



Linden Hills Small Area Plan: Summary of April Community Workshops

On April 24th & 25th two community workshops were held at Southwest High School. Over the two days 109 people participated in the workshops.

The meetings started with a thirty minute presentation which reviewed the results of the February survey and community meeting, a draft vision statement, comprehensive plan policies regarding land use and intensity, existing densities and housing options in Linden Hills.

A copy of the presentation can be found on the project webpage, LHSAP.org or by clicking [here](#).

A draft vision statement for the plan was shared in the presentation and referenced in the breakout sessions. The draft vision is:

Linden Hills is a thriving pedestrian-friendly and sustainable urban village that offers varied housing and commercial choices to meet residents' needs and where new development supports and enhances the existing scale and character of the neighborhood.

Following the presentation participants broke out into groups around four geographic areas to explore the following:

- How new development can respect and maintain the existing character of Linden Hills with respect to location, height, length, and massing
- Ensuring transitions between new development and smaller-scale adjacent properties
- Parking for new businesses and new development
- How infrastructure improvements can insure a vibrant future for Linden Hills

The breakout groups were focused on a specific geography:

- 44th & France business node and surroundings
- 44th & Beard business node and surroundings
- 43rd & Upton business node and surroundings (due to demand we had two tables for this area)
- France Avenue and 44th Street W corridors- focused on transportation and movement

Each small group had a series of maps, block models of buildings, 3D images of the existing areas, and other aerial images to use to explore the topics.

The following is brief overview of themes that came from the various conversations at all the geographies. After this overview there is a more detailed summary for each of the geographies.

GENERAL SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Land Use

Overall the feedback in the workshops was to retain the physical boundaries of the commercial nodes, with one exception there was some interesting in some slight expansion of the commercial properties for a block east of the existing commercial properties along the southside of 44th Street near Beard Avenue.

Some opportunities for new medium density residential outside of the nodes were identified between 46th and 45th along France. Other locations included properties on the north side of 44th Street West between Xerxes and St. Thomas the Apostle Church. In all of these conversations about opportunities there was a strong recognition that building design was of the utmost importance to ensure good neighbors and enhance the existing scale of the areas. There was also interest in retaining the low scale, low density residential character along most portions of 44th Street West outside of what is listed above and the existing development pattern of the street.

Building Design

In keeping with the draft vision the conversations about building design were focused on maintaining the scale and character by encouraging finer grain designs for new buildings than what has been seen in new development proposals in the area. The concept of breaking up larger monolithic buildings was a theme in each of the nodes. The intention was to make a block face that emulated the existing fabric, was more pedestrian friendly and provided for light and greenspace. Outside of addressing this through design there was also interest by some in reducing the number properties that could be assembled into one development project.

Feedback about building heights was also relatively similar. There was an interest in holding heights at a maximum of three stories, but there were also those interested in having some additional height, typically one additional story, depending on the designs of buildings and what benefits the project provides. At 44th & France there was interest in potentially encouraging a range 2-4 stories to encourage some height variation and visual distinction. At the 43rd & Upton node, the feedback was to limit height to 3 stories along Upton and to the west along 43rd. There was conversation about potential redevelopment of the apartment buildings east of Upton along 43rd Street. In those scenarios heights of 4-5 stories might be appropriate depending on their design - it was recognized that they were not directly adjacent to the intersection and by virtue of their locations the impacts of the building heights would be less on the intersection of 43rd & Upton.

Housing Options

Conversations about housing revolved around an interest in providing more housing options. There were two prevailing ideas in providing these options: new construction and rehabilitation. Participants saw this realized through new construction in the community and some of the conversations revolved around rehabbing existing housing whether that be existing apartment infrastructure or existing single family homes or duplexes. Overall there was an interest in repurposing existing structures over demolition. It is likely that repurposing and new construction will likely need to occur to meet the interest in providing housing options.

Preservation

There was recognition in the value of preserving the existing buildings throughout the project area. Specifically historic preservation was seen as a tool to preserve known historic properties such as the Motor Place Potential Historic District at 44th & Beard.

