

## SMALL AREA PLAN

Approved by the Minneapolis City Council:  
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### *Linden Hills Neighborhood*



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## *EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*

This Small Area Plan builds on the existing policies of The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth, the City of Minneapolis' Comprehensive Plan. It provides a 20 year vision for the three commercial districts of Linden Hills—43rd & Upton, 44th & Beard, and 44th & France—and the corridors of 44th Street & France Avenue.

This community work was initiated in 2012 by the Linden Hills Neighborhood Council (LHiNC). The City of Minneapolis managed the creation of the Plan, guided by a LHiNC-appointed Steering Committee. Existing conditions, City of Minneapolis policy, past planning efforts, and input from the community shaped the proposed policies and recommendations described in this Plan.



## Vision

*Linden Hills is a thriving pedestrian-friendly and sustainable urban village that offers varied housing, commercial, open space, and transportation choices to meet residents' and business owners' needs. Renovation and new development support and enhance the existing scale and character of the neighborhood.*

Neighborhood scale and character are in part defined by:

- A walkable, pedestrian friendly public realm
- An eclectic mix of human-scale buildings
- Vibrant, independent, neighborhood-serving businesses

To fulfill this vision five goals have been established:

- 1. Keep and enhance what makes the Linden Hills commercial districts unique.**
- 2. Ensure appropriately-scaled development.**
- 3. Encourage complementary uses, activities, and public realm enhancements.**
- 4. Promote public infrastructure and private development that reinforces an ecologically healthy neighborhood.**
- 5. Support the development of a broad spectrum of life-cycle housing options.**

### Using the Plan

The Plan applies this Vision and Goals through the development of individual Policies for each element of the plan. This policy frameworks is then applied to distinct issues and locations within Linden Hills in the Specific Implementation Recommendations of the plan.



## Development Patterns

Understanding the history of development in the Linden Hills neighborhood is central to explaining the existing character. These past development patterns influenced the footprint and character of the commercial districts and adjacent properties, and are still evident today. Furthermore, historical context informs the challenges and opportunities of future growth and this Plan's recommendations.

The primary influence was the streetcar line that ran through the neighborhood. The presence of the streetcar encouraged a certain type of commercial development that was oriented toward pedestrians. The pattern is evident in the location and size of commercial lots at 43rd & Upton and 44th & Beard. The small scale of buildings, characterized by modest width and height, create a pedestrian friendly, human-scale character that the community wants to preserve and enhance.



*Historic view Linden Hills ca. 1930. "Twin Cities by Trolley" (Diers and Isaacs, 2007)*

## Recommendations

The guidance in the Small Area Plan is organized around five plan elements: "Land Use and Development," "Building and Site Design," "Movement Connectivity and Parking," "Sustainability and the Environment," and "Heritage Preservation." These create the framework to evaluate existing conditions, City policy, and community input, and they inform the recommendations in this Plan. Policies are suggested in each section to further clarify and refine the goals created for the Small Area Plan. Implementation recommendations are provided to guide the application of goals and policies to specific projects over the next 20 years.

## Land Use & Intensity

The recommendations in the Land Use & Intensity and the Building & Site Design sections work together to shape development in Linden Hills. The community highly values the small, neighborhood-serving businesses located in the Neighborhood Commercial Nodes. Access to a neighborhood grocery store, restaurants, hardware stores, and other businesses that serve the residents needs is a character-defining feature of the community. The 44th & Beard commercial district is not officially recognized as a Neighborhood Commercial Node in The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth. This Plan recommends officially designating this as a Neighborhood Commercial Node.



**LAND USE REFINEMENTS**

- 1 Existing Neighborhood Commercial Node
- 2 Redefine as Medium Density Residential
- 3 Redefine as Medium Density Residential
- 4 New Neighborhood Commercial Node
- 5 Redefine as Medium Density Residential
- 6 Existing Neighborhood Commercial Node

**EDINA LAND USE**

- Commercial
- Single Family Residential
- Multiple Family Residential
- Parks and Recreation
- Public / Semi-Public

**MINNEAPOLIS LAND USE**

- Low Density Residential (up to 20 DU/acre)
- Medium Density Residential (20 - 50 DU/acre)
- High Density Residential (50 - 120 DU/acre)
- Mixed Use
- Parks / Open Space
- ..... Neighborhood Commercial Nodes

This Plan is recommending changes to the land use and intensity of two areas along 44th Street and one area along France Avenue. In each of these areas the Plan recommends allowing medium density multi-family residential at a scale and design consistent with the guidance in the Building & Site section of the plan. This recommendation is responsive to The Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan for increasing density, to existing development patterns in the area, and provides the opportunity for additional housing options in Linden Hills.

**Building & Site Design**

Building height and length contribute to the character of the three commercial nodes and the community corridors within Linden Hills. Together these elements establish a distinct visual character, human-scale, discernible rhythm, and strong sense of place, which should serve as the reference point or basis of design for new developments, substantial building renovations, or additions.

Building height was explored in stories and in feet during the planning process. The Plan’s recommendations are based on considerable exploration of building height impacts and preferences with the community. Due to the existing character and development patterns at 43rd & Upton, 44th & Beard, 44th & France, and along the 44th Street and France Community Corridors allowing 3 or 4-story buildings while encouraging shorter overall building heights, as expressed in feet, is considered the most respectful of existing character.

The intent is to allow for the desired densities called for in City policies while encouraging compatible design through lower maximum building heights than allowed in the current Zoning Code. (Currently the Zoning Code defines four story developments as having a maximum height of 56 feet.) Encouraging a lower maximum height in feet encourages new development to have shorter floor to floor heights and a lower overall building height than allowed under the current Zoning Code, which will ensure more compatible new development that is in scale with the surrounding development patterns. In addition, the plan recommends stepping back the fourth story of any building along the street to further reduce the visibility of a fourth story from the street and the overall visual impacts of four story buildings.

New development should in all possible cases, avoid design of long continuous building frontages (building facade facing the street). Currently in Linden Hills, frontage lengths of existing buildings correspond to the original parcel sizes established in the previous century. This has resulted in the rhythmic, main street, commercial pattern of individual shop fronts found in the 43rd & Upton and 44th & Beard commercial districts. The plan makes specific recommendations to ensure buildings use design techniques to provide more authentic building modulation that relates to the character of the area.

Locations within the study area that allow medium or high density, commercial, and multi-family buildings are often adjacent to low-scale, 1 to 2-family residential properties that have their own distinct character and rhythm. At many of these sites, larger commercial, mixed use, and multi-family residential structures share an alley, side, or rear lot line with smaller-scale buildings and uses. In other cases they are across the street from each other. This was a topic of considerable concern for the community. Transition issues include impacts to the overall character of a block, shading of back yards caused by adjacent tall buildings, disruption and degradation of views, loss of privacy, and increases in noise and traffic. These concerns and issues relate to City policies that address the need for transitions between higher density and lower density development. The plan calls for additional setbacks for the top floor of 3 or 4-story buildings that are adjacent to low-scale residential properties. It further recommends additional building and site design element to reduce the visual impacts of medium and high density development

### Movement, Connectivity, & Parking

Improving connections and movement between the three Neighborhood Commercial Nodes is a priority in this Plan. It encourages infrastructure improvements that make walking and bicycling more appealing options to get to, from, and within Linden Hills. Adding curb extensions will help calm and slow traffic, prioritize pedestrian movements, and provide more space for streetscape infrastructure at intersections with the Neighborhood Commercial Nodes.

