policy 10.23 as proposed by Commissioners Lara Norkus-Crampton and Lauren Huynh as follows:

**A. Minor modification and clarification to existing language**

1. Executive Summary

- i. Page 10 – Replace title heading "Educated and Involved People" with title heading "Literacy"
- ii. Page 12 under title heading "Transportation Access" – Revise last sentence to state "The City sets the example for others through its business practices, featuring low-emitting fuel efficient vehicles in its motor vehicle fleet, for example."
- iii. Page 14 under title heading "Livable Neighborhoods" – Revise last sentence to state "Important priorities include improving public safety, preservation, and equal access to community facilities, such as schools and libraries."

**B. Policy clarification regarding uniform application of Sustainable/Winter Cities/  
Climate Sensitive Design Practices**

1. Land Use Chapter

- i. Page 16, Amend Policy 1.12.4 to state, "Discourage uses that diminish the transit and pedestrian character of Activity Centers, such as automobile services, surface parking lots, and drive-through facilities."
- ii. Page 16, Add Policy 1.12.10 to state, "Encourage developments to incorporate climate sensitive site and building design practices."
- iii. Page 18, Amend Policy 1.13.3 to state, "Discourage uses that diminish the transit and pedestrian character of areas around transit stations, such as automobile services, surface parking lots, and drive-through facilities."

2. Transportation Chapter

- i. Page 7, Amend Policy 2.5.4 to state, "Implement and expand zoning regulations and incentives that promote bicycling, such as secured storage for bikes near building entrances, storage lockers, and changing and shower facilities."
- ii. Page 7, Add Policy 2.5.8 to state, "Incorporate bike parking into all street furniture configurations."
- iii. Page 8, Amend Policy 2.6.3 to state, "Implement strategies, such as preferential and discounted parking for low-emitting fuel efficient vehicles, car- and vanpooling, low-emitting fuel efficient taxi services, and car sharing

programs, that increase vehicle occupancy and reduce the number of single occupancy vehicles."

iv. Page 14, Amend Policy 2.10.4 to state, "Improve the pedestrian environment Downtown to ensure it is a safe, enjoyable, and accessible place to walk. Encourage strategies such as wider sidewalks for pedestrian movement, trees, landscaping, and street furniture, improved transit facilities, additional bicycle facilities, and on-street parking and other curb-side uses."

### 3. Economic Development Chapter

i. Page 13, Amend Policy 4.13.2 to state, "Encourage existing Downtown buildings to retrofit using sustainable design practices, including energy efficiency, additional green space, and bicycle facilities."

### 4. Environment Chapter

i. Page 4, Amend Policy 6.2.7 to state, "Promote the development of sustainable site and building standards."

ii. Page 4, Amend Policy 6.3.5 to state, "Support the development of sustainable site and building standards on a citywide basis."

iii. Page 5, Amend Policy 6.3.9 to state, "Develop regulations to further reduce the heat island effect in the city by increasing green urban spaces for parks and open spaces, including shading of parking lots, sidewalks, and other impervious surfaces, promoting installation and maintenance of green roofs and utilization of highly reflective roofing and paving materials."

iv. Page 5, Add Policy 6.3.10 to state, "Promote climate sensitive site and building design practices."

v. Page 9, Amend Policy 6.9.7 to state, "Preserve and enhance the strategic placement of pervious surfaces within the city to decrease the rate and volume of stormwater runoff."

### 5. Open Spaces & Parks Chapter

i. Page 12, Amend Policy 7.6.1 to state, "Where open spaces and the built environment interface, seek greater design integration between them to create interesting spaces for active and passive use."

ii. Page 12, Amend Policy 7.6.6 to state, "Promote open space design that enhances the four season experience for all Minneapolis residents and visitors."

### 6. Heritage Preservation Chapter

i. Page 10, Amend title heading to state "Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle"

ii. Page 10, Amend last sentence in first paragraph to state, "...Applying the ethic of "reduce, reuse, and recycle" to buildings with the goal of neighborhood revitalization can have positive results for Minneapolis communities, the natural environment, and society."

iii. Page 10, Amend last sentence in last paragraph to state, "...At any time during the process of reducing, reusing or recycling of buildings, documentation of the structure could also take place."

iv. Page 11, Amend Policy title heading to state, "Policy 8.7: Create a regulatory framework and consider implementing incentives to support the ethic of "reduce, reuse, and recycle" and revitalization for buildings and neighborhood."

## 7. Arts and Culture Chapter

i. Page, 4, Amend Policy 9.2.2 to state, "Recruit people of color and diverse geography into cultural leadership roles."