At 43rd & Upton the conversations landed on preserving the built environment, encouraging building rehabilitation and celebrating the historic development pattern that included the streetcar right of way. There was also mixed interest in creating design guidelines or design standards for the area around 43rd & Upton. There was some concern about the benefits (greater control over design than now) and the costs (burden of additional regulations).

Tools to accomplish these preservation interests were not discussed in depth. But local and national designation was mentioned in some conversations. There is also a new tool called [Conservation Districts](#), which is currently being developed by the City of Minneapolis. These tools provide the framework to encourage rehabs, discourage demolitions and develop design guidelines that are implemented through City regulation. However these tools do require a majority of the affected property owner's support to move forward.

Parking

Overall there was interest in having new developments provide their own parking for their residential or commercial tenants. In many of the conversations the location of this parking was within the buildings, but in some cases it was identified as being behind the building and never between the building and the street. There was some conversation about what providing parking within a building does to its footprint and how that impacts the ability of a building to meet the fine grain building design details that were desired.

Parking was also discussed in a way of supply and demand. There were several conversations that revolved around increasing the supply of parking by creating structured parking. Sites were identified at both 44th & France and 43rd & Upton as

opportunities. In these conversations the costs of providing the parking or who provides it were not very robust.

The following is a rough, high level analysis completed by the project team to illustrate order of magnitude costs for providing parking structures. Parking structures cost \$20-30,000 a stall to build. So for a 100 stall ramp the construction cost is \$2-3 million dollars, above the cost of acquiring land. The operation and maintenance costs run approximately \$33 per stall per month or \$39,000 annually. If the parking at the ramp is free, such as at 50th & France, the burden of these costs would likely fall all or in part on the surrounding property owners. In similar cases in Edina commercial property owners often pay most of the costs and then pass those added costs on to their tenants. This added cost could ultimately impact the ability of small and independent businesses to be successful in the area.

Other solutions for parking revolved around better utilizing the supply of parking by working with institutional uses and other commercial uses to develop shared parking agreements.

Connectivity, Movement & Traffic

There was a general consensus to make traffic calming improvements along 44th Street W and Upton Avenue S that emulated the curb bump-out at the intersection 44th & Beard. There was some concern that the bump-outs removed one on street parking space per bump-out and that trade off in some areas required further discussion.

In addition to the bump-outs there was interest in improving the streetscape with plantings, trees, larger pedestrian areas, lighting and street furniture. There was also interest in making the boulevards do more than just look nice. There was interest in utilizing the boulevards to better capture and treat stormwater on site instead of letting go into the sewers and end up in the City's water bodies.

Additional movement concern locations were the current layout and function of Sunnyside creating traffic difficulties at the intersection of 44th. Ideas were explored on limiting traffic or closing, while still allowing connections for businesses.

Another movement issue revolved around the intersections of the bike/ped path on the former trolley ROW between Xerxes & Zenith. The mid-block intersections present challenges and safety issues for users of the trail as well as the users of the intersecting streets.

Another movement issue also revolved around the trolley ROW between Xerxes and Upton Ave S. The major issue is that due to gate closure mid-block the business traffic has no outlet on public rights-of-way and that the only outlets are through private land. These outlets are not sustainable and a solution is needed that can accommodate the businesses' needs to utilize the existing parking areas and loading areas. A solution also

needs to accommodate the residential character of the other half of the alley and minimize the externalities of commercial traffic through the alley if it was reopened.

In addition to the traffic movement issue the ROW is currently being used by pedestrians and bicyclists as an alternative to using 44th or 43rd Streets. Many participants wanted to better utilize this ROW for these connections. Accomplishing these desires with the traffic movement needs will be a challenge.