Supplying additional public/semi-public open space, parks or plazas at each node, connected by a uniform streetscape, is one way to link the three nodes and support pedestrian movement. The 44th & France commercial node does not have any public space and therefore a plaza or pocket park should be explored



From bottom to top: 44th & France, 44th & Beard, and 43rd & Upton. Linden Hills community corridors and Neighborhood Commercial Nodes are characterized by small-scale, 1 to 3-story buildings located along tree-lined streets

within this node.

To address parking concerns, the Plan recommends ways to better organize and manage the existing supply of parking resources to achieve their maximum potential. The three commercial areas of Linden Hills contain over 900 on-street and off-street parking spaces on privately and publicly controlled property. These parking areas can be better utilized through design improvements, such as angled on-street parking, or shared parking agreements between businesses and parking lot owners. The Plan also promotes enhancements to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure (including additional bike parking) to encourage alternatives to using the automobile.

### Sustainability & Environment

Many elements of this Plan address sustainability holistically, focusing not only on environmental aspects, but also on cultural and economic sustainability. This approach to sustainability is integral to recommendations in each section. The following highlights examples of these alternate definitions:

- Promote contextually sensitive building designs that retain or enhance the character of the area.
- Encourage building rehabilitation and retrofitting practices to ensure existing buildings meet modern commercial and housing needs and desires.
- Encourage and foster the small independent businesses that are a vital component of neighborhood character.
- Encourage infrastructure that promotes walking, biking, and transit as alternatives to cars.

This Plan also specifically promotes environmental sustainability through the use of infrastructure and building systems (permeable paving, green roofs, recycled building materials, daylighting, etc.) intended to reduce overall resource consumption. It recommends the development of public and private rain gardens, use of permeable pavers, and other practices to better manage stormwater on-site through the retrofit or new installation of infrastructure.

### Heritage Preservation

The Plan recommends exploring the potential of historic designation—local and national—for individual properties as well as the establishment of designated historic or conservation districts. Historic designation may help provide greater protection for buildings and development patterns that define the character of the commercial nodes. It also could provide further financial resources to help mitigate renovation and maintenance costs. There are several areas that may qualify as historic districts in the neighborhood. Three examples include 43rd & Upton, the former streetcar right of way, and 44th & Beard, each because it is emblematic of streetcar development and infrastructure. Because designation requires strict adherence to historic design standards, further detailed discussions with impacted property owners and the community would need to occur as part of the designated process.

### Implementation

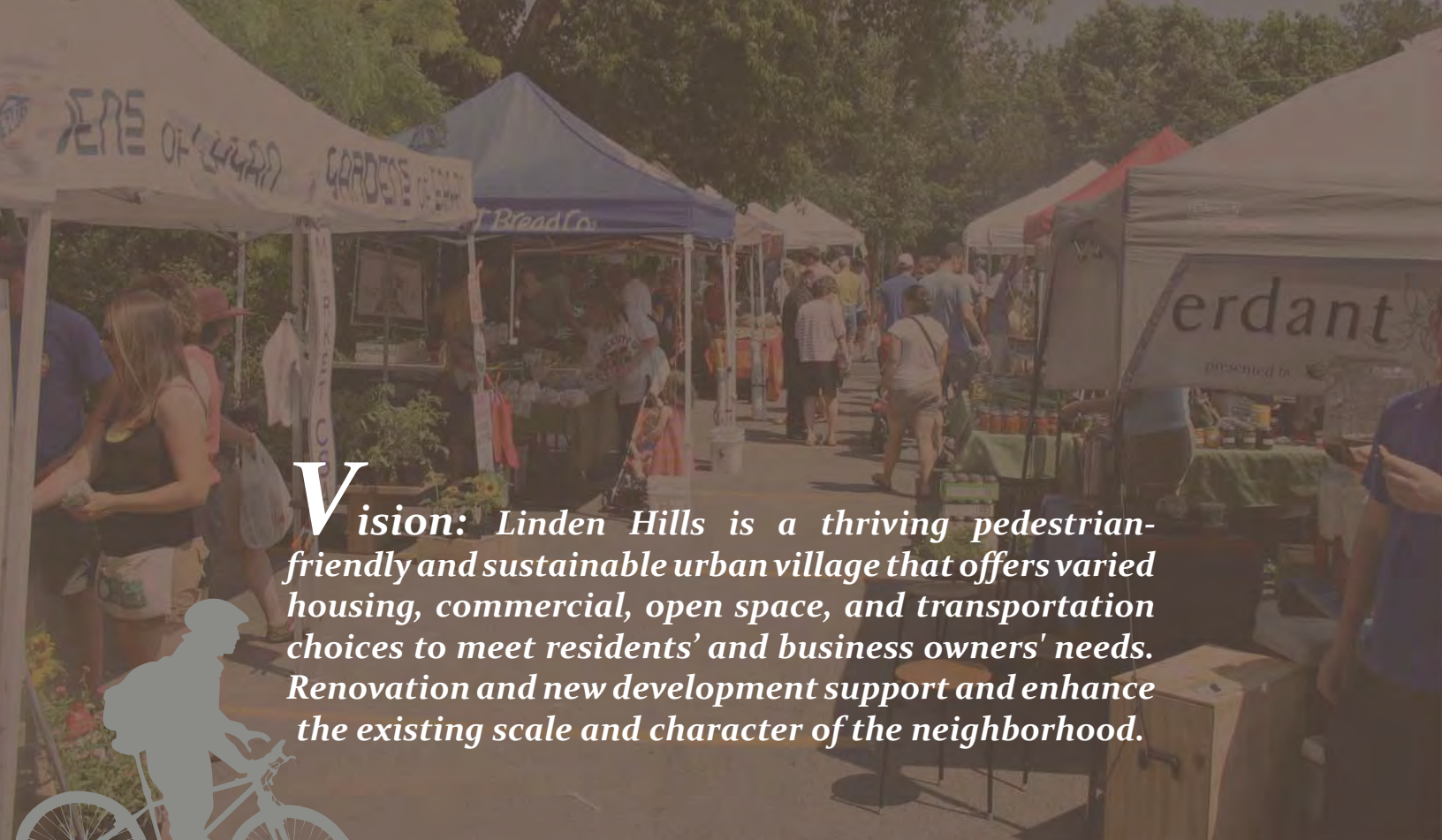
Implementation of the recommendations are phased over a 20-year period. The implementation matrix identifies specific implementation tasks and provides a timeline of when they could, or should likely occur. Because the implementation will fall to a variety of stakeholders, the implementation section also identifies potential parties to lead tasks



*Existing curb extension with ADA features at 44th & Beard.*

# 1. INTRODUCTION





**V**ision: Linden Hills is a thriving pedestrian-friendly and sustainable urban village that offers varied housing, commercial, open space, and transportation choices to meet residents' and business owners' needs. Renovation and new development support and enhance the existing scale and character of the neighborhood.

## 1.1 Summary Overview

Since the early years of the streetcar, the Linden Hills Neighborhood has been a unique and thriving community in southwest Minneapolis. A “small town within a larger city,” its success as an urban village is due to a number of factors including: exceptional residential properties, close proximity to the Chain of Lakes, excellent school options, a number of diverse and unique businesses, and a high quality architectural character and urban public realm.

These characteristics make Linden Hills a desirable place to live, maintain a business, and visit. Due to the neighborhood’s desirability it has attracted development attention, leading to discourse about how to make development work best within the context of the community. As a result, it was deemed a priority for the City and the neighborhood to clearly establish a vision and policy plan for guiding future development of the neighborhood. Issues to be addressed include land use, building scale and massing, density, traffic and parking capacity, function and character of the public realm, heritage preservation, and sustainability.

