



MEETING SUMMARY

Linden Hills Small Area Plan Steering Committee #6.

June 27, 2013, 6:30 PM Linden Hills Park Building

Attendees: Aaron Tag , Eric Hanson, Christy Prediger, Rick Anderson, Ann Voda, Ken Stone, Larry Lavercombe, Sara Jaehne, Dave Luger, Grant Hawthorn, Constance Pepin, Jean Johnson, Dan Cornejo, Chuck Liddy, Bob Kost, Brian Schafer, Development Advisory panel members: Colleen Carey of Cornerstone Development, Don Gerberding of Master Properties and Mary Bujold of Maxfiled Research.

Discussions:

1. Development Advisory Panelists shared their impressions of the Future Land Use and Built Form Typology options presented in the June open houses (in-person and on-line) and also responded to follow-on questions from the Steering Committee:

- Three story development seems to be the most economical, considering the prohibitive cost of underground parking. With three-story development, a developer can put parking at grade. A townhouse development can put parking in a garage at grade with access off the alley.
- The Master development at 46th and 46th in Minneapolis, which was completed by Lander Development, is four-stories, with the top floor stepped back at both the alley and at the street. There are more units in this development than originally planned (when the foundation was laid around two years ago). The demographics will dictate the number and size of units. When this project was originally conceived and approved, there was a demand for fewer and larger units. When it was actually constructed this past year, there were more and smaller units. Also we were able to get approval for only 0.75 cars per unit because this project was only s9x blocks from the Hiawatha Rail station at 46th and Hiawatha.
- In some locations, a one-story building can be appropriate (if there is no market for additional floors).
- Density (or rooftops) drives the demand for retail and services. Neighborhoods need to embrace a “transitional” attitude, that is they need to understand and work with market forces of change. They need to support quality development and developers seeking to respond to a changing marketplace. They need to appreciate that the new buyers or renters want a different type and size of residential unit, with a different type of amenity package.
- The commercial corridors in Minneapolis are only one-half block deep, with alleys. This situation will nearly always produce a “compatibility” issue, with larger buildings being proposed on commercial or mixed-use properties in the corridors pushing up against an alley that will have single-family one- or two-story homes on the other side of the alley.

- What will increased density mean over the next 20 years? Neighborhoods need to understand that a few or even several 3-4 story buildings, as infill projects, are not going to destroy their neighborhood. Yes, there might be compatibility issues that need to be negotiated with the immediately adjacent properties, but by and large these new developments will be providing new units that existing residents need and want, or that newcomers will jump at for the chance to live in this very desirable area.
- If you allow a little more density, you will attract a higher quality developer and get a higher quality development. You do not really want a developer who will respond to a very tightly controlled zoning and permitting environment. They will just seek to “fill it up” in terms of the permitted building envelope.
- Developers want to work with communities that have a vision, with development goals, and with design guidelines that frame out the desired parameters in a new building. They also want to have communities say where they want new development to take place.
- Give your plan and zoning some flexibility within the rules, i.e. statements and regulations that provide different ways to achieve your desired development objectives. Go for a framework with guidelines, rather hard and fast rules. Craft incentives too, so that developers are working with you, not trying to figure out what will please you.
- Developers are scared of “no certainty.” They want a predictable process, with steps that build on each other towards an approval.
- Be clear where you want increased density, and where you don’t want it.
- Think about sustainability from an economic point of view. The young want to move here. Embrace that, and work with that change. Figure out ways to help make that happen, so that your neighborhood can be attractive and affordable.
- You also need to work with existing businesses and building owners, to find ways for them to improve their buildings and continue to provide affordable rents for the local-serving businesses you have and want to continue to have.

2. Consultants presented composite scores (on-line and in-person) and written comments provided by open house participants regarding the planning options.

Much of the discussion focused on the Built Form Typology Options and issues pertaining to transition areas and building heights. There was agreement that planning and design options deemed unfavorable or unsupported (scored high number of “3”s or red dots) by the majority of participants (approx. 120) should not be carried forward into refinement.

Consultants explained that additional traffic engineering analysis was required before transportation options for reconfiguring Sunnyside Avenue and reconfiguring the alleyway between Xerxes and Upton Ave. could be fully evaluated. The process for undertaking the evaluation was outlined and will be summarized in the Small Area Plan. Additional alternatives for considering the direction of one way traffic (for both facilities) will be added to the mix to respond to stakeholder comments expressed during the open house.

Building/development options illustrating four story building configurations elicited considerable negative response on line and in person. Discussions centered on whether or not 4-story buildings should be allowed anywhere in the study area. Opinions varied as to where and under what circumstances buildings of this height may be appropriate. Most committee members agreed that the majority of new buildings, regardless of use, should be no taller than three 35 feet / 3-story. With the exception of along 44th between Drew and Sunnyside, and perhaps along Drew between 44th and 45th Streets.

Requiring developers/builders to provide certain amenities to the neighborhood in exchange for being allowed to build up to 4-stories was discussed. These may include: public green spaces and or plazas, using higher quality building materials and exterior finishes such as face brick, stone, stepping the façade back at the 2nd or third level along areas of transition (between existing single family homes) or along street frontages, or both, meeting higher environmental and green building standards such as achieving LEED Gold or Platinum certification, providing car share, etc. The draft plan will propose a set of options for the committee to consider on this matter.

3. The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 PM.