Transit service between 43rd & Upton and 44th & France was identified as another need. The 6 bus runs north/south along France and Xerxes, but there is a desire to move East/West. This movement once existed for the 50 bus that ran along 44th Street, this service was cancelled several years ago. In addition to the bus there was interest in a circulator system that connected to Lake Harriet and potentially 50th and France. A circulator would need to be supported by local businesses and property owners.

In addition to east/west transit service there is a strong interest in ensuring there is a connector service for the planned Southwest LRT station at West Lake Street.

The new bike lanes planned for construction this year on 44th, Upton, Sheridan and 42nd resulted in some concerns. Some of the concerns revolved around the lack of space in the ROW that may result in conflicts and safety issues. Others felt that they would calm traffic speeds. It was discussed that the bike lanes may not be used by the recreational cyclist only cyclists experienced with biking with traffic. There was recognition that alternative routes might be needed for less experienced riders- routes included 43rd, 45th, or the Trolley ROW.

Business

There were not many direct conversations about the business development or retention. However the themes from the survey and previous workshop about wanting to retain and encourage small independent businesses were evident. There was concern about how redevelopment or new buildings would impact existing businesses and what new businesses might be part of new developments. It was recognized that the existing older building stock likely have lower rents than any new building would. These lower rents make it more attractive for small independent businesses to remain in the area. In a conversation at 44th & France this manifested itself in finding ways to retain the existing businesses in place and encourage creative infill development around the sites or incorporated with the existing fabric.

At 44th & Beard there was discussion about a small expansion of the commercial properties to encourage the repurposing of residential structures to commercial structures. These types of spaces would have lower rents and help foster the small independent business environment.

There was strong interest at 43rd & Upton to figure out a way to get a small store that sells some basic food and convenience items.

In one of the groups there was conversation about encouraging more daytime population by having more office or service businesses. The idea was that not only would this provide a good mid-day customer base, it would also create more opportunities to live and work in Linden Hills and thus be more sustainable.

44TH AND FRANCE NODE SUMMARY

Land Use

There was general concurrence in maintaining the node's current geography. A number of participants expressed interest in the future of Edina's Sunnyside business area (located across France Ave. to the east). While Edina and Minneapolis do not undertake joint planning activities, staffs from both cities are in periodic contact and share information in order to coordinate changes and impacts pertaining to redevelopment in the area.

Maintain existing commercial land use but look closely at modifying building heights and building size (massing, scale, street frontage length) along areas of transition, where commercial abuts low density residential. This may lead to rezoning some the C2 which allows buildings at 4 story (56 ft. ht max.) to C1 neighborhood oriented commercial which allows 2 ½ story (35 ft. ht.). Concerns were also raised about potential over building of retail space as well as high retail space rental rates (resulting from new development) that would price out small, locally run niche retailers. This led to exploration of redevelopment scenarios that included keeping the existing "Turn Style" building (with an enhanced façade) at 45th and Drew while redeveloping the surface parking areas as 3 and 4 story mixed use buildings with combinations of office and residential over ground level retail. Participants were in general agreement that retail frontages are better located along France Avenue and 44th Street as opposed to along 45th, Ewing, Drew and Chowen.

Future expansion of the Linden Hills Co-op was discussed and explored in conjunction with longer term redevelopment of the Sunnyside garden center. Expansion of the co-op could support the inclusion of some the services that were identified in the neighborhood survey such as a pharmacy, bank and clinic. Additionally an enlarged co-op could provide seasonal yard and garden products. This redevelopment could include a two-level parking deck (as opposed to a multi-level parking garage) that would serve added retail traffic. Access (ingress-egress) to the future parking deck (or surface lot if a deck is not included) should be directed to 44th for top level and 45th for the lower level to leverage existing grade differentials. While preference was expressed for subsurface parking facilities, it was recognized that these are very expensive (+/- \$30,000/space) and may not be economically feasible in some redevelopment circumstances.

Concepts were explored for redeveloping the strip mall along France and 45th as well as the residential properties (currently under design review) along France Ave north of 46th Street using massing blocks. All of the block exercises focused on multi-level, multiple building concepts as opposed to the 4 story, single block buildings, typically proposed by area developers. Strong preference was expressed for the introduction of smaller, multiple buildings that step from 2, 3 and 4 stories and for providing a variety of public and semi-private green spaces.