## 8. Urban Design Chapter

i. Page 2, Amend the first text paragraph to state, "Our urban form also reflects the fact that Minneapolis is a Winter City. Utilizing climate sensitive design strategies adapted to our northern environment can create and enhance year round urban livability by making the winter environment more safe, comfortable and enjoyable at the pedestrian realm. Snow removal for safety and active winter transportation (walking and biking), minimizing the shadowing of pedestrian spaces used in the wintertime, as well as landscaping for winter visual interest and wind screening are important.

ii. Page 5, Amend Policy 10.2.8 to state, "Coordinate site designs and public right-of-way improvements to provide adequate sidewalk space for pedestrian movement, street trees, landscaping, street furniture, sidewalk cafes and other elements of active pedestrian areas."

iii. Page 13, Amend Policy 10.9.4 to state, "Coordinate site designs and public right-of-way improvements to provide adequate sidewalk space for pedestrian movement, street trees, landscaping, street furniture, sidewalk cafes and other elements of active pedestrian areas."

iv. Page 14, Amend the first sentence of the second paragraph to state, "Successful commercial buildings and areas attract pedestrians by bringing their storefronts close to the sidewalk's edge, providing adequate sidewalk space for pedestrian movement and four season amenities, orienting building design to the street, and respecting traditional urban form by keeping building heights to a level that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood."

v. Page 15, Amend Policy 10.10.1 to state, "Enhance the city's commercial districts by encouraging appropriate building forms and designs, historic preservation objectives, site plans that enhance the pedestrian environment, and by maintaining high quality four season public spaces and infrastructure."

vi. Page 16, Amend Policy 10.11.4 to state, "Maximize the year round potential for public transit, biking, and walking in new developments.

vii. Page 18, Amend the first sentence under **Public Spaces** to state, "Public spaces in Winter Cities are successful when they are designed with people in mind for year round use."

- viii. Page 19, Amend Policy 10.14.6 to state, "Develop public plaza standards that give specific guidance on preferred design and maintenance of seating, lighting, landscaping and other amenities utilizing climate sensitive design principles."
- ix. Page 20, Amend Policy 10.16.2 to state, "Provide streetscape amenities, including street furniture, trees, and landscaping, that buffer pedestrians from auto traffic, parking areas, and winter elements."
- x. Page 22, Amend Policy 10.17 title heading to state, "Provide sufficient lighting to reflect community character, to provide a comfortable environment in a northern city and promote environmentally friendly lighting systems."
- xi. Page 22, Amend Policy 10.17.1 to state, "Provide high-quality lighting fixture designs that are appropriate to street types and land use, and that provide pedestrian friendly illumination, but minimize glare and dark sky conditions, and other unnecessary light pollution."
3. To designate 38th St E and 4th Ave S as a Neighborhood Commercial Node in the 2008 update to the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth, to include the following properties: 3744, 3753, 3759, 3800, 3801, and 3810 4<sup>th</sup> Ave S; and 330, 343, 345, and 411 38<sup>th</sup> St E.
4. To expand the boundaries of the 38th St E and Chicago Ave Neighborhood Commercial Node shown in the draft 2008 update to the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth to include the following properties: 3641, 3649, 3701, 3705, 3715, 3644, 3710 Chicago Ave and 730 E 38<sup>th</sup> St.
5. Page 14, add 1.11.7 to encourage the redevelopment of vacant commercial buildings and direct City services to these areas.

Staff Berkholtz presented the staff report.

President Tucker opened the public hearing.

Michael Katch (3737 12<sup>th</sup> Ave S): There are a couple of amendments here that I would like to see to the plan just as a note. In the housing section, we talked about Metropolitan median income; it should say "the seven county metropolitan area median income" rather than "metropolitan median income." It is an unclear statement. It also uses this term in 3.4, that one where they talk about low income housing. Within sustainability we talked a great deal about low income housing and affordable housing, but nothing has talked about neighborhood gentrification or above market rate housing or actually housing to attract people from the suburbs at \$6.00 and \$8.00 a gallon for gasoline, hopefully we'll get some of those who want to pay more. We have a map here on affordable housing density that we're not showing in within a density map where we're going to increase the density of people who have means whether we are so focused on building affordable housing that we're not looking at neighborhood revitalization quite as much. My friend that lives down by the Greenway would possibly agree with me on some of this that we need to have both rich and poor living in every neighborhood in Minneapolis and not just in some neighborhoods in Minneapolis. Within this density map you can see there is large areas that have no affordable housing whereas you have neighborhoods...we can talk about the gentrification developments on Franklin Ave that have made Franklin Ave safe to walk on at night that we don't seem to have anywhere else. The Minneapolis Plan spends too much time talking about affordability and not

enough time about sustainability of neighborhoods and the building of neighborhoods. That's all I've got.