These matters were studied in the context of the neighborhood’s commercial nodes at 43rd & Upton, 44th & France, and 44th & Beard, and commercial corridors of 44th Street & France Avenue. Historical development patterns along these corridors, such as commercial development around the streetcar, and subsequent cultural forces, such as the rise of the automobile and local niche retailers, provide the foundation for describing existing conditions and future planning.

The resulting Small Area Plan outlines a collaborative vision for growth within the Linden Hills neighborhood. It achieves this vision by building on The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth, the City’s Comprehensive Plan, while incorporating neighborhood members’ ideas and preferences for shaping change within the community. This input, from residents, business owners, and visitors to Linden Hills, creates the foundation of the Small Area Plan’s vision, goals, and policies.

## 1.2 Purpose of the Linden Hills Small Area Plan

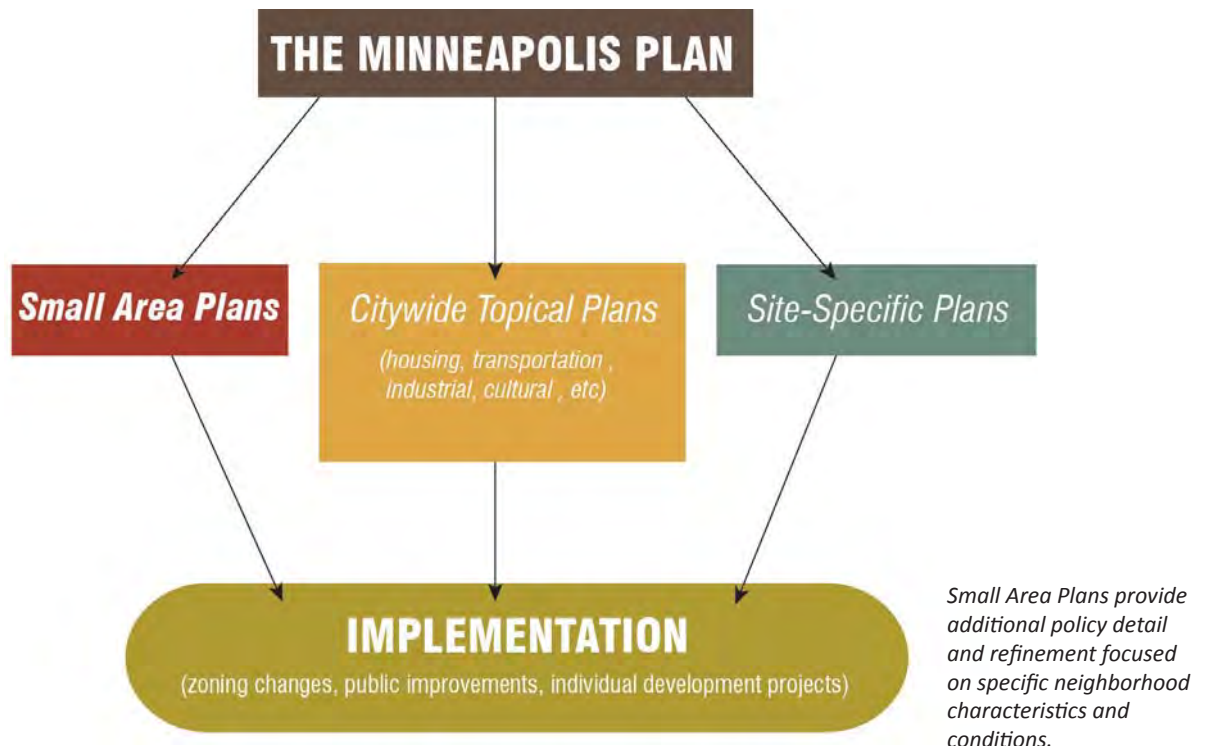
This Plan has been created to guide future development of Linden Hills' Neighborhood Commercial Nodes and Community Corridors over the next 20 years. The intent of the Plan is not to be prescriptive, nor to restrict the types of mixed use commercial development as it is currently permitted under the City Zoning Code. Instead, it serves to provide policy framework within which Linden Hills can continue to evolve as an exceptional neighborhood.

An aim of this Plan is to provide a contextually and environmentally sensitive framework for guiding developers or business owners wishing to propose expansion, renovations, or new development. This same framework will assist residents in evaluating development proposals.

Another aim of the Plan is to guide residents in the design and implementation of public improvement projects, allowing neighborhood members to shape or influence future growth in the areas studied.

**In summary, the Small Area Plan:**

- 1. Describes a 20 year vision for business nodes and corridors**
- 2. Formulates specific goals, and policies and projects to implement the vision by addressing matters of Land Use; Transportation; Movement, Connectivity and Parking; Building and Site Design; Sustainability and Environment; Heritage Preservation**
- 3. Refines Comprehensive Plan policy to address specific circumstances and conditions in Linden Hills.**
- 4. Creates a framework for residents to influence neighborhood improvement or development projects.**



### *1.3 Project Area Description*

Like the adjacent Chain of Lakes and Grand Rounds, the Linden Hills' commercial districts are community assets that should be retained and enhanced. The main attributes of these corridors and commercial districts include a number of successful and independent business operations, a mix of retail and service establishments, a collection of low-rise buildings, narrow storefronts along tree-lined streets, and close proximity to Lake Harriet and the Grand Rounds parkway.

Linden Hill's commercial districts have been, and continue to be, very successful. The sum impression and interrelationships of the individual commercial districts, the adjacent residential areas, and the connection to regional park amenities conveys a character that is desirable to residents and visitors. A significant factor of the commercial districts' success is the interplay of its urban design character and eclectic mix of businesses within a surrounding residential context.



*Fig 1.3 Linden Hills at 43rd & Upton looking north toward downtown Minneapolis. Courtesy of Metropolitan Design Center.*





### Project Area Boundary

The project boundary is defined as the commercial areas described below in the “Area of Direct Study.” The Small Area Plan considers impacts on properties within one-block from the Area of Direct Study (Area of Influence) as well as important connections to amenities outside of the study boundary.

### Area of Direct Study

The Area of Direct Study contains properties within the Neighborhood Commercial Nodes that are recognized in the City’s Comprehensive Plan at 43rd & Upton and 44th & France. It also includes the parcels immediately adjacent to the 44th Street Community Corridor between Upton Avenue and France Avenue and the France Avenue community corridor from Glendale Avenue to 47th Street. Goals, plans, and policies described in this Small Area Plan are focused in the Area of Study.

### Area of Influence

The Area of Influence contains properties within one block of the Area of Direct Study. This is the adjacent area where properties are most directly affected by activity and development in the Area of Direct Study. Changes in land use, density, and design are not anticipated in these areas. Goals, policies, and recommendations do not pertain to this area.