Other longer term redevelopment opportunities were identified and explored for relocating the Kinder Care facility (north side of 44th) into a new mixed use project along the south side of 44th St. and replacing the existing facility with additional row houses; rehabbing or redeveloping the Harriet Commons Apartments as a mix of different residential building types, heights and price points instead of the current 2 ½ story medium density, 1960's courtyard buildings (zoned R5 high density).

Housing Options

Conversations were somewhat limited on the topic of new residential development options. New residential offerings positioned above retail space were discussed for along France Avenue (should the strip mall redevelop). Preference was expressed for a wider variety of housing types (beyond rental apartments) that support a diversity of income and age levels as well as for including residential-only buildings in addition to mixed use buildings.

Building Design

Strong preference was expressed for new buildings that reflect the variable size and character of the neighborhood's existing built context. In general, there was concurrence that density and intensity should be achieved through multiple buildings as opposed to single structures that occupy entire block frontages. This is especially important in this node as there are several large parcels. Establishing policies that encourage this was discussed along with acknowledgement that a follow up zoning study to examine regulations to require or encourage smaller building footprints as a predictable outcome will need to be undertaken.



Figure 1: Example of multiple, smaller buildings and a 35 foot height limit along 45th St. and Drew adjacent to single family homes with 56 foot height buildings along 44th Street.

Opinions were mixed as to fixing building heights to a maximum of three stories. Many people favored stepped heights ranging between 2 to 4 (25 ft. – 56 ft.) stories depending on the surrounding context. Where the context included adjacencies with single family homes a maximum height of three stories (35 ft.) was unanimously preferred. There was also concurrence on a maximum building height of four stories (56 ft.) within the node and no special exceptions or incentives given that would result in for increased height.

Preservation

While cultural resources such as historic structures are not present within the 44th and France node many participants expressed an interest in preserving some of the existing commercial structures such as the Linden Hills Co-op and the former Red Owl Grocery (now Tuesday Morning, Turn Style, Needlepoint shop) for the foreseeable future.

Parking

Buildings should continue to provide most of their own parking on site. Parking lots should be in the back of buildings, not fronting 44th Street. Interest was expressed in decoupling parking requirements from individual buildings, especially on smaller sites. This would promote parking management at the neighborhood level as well as provide greater flexibility in building design, support more useable, on-site green space and potentially allow for smaller, less expensive building projects. Access (ingress, egress) to parking lots and or structures should be kept closest to France Avenue and out of the interior of the neighborhood. On street parking is an essential component for maintaining commercial use viability and street walkability. Including on street parking in a commercial use's parking requirement could be helpful in reducing hard surface runoff and also support more useable, on-site green spaces. If structured parking is part of a new redevelopment it should be located to the interior of the site and set below grade (as much as feasible), preferably providing for public green space on top.

Connectivity, Movement, Traffic

The skewed intersection of Morningside and 44th Street was discussed as being problematic (unsafe and confusing) for pedestrians, cyclist and motorists. Several ideas were explored for repurposing Morningside including redesigning it as a pedestrian and bike only, plaza space or establishing one way traffic (eastbound) with angle parking and wider sidewalks.

Expanding the use of curb extensions currently found along 44th at Beard to the intersections of Chowen and Drew would improve pedestrian safety and further calm traffic along 44th Street. Extending Drew northward to connect it with 44th Street was explored as a possibility should the Sunnyside Garden and Co-op sites be redeveloped. It was acknowledged that this would likely need to include closure or repurposing of Sunnyside to prevent further traffic conflicts.

Improving/expanding transit service to the node was seen as essential over the long term if shifts from driving to more sustainable travel modes were to ever be successful. Improving transit service and facilities could also support reductions in development-related parking requirements.

