

LINDEN HILLS SMALL AREA PLAN

BUILDING & SITE DESIGN

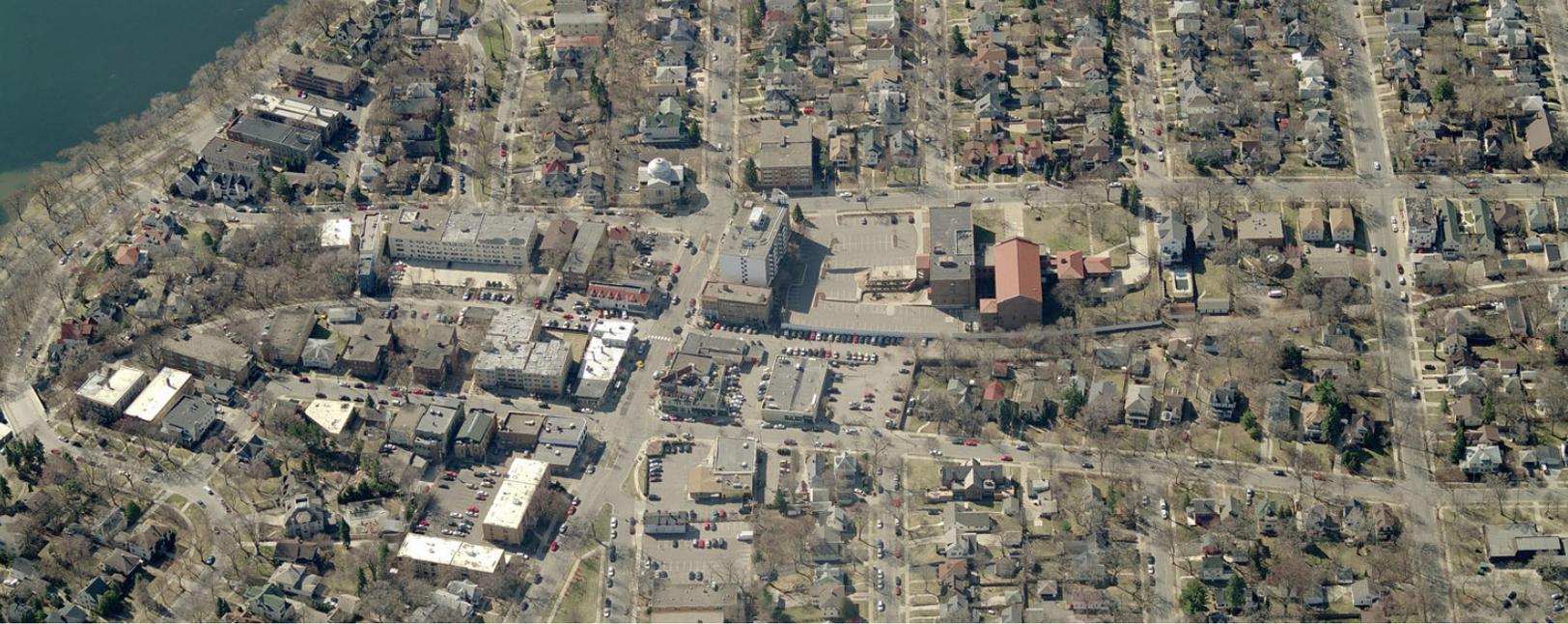
The following briefs identify key City policy framework, past guidance from the Linden Hills Neighborhood Design Framework from 1997, survey and workshop themes, and analysis of existing conditions to provide a distilled set of issues for consideration in the small area planning process.

THE MINNEAPOLIS PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

THE CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Applicable Policy on Building & Site Design

- 1.2.1 Promote quality design in new development, as well as building orientation, scale, massing, buffering, and setbacks that are appropriate with the context of the surrounding area.
- 1.5.3 Promote the preservation of traditional commercial storefronts wherever feasible
- 10.5 Support the development of multi-family residential dwellings of appropriate form and scale.
- 10.5.1 Smaller-scale, multi-family residential development is more appropriate along Community Corridors and Neighborhood Commercial Nodes.
- 10.6 New multi-family development or renovation should be designed in terms of traditional urban building form with pedestrian scale design features at the street level.
- 10.6.1 Design buildings to fulfill light, privacy, and view requirements for the subject building as well as for adjacent properties by building within required setbacks.
- 10.6.3 Provide appropriate physical transition and separation using green space, setbacks or orientation, stepped down height, or ornamental fencing to improve the compatibility between higher density and lower density residential uses.
- 10.7 Maintain and preserve the quality and unique character of the city's existing housing stock.
- 10.7.1 Rehabilitation of older and historic housing stock should be encouraged over demolition.
- 10.7.2 Encourage the use of high quality and durable materials for construction and historic preservation.
- 10.7.3 Encourage adaptive reuse, retrofit and renovation projects that make the city's housing stock competitive on the regional market.
- 10.7.4 Renovation of housing should reflect the setbacks, orientation, pattern, materials, height and scale of surrounding dwellings.
- 10.7.5 Provide the flexibility in the city's ordinances to improve and maintain existing structures.
- 10.10 Support urban design standards that emphasize a traditional urban form in commercial areas.
- 10.10.1 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.