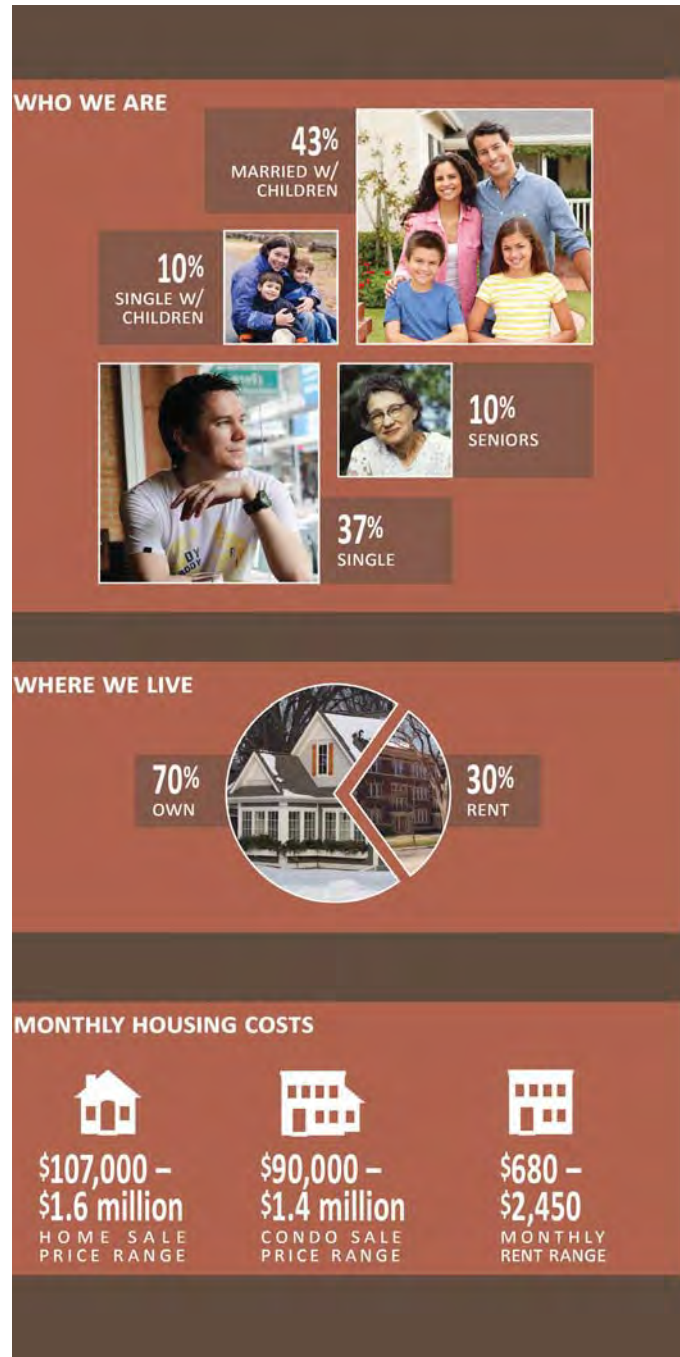
- - - - - Project Boundary
- - - - - Area of Influence

*Map of the Linden Hills Neighborhood, the Small Area Plan Site Boundary, and surrounding Area of Influence.*

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## Demographic and Housing Profile of Linden Hills

- Population growth:** Between 1990 and 2010, total population declined from 7,678 to 7,564, roughly 1%. During this same time, Minneapolis total population declined from 382,618 to 382,578, under 1% or essentially no change.
- Age:** In 2010, 52% of Linden Hills residents were between 18 years old and 54, compared to 62% of Minneapolis total resident population. In terms of seniors or older adults, 24% Linden Hills residents were 55 years of age or older, compared to only 17% of Minneapolis total resident population.
- Households by Type:** Total households: 3,488 in Linden Hills compared to 163,540 in Minneapolis. Households with no children or no children under 18: 930 (27%) compared to 36,942 (22%) in Minneapolis. Married couple family households with children less than 18 years: 707 (20%) compared to 20,270 (12%) in Minneapolis. Single-person family households with children under 18 years: 213 (6%) with 14,760 (9%) in Minneapolis. Non-family households: 1,638 (47%) compared to 91,568 (56%) in Minneapolis.
- Household Income (annual):** 51% of households have an income of over \$75,000, 33% have an income between \$35,000 and \$75,000, and 16% have an income of less than \$35,000. Household income for Minneapolis shows 29% of households with an income over \$75,000, 32% have an income between \$35,000 and \$75,000, and 39% have an income of less than \$35,000.
- Rent versus own housing:** Of the occupied housing units in Linden Hills, 70% are owner-occupied and 30% are renter-occupied, compared to 49% owner-occupied and 51% renter-occupied for Minneapolis as a whole.
- Housing Costs:** Home Sale Price: \$107,000 to \$1.6 million. Condo Sale Price: \$90,000 to \$1.4 million. Monthly Rent: \$680 to \$2,450. Compared to Minneapolis where home sale prices range from \$77,000 to \$17.7 million, condo sale prices range from \$77,000 to \$3.5 million, and monthly rent ranges from \$297 to \$12,000.
- Number of Housing Units:** Total number of housing units in Linden Hills: 3,688. Single Family units: 2,217. Two family units: 410. Multi-family (3 or more) units: 1,061.



## 1.4 Background Plans

This Linden Hills Small Area Plan expands on a body of research and planning conducted for and by the community over several decades. As pressures in and around the neighborhood change, neighborhood plans, goals, and objectives are updated, and strategies are re-evaluated.

Neighborhood planning and visioning initially began after the creation of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP). Motivated by a decline in Minneapolis neighborhoods the NRP was created in the early 1990's as a city-wide program that invites residents to participate directly in public decision making at a sub-local neighborhood level. The initiative builds neighborhood capacity through a public planning process that defines visions, goals, guidelines, and actions, as well as allocates funds for improvement.

### First Step NRP Action Plan

Linden Hills began its NRP process in 1994 with the creation of specialized community task forces. Members studied distinct elements of the neighborhood, including, "Commercial Districts," "Transportation," "Natural Environment," "Public Spaces," "Building Community," and "History, Art, and Culture." Based on ideas contributed by each task force and from extensive neighborhood input, an elected Steering Committee drafted a First Step Action Plan (the first deliverable in the NRP process). This Plan outlined measurable objectives that supported the visions and goals identified by members of the Linden Hills neighborhood. The NRP Action Plan was approved in 1995.

### Linden Hills Neighborhood Action Plan

After approval, a new Steering Committee was elected in 1996 to guide the implementation of the First Step Plan and to write the Linden Hills Neighborhood Action Plan, a document that identified projects for Linden Hills and funding allocation for each project.

### Linden Hills Neighborhood Design Framework: A Plan for Commercial Districts

An additional component of the implementation of the First Step Plan allowed the Linden Hills Neighborhood Council to hire a professional planning consultant. The firm BRW was contracted to create the Linden Hills Neighborhood Design Framework. The Plan was designed as a means to guide future development and public and private improvements in the Linden Hills neighborhood over a 20 year time period. While this Plan was never officially adopted by City Council, its design framework and guidelines were readily accepted by the neighborhood, and it helped inform elements of the Linden Hills Neighborhood Action Plan.

### NRP Phase 1 Report

At the same time as the First Step Plan and Neighborhood Action Plan were being created, a parallel subcommittee of the Linden Hills Neighborhood Council—The Commercial Development Task Force—was formed to study the impact of the three commercial districts in response to resident concerns over perceived parking shortages, traffic congestion, and changes in district scale and character. The task force prepared a report: Recommendation for the Linden Hills Neighborhood Commercial Areas, also called the Phase 1 Report.

This report identified issues, opportunities, future objectives, and strategies within the three commercial districts. One strategy proposal was the creation of a zoning overlay district. The overlay district was approved by the Planning Commission and City Council in the summer of 1997. It includes design guidelines for building and parking location, loading areas, signage, as well as parking requirements for specific users such as restaurants and coffee shops.