Sustainability

Issues and ideas for making LH more sustainable included broadening the mix of land uses to provide greater balance between housing and jobs such as new office space within mixed use projects rather than just retail and housing. Include a professional “commons” office sharing facility where people currently working from home can hold professional meetings, video and teleconferences etc. within a new development project.

Other ideas included:

- Encourage or incentivize use of green roofs and rain gardens on site and within public street boulevards to reduce stormwater runoff to Lake Harriet.
- Improve/enhance transit service and transit connection to the future Southwest LRT station.

44th and Beard Node Summary

Land Use

There was general consensus in keeping the boundaries of the commercial area relatively similar, while providing for modest change and growth of the node through conversion of a few homes closest to commercial buildings to convert to office, service or retail uses. There was recognition that some of the one story commercial buildings might redevelop and that those new buildings should be mixed use at two and three story heights. There was a clear recognition of the financial relationships and interdependencies between the small, unique existing businesses and the older small scale buildings they occupy. New construction often results in more expensive rents, which are likely too expensive for most of the businesses in this node to afford, driving them from the neighborhood. This would result in a loss of character and charm. The concept of converting residential properties along 44th adjacent to the commercial businesses to commercial uses might create more opportunities for small businesses.

The former trolley right of way north of 44th Street presents an interesting opportunity for businesses to consider utilize the back of the building for commercial uses that cater to the pedestrian and bike traffic.

Maintain the residential uses along the majority of the 44th Street corridor and support opportunities for in-home businesses between the Upton and France commercial nodes. More extensive redevelopment and higher density/intensity should be served by the two established commercial nodes, not in the 44th and Beard area.

Small enhancements to the Christmas tree lot like benches, tables and chairs and pathway would provide a needed public space for teens and others. This could also improve the linkage between the commercial area and the tennis court park.

Housing Options

Empty nester and senior serving housing could include duplexes as well as new row houses and condominium buildings with elevators, underground parking and outdoor space for gardening. Allow houses along 44th Street to be converted to serve multiple families or include accessory dwellings.

Building Design

New buildings and remodels/conversions should closely relate to the small scale (1, 2, 2 ½ story ht.) of the nodes' surrounding context. An occasional three story (35 ft. ht.) building may be fine, just not all of them. Better to have buildings at a variety of heights and steps in heights within bigger buildings. Need to explore ways to limit the number of lots that can be combined or set maximum lengths (street frontages) for new buildings to keep the scale and massing in character.

Preservation

Historic properties within the Motor Place Historic district are seen as valuable to area character and provisions for their protection, conservation, preservation should be explored.

Parking

Explore converting some of the parallel on street parking to angle parking such as along the Christmas tree lot where space is available. Lots are small in size, locating parking below ground and on the street are more logical choices rather in surface parking lots.

Connectivity, Movement & Traffic

The area is recognized as being very walkable and connected to the other adjacent nodes. Additional measures for enhancing and strengthening walkability and connectivity included:

- Extend the Path project through the rest of the old trolley ROW
- Add decorative pedestrian lighting
- Add a few benches along the sidewalks connecting the two major nodes
- Enhance plantings in the boulevards with more than just lawn
- Convert grass boulevards into rain gardens
- Add bump outs at other intersections along 44th Street
- When mixed use redevelopment occurs, set buildings back a few feet extra and widen the sidewalk
- Run a circulator trolley bus from Lake Harriet to the commercial nodes, maybe to 50th and France as well
- Enhance alleyways to support back of shop commercial activity

43RD AND UPTON NODE SUMMARY

Land Use

There was interest in retaining the land uses currently allowed under the C1 zoning district. The preferred building heights were two to three stories. While this is the case there were some participants that said they were not categorically opposed to 4 stories and that the design of the building would dictate whether this could be allowed.

The boundaries of the commercial node should remain the same, no real commercial expansion outside of existing commercial area. Opportunities within the node include the two former residential houses along 43rd next to Dunn Brothers. These two properties were identified as good transitions into the neighborhood and if they were replaced attention would need to be made about the transitions. Good transitions in this case included building setbacks and building scale.

