

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division
Small Area Plan/Comprehensive Plan Amendment

Date: April 20, 2009

Project Name: Lyn-Lake Small Area Plan

Submitted By: CPED Community Planning Division

Planning Staff and Phone: Amanda Arnold, 612-673-3242

Wards: 6 and 10

Neighborhood and Business Organizations:

- Lowry Hill East Neighborhood Association
- Calhoun Area Residents Action Group
- Whittier Alliance
- Lyndale Neighborhood Association
- Lyn-Lake Business Association

Current Minneapolis Plan Designations:

- Activity Center – Lyn-Lake
- Commercial Corridors – Lake Street, Lyndale Ave. S from Franklin Avenue to 31st Street
- Community Corridors – Lyndale Avenue S., south of 31st Street

Background

In early 2008, the Planning Division began work on the Lyn-Lake Small Area Plan, following the adoption of the Uptown Small Area Plan after a two year planning process. Early in the Uptown planning process, a decision was made to follow up the Uptown Small Area Plan with a Lyn-Lake Small Area Plan so that there would be detailed planning guidance for both of these “sister” Activity Centers.

During the Lyn-Lake planning process, City staff worked with a Steering Committee made up of representatives from the four surrounding neighborhoods, the Lyn-Lake Business Association, and the Midtown Greenway Coalition. Council Members Ralph Remington and Robert Lilligren each appointed additional individuals who did not represent specific groups. During the year long development of this plan, five steering committee meetings and four community meetings were held. Other outreach included direct mail, an online survey, regular e-mail updates, a project website, and a total of fourteen updates at regularly held neighborhood and business association meetings.

The 45-day public review period began on February 21, 2009 and ended on April 6, 2009. The draft

plan was discussed at the March 26, 2009, City Planning Commission's Committee of the Whole meeting.

Plan Summary

The primary purpose of the plan is to provide more detailed policy direction for land use and development in the Lyn-Lake area. The plan builds on the existing land use policies in the *Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth* and the *Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan*. The plan focuses on the area surrounding the Lyndale Avenue South and West Lake Street intersection but also speaks to a larger "influence area", a large part of which is addressed in the *Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan*.

The plan development process began with several exercises designed to establish a vision statement that describes the desired character of the area. That statement, which was crafted from public feedback, is:

The Lyn-Lake area highly values its independent and diverse business mix. This colorful destination will be supported and enhanced by encouraging the continued development of a clean, dense, and vibrant district. Lyn-Lake's diversity and urban character is valued; it will continue to be an artsy enclave that serves as a home to a diverse population. It will continue to be a place where people choose to walk, bike, and take transit to enjoy all that the area has to offer.

Principles that guide the plan include the need to:

- Maintain and grow an independent and diverse business mix.
- Promote a clean, safe, pedestrian friendly urban environment.
- Maintain and cultivate a residential and commercial identity that is uniquely Lyn-Lake.
- Support a dense environment with housing options for a variety of incomes and lifestyles.
- Encourage incremental greening through the development of small urban green spaces and environmentally sensitive design.
- Balance the needs of automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian travelers while recognizing the exceptional nearby amenities of the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes and the Midtown Greenway.
- Continue to plan for the parking needs of area businesses, residents, and visitors while balancing the need for a walkable, well developed area.

The plan includes a demographic and real estate market analysis conducted by Joe Urban, Inc. and a series of development case studies and conceptual "build-out" sketches created by Bonestroo, Inc.

The plan contains a series of recommendations designed to strengthen the business core, provide design considerations in the case that rail service is implemented within the Midtown Greenway, further historic preservation efforts, encourage incremental additions of green space, and provide guidance on building scale and design.

Analysis – Major Considerations and Issues

Business Core

The plan is focused on the intersection of West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South which is major destination for shopping and entertainment. The plan speaks to the need for a larger daytime population and stronger business synergy. However, these are issues that are influenced by market forces in addition to land use policies. The land use recommendations support commercial development with a preference for mixed-use development around the intersection of West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South. The plan also contains several recommendations related to the Garfield parking lot, which is publicly owned and could reach its capacity to accommodate “parking credits” purchased by nearby businesses. Recommendations include planning for the development of a ramp and potentially expanding the area in which assessments are issued to support the lot.

Land Use

The land use plan map reflects the principles found in *Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth* and the *Midtown Land Use and Development Plan*, with a few exceptions:

- This plan specifically recommends that the existing fabric and feel of Lyndale Avenue South between West 24th Street and West 26th Street be retained. Several residential structures are found in these blocks. This section of South Lyndale Avenue is a Commercial Corridor, and preservation of housing stock on Commercial Corridors is not typically a priority. However, in this case, the existing fabric is strong and offers a unique opportunity for preservation.
- Alterations to the future land use map in the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan represented in this plan relates to the following areas:
 - Between Colfax and Lyndale Avenues South and between West Lake Street and West 29th Street. Previously parcels not fronting West Lake Street were previously designated for high-density housing. While it is still the desire to have housing along the Midtown Greenway and commercial uses along West Lake Street, these blocks may be redeveloped as part of a larger project in the future that contain both retail and residential uses, and thus they are designated for commercial mixed-use to allow for greater flexibility in design and zoning options.
 - This is also the case on the eastern side of Aldrich Avenue and the western side of Garfield Avenue, between the Midtown Greenway and West 28th Street.
 - This plan changes the previous future land use of the Garfield parking lot from high density residential development adopted in the *Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan* to commercial with a preference for mixed-use.
- This plan does not outline specific residential densities for the parcels on Aldrich and Garfield Avenues that share an alley with parcels that front Lyndale Avenue South, north of West 28th Street. Instead, it designates those parcels as “Urban Neighborhood”, as designation used in the *Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth* to indicate that a variety of densities exist and that existing buildings should be replaced with those of similar density.