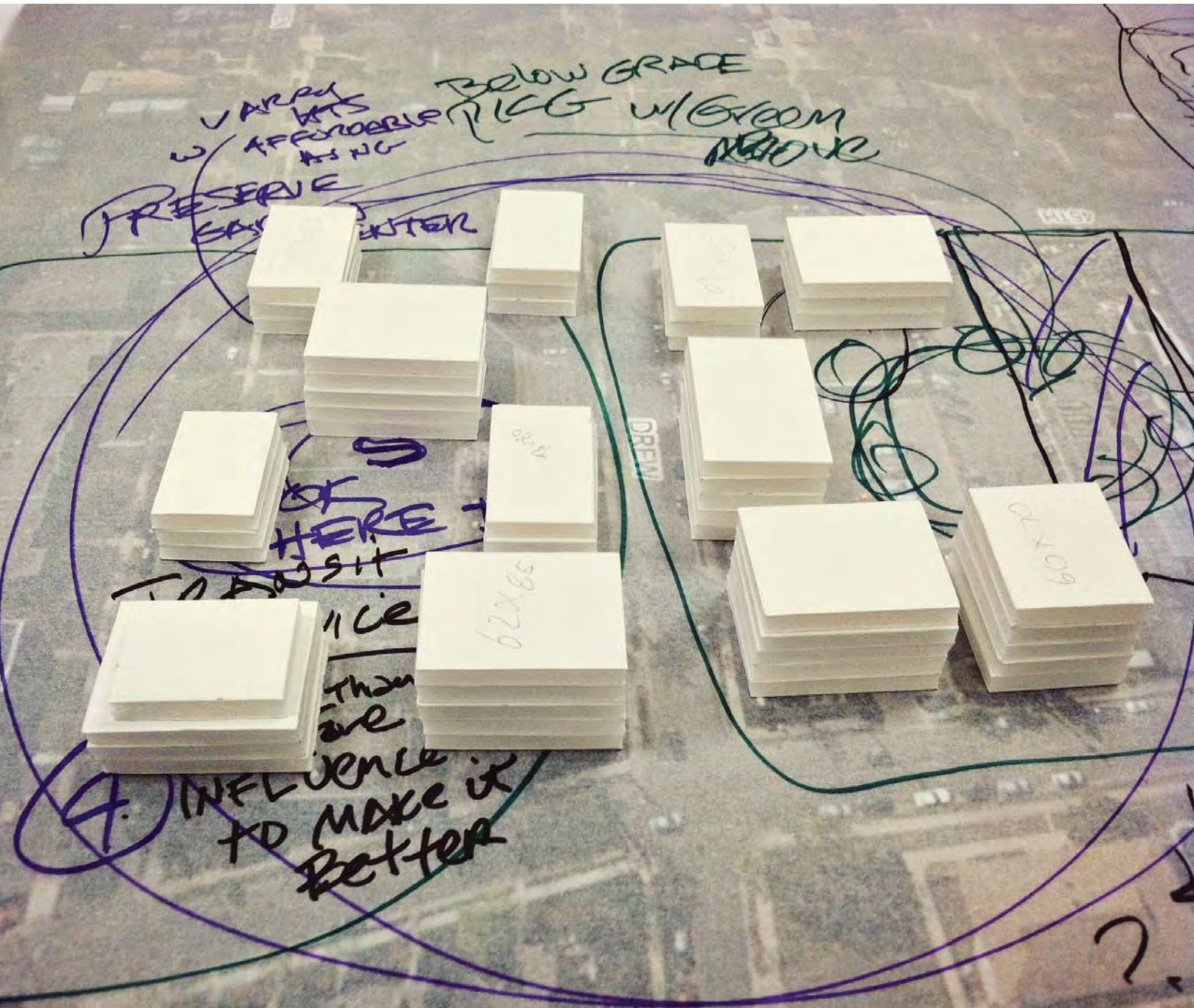
### City's Comprehensive Plan (The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth)

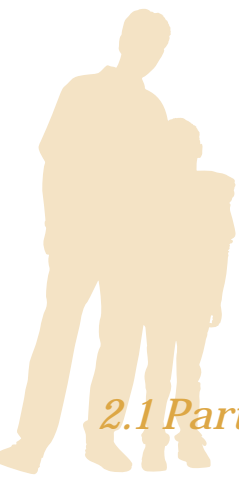
The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth is significant to the Linden Hills Small Area Plan because it provides policy direction based on the recognition of land use features, such as Neighborhood Commercial Nodes and Community Corridors, and land use classifications, such as Urban Neighborhood and Mixed Use. The Minneapolis Plan uses these features and land use classifications to guide land use and development intensity. The Minneapolis Plan was updated in 2008 to provide a current policy framework in response to changes occurring in the City and region, and to direct the logical and coordinated physical development of the City's future growth. The Comprehensive Plan looks forward, anticipates change, and provides guidance for prospective legislative and administrative actions.

### Access Minneapolis, 10-Year Transportation Action Plan

The City's Transportation Plan provides a comprehensive, place-based, multimodal approach to transportation planning and design within the City's neighborhoods, districts and corridors. Comprised of multiple components, the Street Design Guidelines are particularly relevant to the development of the Small Area Plan as they establish parameters and guidance integrating land use and transportation facility design.

## 2. NEIGHBORHOOD PARTICIPATION





## *2.1 Participation Program and Process*

The Small Area Plan development process took place in four phases over 11 months. Hundreds of community members participated in various aspects of the project through four neighborhood workshops, eight Steering Committee meetings, two open houses, and two public online surveys. In addition, a project-specific web site was hosted and maintained by the City to keep neighborhood stakeholders informed of progress over the course of the project. These types of engagement gathered feedback from neighborhood residents, business and property owners, which helped identify areas of concern, and inform the development and evaluation of key plan elements.

The purpose of these efforts was to provide opportunities for participants to collaborate in identifying issues and opportunities, and to evaluate modifications and enhancement options for the Small Area Plan in the areas of land use, urban design, building and site design, transportation, heritage preservation, and the environment. Meetings, surveys, and workshops provided the consultant team with a deeper understanding of the issues and concerns surrounding neighborhood redevelopment and quality of life. Ideas that redefined land use, scale of redevelopment, and strengthening

neighborhood sustainability were evaluated by neighbors and business owners and refined in consultation with the 14-member Steering Committee over the course of the planning process.

### **Steering Committee**

A project Steering Committee was selected in July of 2012 and represented a wide range of constituents from the Linden Hills neighborhood. Responsibilities of committee members included:

- Communicate and collaborate with project consultants
- Advise on the planning process
- Help engage neighborhood members
- Advise on content of the Small Area Plan
- Balance various values and make recommendations to the Linden Hills Neighborhood Council Board

Steering Committee members met with City staff and consultants eight times during the Small Area Plan preparation process in addition to participating in neighborhood workshops, open houses and conducting several informal organization and document review sessions.

## Creative City Making Initiative

As part of the planning process, a team of three artists worked with youth in the community to introduce them to aspects of neighborhood planning and seek their input. As part of this outreach the artists completed a three-week-long residency in the arts program at Southwest High School. During their residency the artists guided students in activities designed to engage them with questions regarding a vision for Linden Hills.

Working with the artists was made possible by Creative CityMaking, a partnership between the City of Minneapolis and Intermedia Arts to imbed artists in planning processes with the intention of increasing community interaction and collaboration with the public to foster positive change in the quality and trajectory of social discourse regarding the City's urban future.