Council Member Glidden (8<sup>th</sup> Ward): I want to thank Planning staff for all the work they've done to put together this document. They've been really generous in answering my questions and those of my residents. I had two issues I wanted to bring to your attention and I want to thank Commissioner Schiff for agreeing to bring forward some motions that relate to these, they are kind of neighborhood specific. One is a little more substantive; there is a recommendation in the plan that relates to neighborhood commercial nodes, nodes to retain and nodes to take away that designation. One of the current neighborhood commercial nodes where there is a recommendation to take away that designation is the corner of 38<sup>th</sup> St E and 4<sup>th</sup> Ave S. We met with Paul Mogush about this. This is a neighborhood commercial node that's on the boundaries of Central and Bryant neighborhoods and one of the most immediate, very large institutional partners is Sabathani Community Center just to the west of that corner. Both of the neighborhoods, as well as Sabathani, express strong concern about taking away that designation, taking away potential resources that we have an issue with that neighborhood commercial node, that there are some vacant parcels on there but yet it's also the home of one of our most successful businesses, the Spokesman Recorder, as well as a Minneapolis Urban League south office. My request on behalf of those neighborhoods who are not here, I know that the staff person from Central was here for a long time and I think he had to leave for childcare reasons, is that that be added back in as part of the plan. The second motion is a little bit more technical and that's just increasing the boundaries of the neighborhood commercial node for 38<sup>th</sup> and Chicago. I think there was some confusion or dispute about what should be those boundaries and we have worked with staff to make sure that all of the existing commercial properties are mentioned now within the motion that's coming forward by Commissioner Schiff.

President Tucker closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Tucker: Let me just start off by moving that we approve the submittal of the City's new Comprehensive Plan (Norkus-Crampton seconded). I know we have a number of amendments already prepared. Let me start with the first one that staff asked me to bring forward and Karin talked about that and that's to direct staff to continue revising the growth projections (Norkus-Crampton seconded).

The amendment was adopted 7-0.

Commissioner Tucker: Commissioners Norkus-Crampton and Huynh did a very fine reading of the text to find a couple of technical changes and also talk about climate sensitive design. Commissioner Huynh, did you want to introduce this?

Commissioner Huynh: I believe that all of you should have received the revised amendments to the new policy, the new draft that we received in our folder today. Basically, the modifications that Commissioner Norkus-Crampton and I are proposing are outlined in red on this four page handout. Basically, the modifications that we're proposing are just clarification to the language that looks at allowing more flexibility in terms of sustainability such as instead of saying "hybrid vehicles" you say "low emitting fuel efficient vehicles" to allow more types of vehicles in case city staff or the public wants to address alternative modes of transportation and also look at climate sensitive design features. I also just wanted to thank Karin and Haila Maze in terms of meeting with us on these issues here and incorporating a lot of our changes and understanding the importance of sustainability and looking at climate sensitive issues. I believe that Commissioner Norkus-Crampton is going to address more of the climate sensitive issues, but in terms of sustainability, it's really important for the Minneapolis Plan to start fine-tuning, in terms of the language, the future growth of Minneapolis, not just looking at where we are now but projected growth, where we want to be in terms of fuel efficiency in terms of alternative modes of

transportation and I believe that this language that we have looked at, amending the policy starts to incorporate that.

Commissioner Norkus-Crampton: It's been quite an honor to be on the Planning Commission while all these small area plans, the Comprehensive Plan, I always say that these are 100 year decisions because the things we're doing now, maybe this plan is good for ten years but the decisions we're making now are setting things in motion that are going to have long-term ramifications for the City. I appreciate the clarity and the readability of this plan because I think that if a plan is going to be used, it's going to be usable, it's going to get you where you want to go, it has to be user friendly. I think the goals should be explicit and not implicit. I think what we've seen here and what we've tried to elaborate on is that we have the overall policies and then we have the implementation strategies and then the rationale for those strategies and how they tie back into the policy. You have the goals and the strategies all tied in together and I think that's really important for any plan to be successful. One of the things that I've been very interested in for a while and we've been talking about this at Committee of the Whole we had is just the idea that for Minneapolis, the elephant sitting in the living room is that we have very long winters that affect the perceived livability of our city. There has been ongoing conversations, conferences, things like that to talk about how do you make a winter city more livable, how do you make it more friendly and how do you make the public realm which is so critical to all the sustainability things that we're talking about whether it's getting people to take the bus, getting people to walk, winter biking, just getting them outside to enjoy our natural amenities as well as our commercial amenities, places like these commercial nodes where if everybody is driving out to the Mall of America that's not exactly building the city you want to build, you need people to get out. So how can you make that more friendly and make that more usable for people? That's what we try to talk about here. For the winter city stuff and also the whole idea of climate sensitive design, the idea that using architectural features, using Urban Planning features, massing buildings in certain ways that you can eliminate some of the winds that make it so unbearable to be on the streets, try to deal with shadowing issues and be sensitive to that. In effect, you're trying to create microclimates all over your city so that way you can encourage people to be out more and enjoy the city more. Some of the language that we've just added here, especially in the urban design chapter, just basically applies the winter city goals and just sort of adds them into...to add a more four season approach to some of the suggestions for the pedestrian realm. I think the more successful our pedestrian realms are on a four season basis, the more sustainable and the more successful we'll be as a city. We'll move the amendment of the revised policies listed here on the handout we have.