There was interest in some expansion of 2-3 story medium density housing around the node along 44th Street between Xerxes and Upton. There was an overtone that we need to be cognizant of the residential properties along 44th when considering new development and that the character could be negatively impacted if the buildings were not designed properly. New development needs to maintain the rhythm of 44th defined by building widths and greenspace.



Figure 2: Example of interest in expanding 2-3 story, multiple buildings in medium density housing along 44th Street.

There was also interest in the potential of redevelopment of the late mid-century apartments and condos to the east of 43rd & Upton into slightly larger developments that were 4- 5 stories.

There was general concern that new development might out price entrepreneurs and small businesses. The character of the areas is in part defined by these types of businesses we need to keep them around.

Housing Options

There was a conversation about where people wanted to live when or if they downsized from their homes. In general there was a desire to live in buildings with a mix of ages, not just senior housing. There was a split between people who wanted to live above a commercial location in the middle of 43rd/ Upton and those who would want to live just outside the commercial area. The preference for the latter came from those who wanted to be able to walk to the node, but not have the added noise or externalities of living directly above a commercial location.

There was interest in providing desired housing options through rehabilitation of existing structures. An example of a duplex being converted into two condo units with an elevator was mentioned by a resident and was well received by that particular group. An example of updating some the older apartment buildings to meet contemporary needs was also discussed.

Building Design

The character of the node is fine grained with a small building rhythm and articulation. One of the more attractive elements of the character is the general “lack of sameness.” There was a concern with new development that it did not capture this character; it was too long, tall, and didn’t have the small building rhythm and articulation.

The above description of building design came after exploration of several ideas and concepts. For one group this came after several iterations of building and massing that included exploring 6 story buildings, one story buildings, buildings setback from the street the conversation circled back to wanting to proliferate the scale and character that exists today: Maximum of three stories, break up facades to resemble finer grain of area, include building articulation. An example of the building at 50th & Xerxes was discussed (see photo below). The facade was too big. Break it up in finer horizontal and vertical details. An agreed upon comment was the looks ‘swollen’ and would not fit in this area.

There was desire for more outdoor space for restaurants and coffee shops. There were two ways discussed to accommodate this. One was to push new buildings back from the street to create the space was discussed, but there was concern about how the meshed with the character of the area. The other option was to create space next to a building, much like Sebastian Joe’s and Tilia for outdoor seating. Support for incorporating

outdoor space into new development was clear, but the design for how to do it needs more attention.



Figure 3: Medium Density building example from 50th & Xerxes

Preservation

There was a consensus on preserving the built environment, encouraging building rehabilitation and celebrating the historic development pattern that included the streetcar right of way. There was also mixed interest in creating design guidelines or design standards for the area around 43rd & Upton. There was some concern about the benefits (greater control over design than now) and the costs (burden of additional regulations).

Tools to accomplish these preservation interests were not discussed in depth. But local and national designation was mentioned in some conversations. There is also a new tool called [Conservation Districts](#), which is currently being developed by the City of Minneapolis. These tools provide the framework to encourage rehabs, discourage demolitions and develop design guidelines that are implemented through City regulation. However these tools do require a majority of the affected property owner's support to move forward.

Parking

Parking was discussed in terms of parking for new developments and parking for existing buildings and businesses. It was generally agreed upon that building should park themselves- especially residential. However there was a question about what this does to a building's design and its affordability (cost of residential and commercial tenant spaces.) New construction often has a price point that makes it difficult to attract and retain small independent businesses.

There are approximately 309 off-street parking spaces in the area of the node and approximately 83 on-street parking spaces. There was a recognized interest in better utilizing the parking spaces to fulfill the parking demand in the area. At the same time,

it a participant affiliated with one of the institutional uses reminded the group that some of the institutional uses in the area have parking needs that is not just on Sundays.