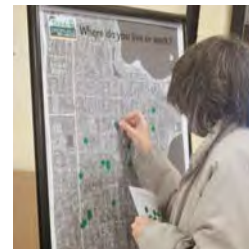
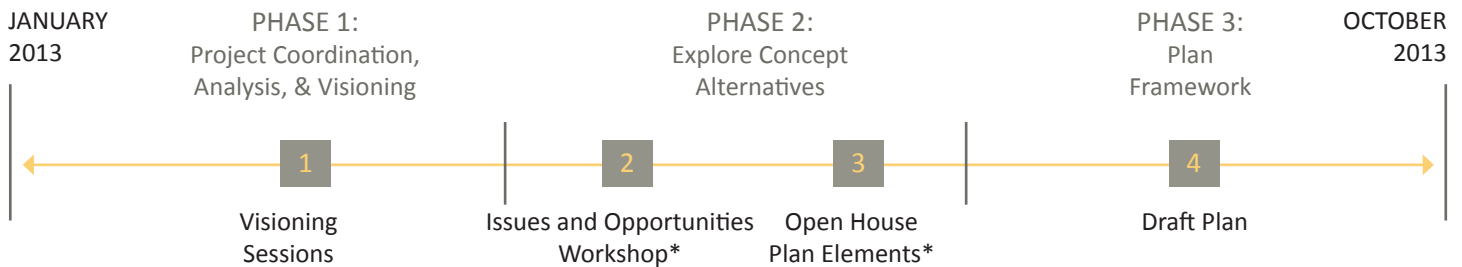
## Project Tour

The planning process was initiated on January 24, 2013, with a neighborhood tour where Steering Committee members, artists, consultants, and City staff walked

the project area together. The tour was followed by a facilitated discussion about project issues goals and topics for the online issue, opportunities and visioning survey.

## Neighborhood Survey and Issues and Opportunities Workshops

An online neighborhood survey comprised of eight questions was developed to obtain opinions and ideas from as broad a spectrum of the public as possible. Questions ranged from asking what people like most and least about the neighborhood, to what their most common mode of travel is during different seasons. More than 300 survey responses were received over a three-week period. While the online survey was being conducted, approximately 80 people participated in two neighborhood workshops to share their likes, dislikes, concerns, and ideas for future neighborhood growth, preservation, and improvement with consultants and City staff. Survey and workshop input were tabulated and summarized to help inform the Steering Committee and consultant in developing the vision and goal statements for the Small Area Plan.



\*With Virtual Open House and Online Survey

**Public Process:** The Small Area Plan Process included four community meetings. Presentations and feedback were part of each meeting. Surveys and comments accompanied open house presentations.

## Interactive Planning Workshops

Two interactive planning workshops were conducted on the evenings of April 24th and 25th, midway through the Small Area Planning process. Attended by over 90 neighbors and property owners, these two interactive sessions provided a variety of opportunities for discussing issues and exploring ideas. These included:

- Presentation of neighborhood inventory and analysis findings on land use and density, market, transportation, and heritage preservation.
- Summary of key Small Area Plan issues, themes and vision statement.
- Small group planning exercises organized by commercial area and corridor, using maps, scaled building blocks, and sketches.
- Small table reporting to full participant group.

Plans, sketches, and notes developed during the planning workshops were synthesized into a series of topic-specific planning options and policy recommendations. Working in collaboration with the Steering Committee, options were developed for:

- Land Use
- Built Form/Building and Site Design
- Cultural and Historic Districts
- Multimodal Transportation
- Parking
- Green Infrastructure

Options were presented through illustration and description. The resulting presentation boards were packaged for neighborhood review and evaluation based on the neighborhood's vision statement and defined goals.



*Project kick-off began with a tour of the Linden Hills neighborhood with City staff, Steering Committee members, and consultant.*

## Online and Neighborhood Open Houses

After developing the detailed planning options, a set of evaluation questions were prepared. These formed the basis of the online open house survey. The 45 question virtual open house survey ran on the project web site for several weeks and received 73 completed responses. Meanwhile the neighborhood open house, conducted on June 5th, drew approximately 50 visitors. Participants shared their opinions with consultants and Steering Committee members by voting for or against options using red and green stickers. These votes were incorporated with online survey responses to provide direction on further plan development and refinement.

## Development Advisory Panel

A Development Advisory Panel (DAP) was created to consult on development challenges and opportunities facing Linden Hills. The panel was comprised of members of the local development and real estate market research community. During the development process, the DAP participated in two meetings with the Steering Committee and consultants to provide insight into neighborhood redevelopment market trends and review project-specific planning concepts. During the first meeting, in March 2013, panel members discussed redevelopment challenges facing the Neighborhood and Commercial Nodes, such as increasing urban density, providing a range of housing, and accommodating an urban fabric while maintaining the unique qualities of Linden Hills. The second meeting was held in June 2013, during which the panel reviewed development concepts and recommendations generated throughout the project. Members provided feedback on building height, density, sustainability and the economy, and the role of developers in subsequent stages of the neighborhood planning process. Detailed summaries of these meetings are available in the Appendix.



*Meeting with the Steering Committee, consultants, and the Development Advisory Panel.*



## 2.2 Key Themes

Key themes expressed during workshops and online survey responses were used to guide the development and evaluation of planning options.

### Outline of Themes

1. Retain the existing scale, character, and charm of the Neighborhood Commercial Nodes
  - Walkable, pedestrian friendly public realm
  - Eclectic mix of human-scale buildings
  - Vibrant, small, independent, neighborhood-serving businesses
2. New buildings should exhibit similar height, massing, and human-scale as those that surround them
3. Provide a broader spectrum of life cycle housing options to allow people to stay in the neighborhood as they age
4. Increase diversity (cultural and income) in the area
5. Become more sustainable
  - Build more bike and transit facilities, not more parking lots
  - Incorporate “green” systems and technologies into buildings and sites
  - Preserve, rehabilitate, and adapt, existing buildings for new uses

### Description of Themes 1 and 2

The buildings of the commercial nodes at 43rd & Upton and 44th & Beard have a discreet rhythm of storefronts; a new storefront or building transition occurs approximately every 50-feet or less. This creates variation among the commercial blocks which reinforces walkability in these nodes. Community members’ value the pedestrian experience afforded by this fine grain.

Building height and length (building face fronting the public street) are two elements that significantly contribute to the existing storefront rhythm (other key features include building material and facades, windows to the street, and consistency of buildings at the sidewalk line.) In the 43rd & Upton node, building heights range from 1 to 3-stories. In the nodes of 44th & Beard and 44th & France, building heights range from 1 to 2-stories. The majority of project participants expressed that it is important for new development or building additions in these areas to be of similar height (1 to 3-stories) to retain the scale and character of these nodes.

The commercial node at 44th & France is primarily defined by single-story, single-use commercial buildings with surface parking lots. The buildings on the west side of France Avenue have a cohesive, main street character preferred by the community while buildings on the eastern side of France Avenue are more disparately placed and

many have larger adjacent parking lots. Despite the large lot size of many of the businesses in this node, disfavor was consistently expressed regarding monolithic developments that pay little attention to architectural detail, massing, height, and articulation, and are so common on large sites.

While the exterior qualities of buildings are significant to neighborhood structure, the array of vibrant and unique businesses housed within also significantly contribute to what residents and visitors value about the neighborhood. The factors that affect the success of small and independent businesses are complex and many are beyond the scope of this planning process. However, certain criteria became important when considering new development such as rental costs associated with older buildings versus new development, as well as the need for lower rent structure to support small and independent businesses.