President Tucker: That which is highlighted in red are the actual changes to the draft.

Commissioner Norkus-Crampton: The actual amendments are in red so it's not the entire text. We're trying to put it in a context so it makes sense.

Commissioner Nordyke seconded the motion.

President Tucker: Any further discussion? All those in favor? Opposed?

The amendment was adopted 7-0.

Commissioner Schiff: I'm thankful to my colleague Council Member Glidden for bringing the changes in the neighborhood commercial nodes to my attention. I had missed some of the dramatic effects that would happen with these changes until she brought them to my attention. I'm wondering if I can start with our staff; do we have a list of the number of neighborhood commercial districts that are being dropped off the map and which ones are being added? I've spotted several that are new but I'm wondering if you have a list that you could go over right now with us. This is an area that needs a lot of focus. There is a huge problem with vacant

commercial buildings in the city of Minneapolis. So many of them go back to the city's origins, to the city's streetcar days. They are some of the original buildings built out of the farmland. About fifteen years ago we embarked on a mistake in policy; there was a study done by the city about what to do with all these vacant commercial buildings that are throughout low income neighborhoods predominantly. The conclusion of the study was that there are too many of them and we should ignore them. We started do designate which ones were official and which ones were not official and we would target money and resources towards the ones that are official. That's the unstated element of what's in the plan here today. The city Economic Development office funds certain grant programs, certain loan programs and targets them to be officially designated commercial nodes. If you're not on the list and you've got a vacant building, like 38<sup>th</sup> and Bloomington, it's going to stay there for a long time if you're not eligible for any city assistance. I think it should be the opposite of what we've been doing. We should be targeting our resources towards these vacant buildings; they shouldn't go away, we shouldn't turn our back on them, we should prioritize them for redevelopment so that these vacant buildings can become contributing. The fact that so many of these buildings are located in low income neighborhoods is a matter of economic justice for these residents to get access to the retail services that they need and so often you can't even buy basic staples of life in a low income neighborhood. What I want to do is move the amendments by Council Member Glidden which would add back the 38<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Ave S as a neighborhood commercial node and also specifying the properties 3744, 3753, 3759, 3800, 3801 and 3810 4<sup>th</sup> Ave S as well as 330, 343, 345, 411 and 38<sup>th</sup> St E as part of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup> commercial node. Also, expand the boundaries of the 38<sup>th</sup> and Chicago Ave node to include the properties of 3641, 3649, 3701, 3705, 3715, 3644 and 3710 Chicago and 730 E 38<sup>th</sup> St. I'm going to ask staff which other areas of the city have dropped off. I know in southwest several new commercial nodes have been placed on the map and I see some on Bloomington Ave that have been removed and these are the areas that need our resources. I'll wait to move my next motion until after these get adopted (Nordyke seconded).

Chair Tucker: Moved and seconded, other discussion? All in favor? Opposed?

The amendment was adopted 7-0.

Commissioner Schiff: The next one, on page 14, is under our policies on neighborhood commercial nodes and this gets right to the heart of the issue because we have so many vacant and commercial buildings in the city of Minneapolis. I want to add a new policy number of 1.11.7 which would be to encourage the redevelopment of vacant commercial buildings and direct city services towards these areas (Norkus-Crampon seconded).

Commissioner Norkus-Crampton: When you look at some of the traditional streetcar intersection buildings, they're lovely buildings and they're really built to stand. That they are still standing despite all the neglect kind of points to their sustainability and I think that some of the really interesting creative projects that we've seen come before us are projects that have either reused buildings or incorporated them into more development so I think that anything we can do...it would be very hard to build a quality...at least structurally in a lot of these buildings that we do today so I fully support the amendment.