In addition to better utilizing the existing supply of parking there was interest in providing parking structures to increase the supply. It was felt that these structures could be concealed or buried in the mid-block sections of the NE, SE or SW quadrants of the 43rd/Upton corner. It was felt that structured parking should be constructed in keeping with the heights of 2-3 stories outlined for the design of the buildings in the area.

The following is a rough, high level analysis completed by the project team to illustrate order of magnitude costs for providing parking structures. Parking structures cost \$20-30,000 a stall to build. So for a 100 stall ramp the construction cost is \$2-3 million dollars, above the cost of acquiring land. The operation and maintenance costs run approximately \$33 per stall per month or \$39,000 annually. If the parking at the ramp is free, such as at 50th & France, the burden of these costs would likely fall all or in part on the surrounding property owners. In similar cases in Edina commercial property owners often pay most of the costs and then pass those added costs on to their tenants. This added cost could ultimately impact the ability of small and independent businesses to be successful in the area.

Connectivity, Movement & Traffic

The former trolley right-of-way that extends from Lake Harriet to Beard Avenue was the focus of significant discussion. It is seen as community asset that could better connect the business nodes of Linden Hills with the lakes. Challenges include the narrow right-of-way, 16 feet, in most locations, its current use as drive aisle for parking lots near Upton, current use as a residential alley near Xerxes and that the public right of way is not continuous- its eastern extent at Linden Hills Boulevard terminates in a residential property.

Aside from a larger vision of the corridor the current configuration of the right of way between Upton and Xerxes presents some challenges for traffic movement. At Upton the public right of way is 16 feet wide and it is currently used to access parking on either side of the drive lane. The drive lane then leads to two private parking lots that access 43rd Street West. Access from the alley to one of the two parking lots will be closed when a recently approved building addition is made to the property at 4312 Upton Ave S.

The second, and most commonly used, access is through the parking for Settegren's Hardware. In the workshop it was noted that the use of the lot as a public driveway creates insurance problems for the property and that its long term use as a public driveway is not sustainable.

The western half of the former right of way is gated off and is used as a residential alley for the adjacent properties.

In the workshop both business owners and residential property owners that utilize the alley were present.

The businesses had concerns about customer and commercial truck traffic would be able to get out of the alley if the private egress access was removed and the gate remained. There was concern about where the turnaround would be and how that would impact traffic on Upton Ave. There was interest from the businesses and others that the alley be opened to allow at least one way traffic. They were concerned about the loss of parking and truck delivery.

In general there was concern about the impact of the right of way becoming a cut-through to avoid traffic on 43rd of 44th. It was also recognized that the right-of-way is used by many pedestrians and bicycles as a way to access the 43rd/Upton. There is an existing bike path to the west from Xerxes.

The residents had concern about the frequency and speed of the alley traffic if the right of way opened up. There were concerns about safely accessing their garages and being able to feel safe in the area. Safety appeared to be about vehicle traffic and not others but it was not clear.

A couple solutions were identified:

- Retain the gate and have a turnaround area for commercial traffic
- Remove the gate and divide and limit the commercial traffic from the residential traffic.

There was an overall interest in creating a consistent streetscape that included improved greening that functioned to both improve aesthetics and management of stormwater. Traffic calming and pedestrian improvements such as curb bump outs were seen as part of this streetscape. There was also a desire to find more space for outdoor seating on the sidewalk for restaurants. There was some concern about how that would impact the ability of pedestrians to move through the sidewalk. An alternative was encouraging outdoor areas on the sides of buildings such as at Tilia and Sebastian Joes. It was encouraged to integrate this type of space into new building designs.

CORRIDORS- MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION TABLE SUMMARY

Bike Lanes:

- Many participants weren't aware that shared bike lanes were being installed between the nodes this summer. Some felt this would help calm traffic, others felt it would create conflicts and lead to safety issues between modes.
- Signing 43rd Street as a bike route or installing a genuine bike boulevard (in addition to 44th shared lanes) for less experienced cyclists may also be worthwhile. Explore challenges with topography.
- Close the gap on pedestrian connectivity throughout the corridor and commercial nodes. Evaluate ADA accessibility and explore alternate routes for pedestrians with disabilities.
- Alternate bike route should explore a safer route to connect to the commercial nodes, especially connecting to the Co-op site (bike route could connect from 45th instead?)
- Education regarding shared bike lane operations is needed for drivers and cyclists.