Commercial buildings in the 43rd & Upton node.

### Description of Themes 3, 4, and 5

In addition to concerns over commercial and mixed use buildings, providing a variety of housing options is important to the neighborhood. For example, the lack of up-to-date housing for empty nesters and seniors was a theme expressed during the planning process. Specifically, planning participants identified the need for residences that offer single level living (multi-story with elevators, or 1-story), are smaller in size, and require less maintenance. This type of housing would allow residents to downsize while continuing to live in Linden Hills.

Concerns for improving connections between the commercial nodes and enhancing the pedestrian and bicyclist environment along 44th Street were also frequently voiced by planning participants. A theme

throughout the planning process was to continue to shape the neighborhood to support active living, improve public health, and reduce demand for parking. Preferences for achieving these goals included attention toward pedestrian accessibility to the neighborhood as well as exploring options for expanded bike and transit facilities.

The neighborhood's mature tree canopy, accessible parks and green spaces, and direct connection with Lake Harriet were often mentioned as contributing to the neighborhood's sense of place and high-quality of life. This led to discussions of integrating new development infrastructure that would reinforce the neighborhood's current environmental programs and landscape amenities, such as better stormwater management and green building practices.

## 2.3 VISION AND GOALS

The Steering Committee and the consultant team collaborated in developing a vision statement for the Small Area Plan:

*Linden Hills is a thriving pedestrian-friendly and sustainable urban village that offers varied housing, commercial, open space, and transportation choices to meet residents' and business owners' needs. Renovation and new development support and enhance the existing scale and character of the neighborhood.*

Building upon the vision statement, four primary projects goals were established to further guide the preparation of the Small Area Plan:

1. Keep and enhance what makes the Linden Hills commercial districts unique.
2. Ensure appropriately-scaled redevelopment.
3. Encourage complementary uses, activity, and public realm enhancements.
4. Promote public infrastructure and private development that reinforces an ecologically healthy neighborhood.
5. Support the development of a broad spectrum of life-cycle housing options.

### 3. PLAN ELEMENTS



This Plan provides guidance on five major elements: Land Use & Development Intensity, Building & Site Design, Movement, Connectivity & Parking, Sustainability & Environment, and Heritage Preservation. Each section on the elements provides information on existing conditions, relevant City—wide policy, and outlines neighborhood-specific goals, policies, and recommendations.

### *3.1 Land Use & Development Intensity*

Past development patterns in Linden Hills strongly influenced the neighborhood’s current property development and character of commercial blocks and adjacent properties. The biggest influence on existing land use patterns was the streetcar. The trolley line bisected 43rd and 44th streets as it transected the neighborhood east to west. Other historical influences still apparent today include property ownership, original platting of properties, and market forces of the early 1900s. Understanding this basic development history explains the context for current conditions within Linden Hills. Furthermore, it informs the challenges and opportunities of future growth and this Plan’s recommendations.



*Outdoor seating and open space features are desired amenities.*

**43rd & Upton, Past:** The Como-Harriet line of the Twin City Rapid Transit's street car stopped at the intersection of a dedicated right of way between 43rd and 44th Streets and Upton Avenue. By 1912, 12 years after the line was completed, there was commercial activity at all four corners of the intersection, as well as up to 43rd Street. At this time, homes and tracts of undeveloped land surrounded the commercial structures.

By the 1930's development of this node intensified. Many of the commercial structures were redeveloped and density within the node increased. This intensification, along with small property sizes resulted in a pattern of modest sized commercial buildings with narrow street frontages. At the same time, several homes that were adjacent to the commercial node were assembled and redeveloped into larger multi-family structures. Other tracts near the commercial areas still remained undeveloped. These would be developed several decades later (mid-century) into multi-family apartment buildings. Also completed during this time period was one of the neighborhood's churches, St. Thomas the Apostle Church.

By the end of the 1930s the automobile had gained popularity and several auto service buildings and gas stations were established in the neighborhood. Despite the auto's popularity, the area's general development pattern remained oriented toward the street car stops and pedestrian movement.

**43rd & Upton, Present:** The historic development pattern of the 43rd & Upton commercial node still exists today with various degrees of redevelopment. Properties that were once gas stations in the 1950's—the north east corner of 44th Street & Upton Avenue and north west corner of 43rd Street & Upton Avenue—have not undergone considerable redevelopment. The commercial buildings are 1 to 3-stories in height with upper levels of multi-story buildings being used for offices and residences. 1 to 2-story residential properties to the north and east of the node remain intact, as well as the 3 to 4-story apartment buildings along Sheridan that were developed mid-century. One aspect that has considerably changed is the former trolley right of way, which has been converted into parking space and vehicular access for homes and businesses.



**44th & Beard, Past:** The development patterns of this commercial area were also heavily influenced by the street car, but development happened more slowly in this node and it never reached the same level of commercial intensity as 43rd & Upton. Nevertheless, like development at 43rd & Upton, commercial properties in this area were built as 1 to 3-story buildings with small street frontages. Properties adjacent to the commercial parcels were mostly developed into single family homes with a few multi-family buildings added in the 1950s and 1960s.

**44th & Beard Now:** Like 43rd & Upton, the historic development pattern around 44th & Beard is readily apparent. Original 1 to 2-story buildings with discrete storefronts are largely intact and the most significant change to the node is the redevelopment of the former streetcar right of way as a parking lot, a public park and a multi-family townhouse style development.



**44th & France, Past:** Development patterns in this area varied significantly from 43rd & Upton and 44th & Beard. There was very little commercial development in this node up until 1950, and a very small number of larger properties made up the undeveloped areas. Three of the commercial buildings that existed were filling stations and automotive services. Residential properties surrounding this node were developed much earlier. The more traditional residential development surrounding the area along with large undeveloped tracts of land created a stronger distinction between the commercial and residential uses.

As development progressed after the 1950s, 44th & France continued to cater to the modern auto-oriented habits of the area’s residents as opposed to the more

walkable, streetcar oriented development of 43rd & Upton and 44th & Beard. Unlike the other nodes, this area was platted as a combination of large and medium sized parcels, which when combined with the popularity of the automobile, resulted in a more suburban pattern of development. This pattern of large, street-facing surface parking lots with separate, free standing 1-story buildings established a unique, modern era shopping district within the neighborhood.

**44th & France, Present:** There is little building fabric remaining from before 1950. Of the numerous gas station sites that once serviced the area, one remains at the corner of Sunnyside and France Avenues. Properties surrounding the node have not changed dramatically and range from 1960’s and 1970’s era 2 to 3-story apartments, townhouses and older single family homes.









← EDINA MINNEAPOLIS →

— Existing Commercial Nodes

- EDINA LAND USE**
- Commercial
  - Single Family Residential
  - Multiple Family Residential
  - Parks and Recreation
  - Public / Semi-Public

- MINNEAPOLIS LAND USE**
- Low Density Residential (up to 20 DU/acre)
  - Medium Density Residential (20 - 50 DU/acre)
  - High Density Residential (50 - 120 DU/acre)
  - Very High Density Residential (> 120 DU/acre)
  - Commercial
  - Existing Neighborhood Commercial Node

- Cultural / Entertainment
- Mixed Use
- Public / Institutional
- Parks / Open Space
- Transportation / Communication / Utilities
- Vacant

**EXISTING LAND USE MAP**

## City Policies

The City of Minneapolis' Comprehensive Plan: The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth uses identified land use features to guide future land use policy (residential, office, commercial, etc.) and land use intensity (size and density of residential properties, size and type of commercial uses). These features follow existing development patterns in Minneapolis. Two types of land use features: Neighborhood Commercial Nodes and Community Corridors have been designated within Linden Hills.