Comprehensive Plan Land Use Features

The only proposed change to a land use feature found in the *Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth*, is the expansion of the Activity Center boundary by one block to the north along Lyndale Avenue South to

West 28th Street.

The block of Lyndale Avenue South between the Midtown Greenway and West 28th Street is currently part of a Commercial Corridor. When comparing the existing policies to those that would be in place if the Activity Center boundary was expanded, the following commonalities and differences can be found:

- Commercial Corridor policy supports a mix of uses – such as retail sales, office, institutional, high-density residential and clean low-impact light industrial- where compatible with existing and desired character. Whereas, Activity Center policies encourage a variety of commercial and residential uses that generate activity all day long and into the evening.
- Commercial Corridor policy encourages commercial development, including active use on the ground floor, where Commercial Corridors intersect with other designated corridors. Whereas, Activity Center policies encourage mixed-use buildings, with commercial uses on the ground floor and secure entrances for residential uses. Activity Center policies also specifically support active uses on the ground floors of buildings.
- Commercial Corridor policies discourage uses that diminish the transit and pedestrian character of Commercial Corridors, such as some automobile services and drive-through facilities, where Commercial Corridors intersect other designated corridors. Whereas, Activity Center policies discourage automobile service and drive-through facilities throughout, not just at intersections of corridors.
- Commercial Corridor policy encourages high-density housing along the corridors and medium density housing on properties adjacent to properties on Commercial Corridors. Whereas, Activity Center policy encourages the development of high to very-high density within the boundaries of the Activity Center, and medium to high density housing immediately adjacent to Activity Centers.
- Activity Center policies support other land use and design efforts that Commercial Corridor policies do not specifically support such as district and shared parking facilities and architectural design, building massing and site plans to create or improve public and semi-public spaces.

Staff presents this recommendation because:

- The expansion of the Activity Center can further support the business mix and strengthen Lyn-Lake as a city-wide destination.
- Expanding the boundary of the Activity Center provides stronger support of the addition of the Pedestrian Oriented Overlay district in the added block.
- Both Commercial Corridor and Activity Center policies encourage high density housing. Very high density housing, which is supported by Activity Center policies, is appropriate near the Midtown Greenway where alternate transportation is easily accessible.
- Existing, adopted policy already supports high density housing along the eastern side of Aldrich Avenue South and the western side of Garfield Avenue South.
- Future zoning options in an Activity Center such as C3A would support fewer auto-oriented uses, higher density, and smaller retail spaces.
- The existing uses in this block contain a large mixed-use project, a regional arts destination, and restaurants, all of which are typical of an Activity Center.

- Several of the existing parcels span the distance between Garfield and Lyndale Avenues; so as redevelopment occurs, policies designed for an area verses a corridor may be more appropriate.

Public Comments

During the 45-day public comment period eight letters were received. Since the close of the comment period, staff has made edits to the document to add clarification and address public comments where feasible within the intent of the original drafting of the document. Updated versions of the following chapters: Analysis of Issues, Recommendations, and Implementation are attached. Alterations involving the substance and message of the document are highlighted. In addition, a summary of alterations made since the release of the 45 day public comment period draft is attached.

Future Related Actions

Implementation of the plan recommendations is part of planning staff's 2009 work plan and will likely continue into the future through various partnerships.

- Comprehensive plan changes. This small area plan will be incorporated into the update of the city's comprehensive plan, and its Future Land Use map will be incorporated into the comprehensive plan's citywide Future Land Use map.
- Rezoning study. Zoning changes compatible with this plan's land use recommendations will be made through an upcoming rezoning study.
- Development review. Future development proposals for property in the Lyn-Lake area will require Planning Commission review of development applications such as rezonings, conditional use permits, and site plan review. Thus, the Planning Commission also has a role in the incremental implementation of the plan.

Reference Materials/Attachments

- A summary of the alterations made to the draft after the 45 day public comment period
- Updated drafts of Chapter 4 – Analysis of Issues, Chapter 5 – Recommendations, and Chapter 6 – Implementation.
(The full updated draft can be found at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/Lyn-Lake.asp>)
- Comments received
- Land use map from the *Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan*

RECOMMENDATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – PLANNING DIVISION:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division recommends the City Planning Commission and City Council **approve** the *Lyn-Lake Small Area Plan* and **amend** the policy guidance for the area into the City's comprehensive plan.