Trolley ROW

- Complete the "Path" project as a pedestrian/bikeway corridor through old trolleyway and alleyways to connect to 44th and Beard commercial node.
- Consider implications/challenges of using trolley route as a bike/pedestrian route with awkward mid-block or too close to intersection crossings.
- Explore options for enhancing the closed alleyway between Xerxes and Upton with separate and screened commercial and residential traffic paths, landscaping, paving and lighting that is durable and attractive year-round.
- Consider emulating Chicago's "Green Alley" program or Gerogetown's Cady's alley that rebuilds alleys with attractive, permeable brick pavers to filter stormwater runoff while serving as secondary access ways to properties.

Circulator & Transit

- Explore a trolley bus-circulator, (maybe it only runs during the warm season) to connect people between Lake Harriet Band shell area and the commercial nodes. Consider connecting to other major destinations such as new LRT station and 50th and France area. Circulator should be an example of sustainability practices, promote alternate modes of energy to run it.
- Discussion whether the trolleyway should become the circulator route connecting to Lake Harriet was discussed. Some felt opening to vehicular traffic was less desirable while others felt that it could bring a significant transportation improvement and much desirable connection from the Lakes and to Edina.
- Lack of transit services for seniors. Discuss with Metro transit completing the 6 bus route gap on 44th connecting to the 44th and France node.

- Incorporate a district wayfinding system that can provide efficient sense of direction and information to residents and users. Signage system can also provide the opportunity to incorporate interpretive characteristics whether historical or cultural about the neighborhood.

Open Space

- Desire to promote more community opportunities for the existing open space and parks in the neighborhood. Opportunities for community gardens should be explored.
- Provide more gathering opportunities with inclusion of pocket parks or improved design for the Christmas lot green space: add benches, patio space, could add diagonal parking on the north side with sustainable paving techniques, rainwater gardens, etc.

Parking

- The “Park-once” idea was discussed among participants. Many were in favor of considering structured parking at either of the commercial nodes if development opportunities were to be considered. Understanding the feasibility of implementing structured parking was also discussed and felt that better parking management techniques need to be implemented.

Streetscape & Traffic Calming

- Develop the street character and public realm with a sustainable approach. Promote use of boulevards for stormwater run-off treatment and less “grass-mowed” spaces. Improve the aesthetics and environmental function of the 44th Street corridor with stormwater plantings (rain garden) in the boulevards and or in bump out areas.
- Add more bump outs at intersections along 44th Street especially at west side of Beard, Abbott and Zenith to enhance crossing between the Christmas tree park and city parking lot to businesses on the south side of the street. Bump outs will decrease the pedestrian crossing distance and will improve pedestrian/vehicular visibility at intersections.
- Issues with crosswalk signals not functioning at midblock crossing at Upton. Other traffic signage techniques should be employed.
- Some participants felt the existing traffic circles are not well designed and become a hazard for pedestrians and vehicular traffic. Same was shared regarding the diverters. Exploring whether circles and diverters need to be revisited and redesign should be considered.
- Participants commented on traffic/safety challenges on current Sunnyside street alignment and whether other traffic alternatives should be considered. Some participants would like to see Sunnyside closed from France Ave. but allow access to Co-op from 44th. Consider a pedestrian “plaza” as the leftover space by

closing Sunnyside. Others shared the idea of converting Sunnyside into a one-way system street.

- Improve intersection safety at Drew and 44th. Consider a pedestrian signal and other traffic calming techniques if alternative bike route is considered.
- Evaluate what other intersections need to consider traffic technique recommendations, especially intersections that lead to school routes.