- 10.10.2 Identify commercial areas in the city that reflect, or used to reflect, traditional urban form and develop appropriate standards and preservation or restoration objectives for these areas.
- 10.10.4 Orient new buildings to the street to foster safe and successful commercial nodes and corridors.
- 10.10.5 Limit the visual impact of existing billboards in neighborhood commercial areas.
- 10.10.6 Require storefront window transparency to assure both natural surveillance and an inviting pedestrian experience.
- 10.10.7 Encourage the renovation of existing commercial buildings.

LINDEN HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN FRAMEWORK - 1997

Applicable Guidance

- Complementary design: Design infill and free-standing buildings to complement and reference the pre-existing character of the neighborhood's historic commercial and residential structures. The Design Guidelines that follow this section amplify and provide graphic examples of this policy.
- Design Guidelines:
- Respect historic context: infill buildings that are surrounded by "traditional buildings" as defined above should reflect the shape, placement and proportion of those buildings in door and window location and shape, cornice lines, materials and detailing.
- Greater flexibility in non-historic contexts: Free-standing buildings or buildings adjacent to existing "non-traditional" commercial buildings should follow the follow guidelines with a greater degree of stylistic freedom.
- Building height and roof pitch: buildings should generally not exceed 2-3 stories in height, although buildings up to four stories may be appropriate at certain locations- at prominent corners, for example.
- Smaller Buildings: Enhance the economic diversity of the 44th Street corridor through the development of more, smaller (rather than fewer, larger ones) in new infill development
- New development in the form of modest infill projects builds on past development practices in Linden Hills. It also strengthens the neighborhood by bringing in new building owners, new businesses and residents, each with their own direct interest in livability and economic prosperity of the corridor.
- Vertical mix of uses: Design commercial buildings to encourage mixed use, with upper stories that are easily convertible to residential, office or studio uses, and ground floor that can be used for retail, office or neighborhood services.
- Articulated facades: Attached or multifamily buildings should be designed to avoid monolithic "blank walls" fronting the street; instead, facades should be articulated into smaller units by means of windows, entries or architectural elements.

- Multifamily design: Encourage the use of single-family “vocabulary” in multifamily and attached buildings, expressed by pitched roofs, articulated facades, visible entrances, porches or balconies, and a maximum height of three to four stories.
- Building facade width: If multifamily or attached housing is developed near single-family detached housing, the width of the building facade should be similar to the width of that of a single-family house. Attached units should be grouped in rows of no more than four or six units
- Relationship to street: Design residential buildings with a strong relationship between front facades and the street, with semi-private and private open spaces to the rear.
- Transparency and visibility: at least 40 percent of the ground floor facade of commercial buildings should be transparent.
- Entrances should always face the street
- Buildings should meet the sidewalk or be set back a small distance (10-20 feet) to provide public plazas, courtyards and outdoor eating areas.

CONSIDERATIONS TO BE EXPLORED IN THE SMALL AREA PLANNING PROCESS

The community survey and workshop revealed that while an overwhelming majority of respondents wanted more housing options and increased density, the new development that supports this interest needs to reflect the existing context and scale of its surroundings. In fact maintaining the neighborhood’s scale and character was more important to the community than new density and housing options.

The City’s Comprehensive Plan calls for new development in designs that reflect traditional urban form and respect the adjacent context of an area. The 1997 Design Framework for Linden Hills provides more refined guidance of how to reflect the context of the commercial area, but it does not provide enough guidance to translate the themes into specific development guidance.

Through the small area planning process more specific development guidance will be evaluated and discussed regarding site designs, building locations, height, widths, massing, and scale that reflect the varying characters of the commercial areas of Linden Hills. Ideas will be evaluated that consider factors that drive the design of contemporary development including parking requirements. Additional community desires about development that provides additional community benefits such as public gathering spaces and public parking will likely impact a project’s design and will be evaluated and discussed.

Significant feedback through the community survey and workshop revolved around the transitions of new denser, larger scale development on the surrounding lower scaled residential areas. The small area planning process will evaluate and discuss ideas about how to provide these transitions and mitigate visual impacts.