Chair Tucker: Other comments? All in favor? Opposed?

The amendment was adopted 7-0.

Commissioner LaShomb: What I would ask is kind of a work direction to staff is to work with the gentleman to see if there are language changes that can be made to accommodate his concerns. I kind of agree with him about the issue of sustainability of existing communities and I don't know if those amendments are covered somewhere in there but what I'd like to do is make sure that between now and when this goes to Zoning and Planning that he gets a response back as to

whether there is some language that could be added or why his concerns are being addressed somewhere else because I think they are legitimate.

President Tucker: Is that a motion or direction?

Commissioner Tucker: Just a work direction.

Staff Sporlein: I do believe there are policies that are supportive to the issues that he brought up and I think if we just go through it with him and point those out and if there is something more we can do between now and when [tape unclear].

Commissioner Schiff: Seven years ago the City Council adopted policies to encourage and to give bonus points in the evaluation of affordable housing projects that are not in concentrated high poverty districts and as a result of that, because affordable housing takes several years to develop, for the first time last year the majority of new affordable housing units in the city of Minneapolis that were developed with city assistance were developed in neighborhoods that are not impacted and neighborhoods that are not already the source of concentrated poverty so we're moving in the right direction.

President Tucker: Any other additions to the main motion? If not, we have an approval of the submittal of the new Comprehensive Plan with amendments on climate sensitive design and expanding some commercial nodes and encourage redevelopment of vacant commercial and...I think it's just those five. Any further discussion on approval of the submittal?

Commissioner LaShomb: I was one of the legislative lobbyists who was there when they did the land planning act amendments in about '96 or '97 and I remember a lot of cities who said that you can't do Comp Plans because they're too expensive and you'll get nothing but trouble and all this other stuff. I remember my good friend, who now works for the City of Minneapolis, Gene Ranieri, he had to go to the capital and make these statements to legislators who weren't all impressed with her point of view and I think it was one of the best pieces of legislation that came out of my time in metropolitan government for the very reason that it's very important for cities to stop and look at what the world is and not let their zoning dictate what the city is supposed to look like. The way I would round this all out is to say it's good public policy and I think our staff represented the importance of that policy very well in the whole discussion and you're to be congratulated for taking on a major assignment, which in the long run I think you're right; this is a hundred year issue, what happens in this ten years or however long this is, is going to have a dramatic affect on what Minneapolis looks like long after I'm gone.

Staff Sporlein: This is about two years worth of work and it was a pretty major decision to do it in house. Part of the reason we decided to do that is because some of the largest users in addition to the current public and future public are the people that are designing city programs and services, working on capital improvement programming, working on legislative agendas and we really wanted them to be a part of this so that they understood the policies, the vision we're trying to achieve and get some buy-in so when these tough decisions are made. I also want to point out that during economic slower times, planning and plan implementation meaning what our policies are and what our regulations are which flow from those policies, will have a bigger shape on development than any public resources because they're slim these days. We need strategic investments of those resources and really strong policy and I think the document's a good one, I'm really proud of staff, especially Haila and Karin, but the entire staff worked on this, Public Works, Regulatory Services, Police, Fire, you name it. I particularly want to thank the neighborhood groups, all the focus groups in addition to the open houses and workshops and online, we did focus groups, also the Planning Commissioners and City Council were actively engaged from day one on this process so we really appreciate the support. We're not done yet

because we have to go to City Council and then get this to the Met Council and have them approve it and then it's on to implementation. Thanks to everyone.

Commissioner Williams: I'd like to express thanks and appreciation to the staff. I think it's been a remarkable process. It's been one that has involved an appropriate amount of outreach and it's been an engaging process and I think it's showing up in the quality of the product. It's been transparent too. Kudos to you and your staff.

Commissioner Huynh: I'd like to thank Karin and Haila and all the Planning staff that were involved in the Minneapolis Plan but also for allowing for me to participate and have this opportunity to work with staff and other departments in the environment chapter. It's been a huge honor for me since sustainability is such a huge issue and interest to me to make sure that the language that we have in there is exactly how I envision in terms of building practices and site practices and development over time and to be able to allow the flexibility for Minneapolis to grow in the direction it needs to especially with the economy and market and how things are going currently. It's a great document. I'm very pleased where we are right now with the draft. Thank you.

President Tucker: Let me add my congratulations to staff for an excellent and readable report and Comprehensive Plan and for all the citizens who gave their time to review it. All those in favor? Opposed?

The motion carried 7-0.