The City's Comprehensive Plan recognizes two Neighborhood Commercial Nodes within the neighborhood: the area surrounding 43rd & Upton and the area surrounding 44th & France. Neighborhood Commercial Nodes are defined as:

- They maintain a building typology and pedestrian orientation that is appropriate for the surrounding residential neighborhoods.
- The node's businesses provide retail or other services on at least three corners of an intersection.
- The businesses serve the surrounding neighborhood as well as the larger community and region.
- Residential densities are intended to be medium density to high density where appropriate within the node and then transitioning down to medium density in surrounding areas.

A third mixed use commercial area occurs between the two designated nodes along 44th Street from Beard to Zenith Avenues (44th & Beard) and is not designated as a Neighborhood Commercial Node in the City's Comprehensive Plan. There is less specific guidance offered in the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth for these types of undesignated commercial areas.

The City's Comprehensive Plan designates 44th Street between Upton and France Avenues and France Avenue from Glendale Terrace to 51st Street as Community Corridors:

- The corridors are comprised of primarily residential land use with intermittent commercial uses clustered at intersections in nodes.
- Commercial uses are generally small-scale retail sales and services that support the immediate neighborhood.
- Design and development along Community Corridors is oriented toward the pedestrian experience.
- The narrative of The Minneapolis Plan states that Community Corridors support new residential development from low- to high-density in specified areas, as well as increased housing diversity in neighborhoods. Specific implementation steps in The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth calls for more intensive residential development along Community Corridors near intersections with Neighborhood Commercial Nodes and other locations where it is compatible with existing character.
- The Minneapolis Plan's implementation steps further encourage medium density housing immediately adjacent to Neighborhood Commercial Nodes to serve as a transition to surrounding low density residential areas.

The City's Comprehensive Plan classifies density as follows:

- **Low Density:** Under 20 units per acre
- **Medium Density:** 20-50 units per acre
- **High Density:** 50-120 units per acre
- **Very High Density:** More than 120 units per acre

Within these classifications Linden Hills has a range of densities in a variety of building types. Building types include single family detached homes, duplexes, townhouses, row houses, condominiums and apartments. Within multiple-family structures located in Linden Hills, density (dwellings per acre) varies as identified by the following examples:

#### **Low Density**

3824 44th Street W - 11 dwelling units per acre, 5 units

#### **Medium Density**

4408 Chowen Avenue - 32 dwelling units per acre, 66 units

4444 Lake Harriet Parkway- 35 dwelling units per acre, 10 units

4314 Upton Ave S - 35.8 dwelling units per acre, 7 units

#### **High Density**

2716 44th Street W- 67 dwelling units per acre, 15 units

4269 Sheridan Ave S- 60 dwelling units per acre, 35 units

4300 Upton Ave S- 53 dwelling units per acre, 7 units

## **Density versus Large Scale Development**

The terms “high density” and “large or out-of-scale development” are often used interchangeably. This is inaccurate as they are not interchangeable and their use as synonymous is misleading. Density describes the number of housing units per unit of land; it is expressed as units per acre. It does not describe the height, massing, or size of a building. As illustrated in the photographs, many of the densest residential properties in Linden Hills are modest scale residential and mixed use commercial properties—properties that the community has identified as defining the essential character of Linden Hills. Many of the larger scale properties in the area (covering full blocks, of a consistent style, mass and height) are actually less dense. New development needn't be substantially taller or larger than other buildings in the area to provide the levels of density called for in the City's Comprehensive Plan and encouraged within this Small Area Plan.



*High density housing: 53 dwelling units per acre. 4300 Upton Avenue.*



*Medium density housing: 35 dwelling units per acre. 4444 Lake Harriet Parkway.*



*Low density housing: 11 dwelling Units per acre. 3824 44th Street.*

## **Applicable General Policies Guiding Land Use, and Commercial and Residential Intensity *from the City's Comprehensive Plan***

The City's Comprehensive Plan provides a number of policies regarding land use, and commercial/residential development intensity that are applicable to this Plan. Examples of these include:

**Policy 1.2:** Ensure appropriate transitions between uses with different size, scale, and intensity.

**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.

**Policy 1.5:** Promote growth and encourage overall city vitality by directing new commercial and mixed use development to designated corridors and districts.

**1.5.3:** Promote the preservation of traditional commercial storefronts wherever feasible.

**Policy 1.8:** Preserve the stability and diversity of the city's neighborhoods while allowing for increased density in order to attract and retain long-term residents and businesses.

**1.8.1:** Promote a range of housing types and residential densities, with highest density development concentrated in and along appropriate land use features.

**Policy 1.9:** Through attention to the mix and intensity of land uses and transit service, the City will support development along Community Corridors that enhances residential livability and pedestrian access.

**1.9.5:** Encourage the development of low- to medium-density housing on Community Corridors to serve as a transition to surrounding low-density residential areas.

**1.9.6:** Promote more intensive residential development along Community Corridors near intersections with Neighborhood Commercial Nodes and other locations where it is compatible with existing character.

**Policy 1.11:** Preserve and enhance a system of Neighborhood Commercial Nodes that includes a mix of housing, neighborhood-serving retail, and community uses.

**1.11.2:** Support the continued presence of small-scale, neighborhood serving retail and commercial services in Neighborhood Commercial Nodes.

**1.11.4:** Encourage a height of at least two stories for new buildings in Neighborhood Commercial Nodes, in keeping with neighborhood character.

**1.11.5:** Encourage the development of medium- to high-density housing where appropriate within the boundaries of Neighborhood Commercial Nodes, preferably in mixed use buildings with commercial uses on the ground floor.

**1.11.6:** Encourage the development of medium-density housing immediately adjacent to Neighborhood Commercial Nodes to serve as a transition to surrounding low-density residential areas.

**Policy 3.1:** Grow by increasing the supply of housing.

**3.1.1:** Support the development of new medium- and high-density housing in appropriate locations throughout the city.

**3.1.2:** Use planning processes and other opportunities for community engagement to build community understanding of the important role that urban density plays in stabilizing and strengthening the city.

**Policy 3.2:** Support housing density in locations that are well connected by transit, and are close to commercial, cultural and natural amenities.

**3.2.1:** Encourage and support housing development along commercial and community corridors, and in and near growth centers, activity centers, retail centers, transit station areas, and neighborhood commercial nodes.

Existing zoning within the mixed use nodes closely corresponds to the functional nature of each area and reflects implementation of land use policies from the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The 43rd & Upton node is predominantly zoned C1—Neighborhood Commercial District—with the exception of the former grocery store site (currently Settergren’s Hardware) which is zoned C2—Neighborhood Corridor Commercial District to accommodate the former grocery store use. The 44th & Beard commercial area is zoned C1—Neighborhood Commercial District. The 44th & France mixed use commercial node is zoned C2—Neighborhood Corridor Commercial District—reflecting the auto-oriented pattern of development (grocery store, gas station, strip mall center, etc.). Because the majority of commercial buildings are 1 to 2-stories, the height limit of the C1 zoning district has been mostly untested as to its adequacy in transitioning between the commercial and adjacent residential structures. While the 4-story, 56-foot, maximum height permitted in the C2 zoning district of the 44th & France node also hasn’t been built, its potential impact on adjacent homes was the subject of considerable discussion and evaluation during the preparation of this Plan.

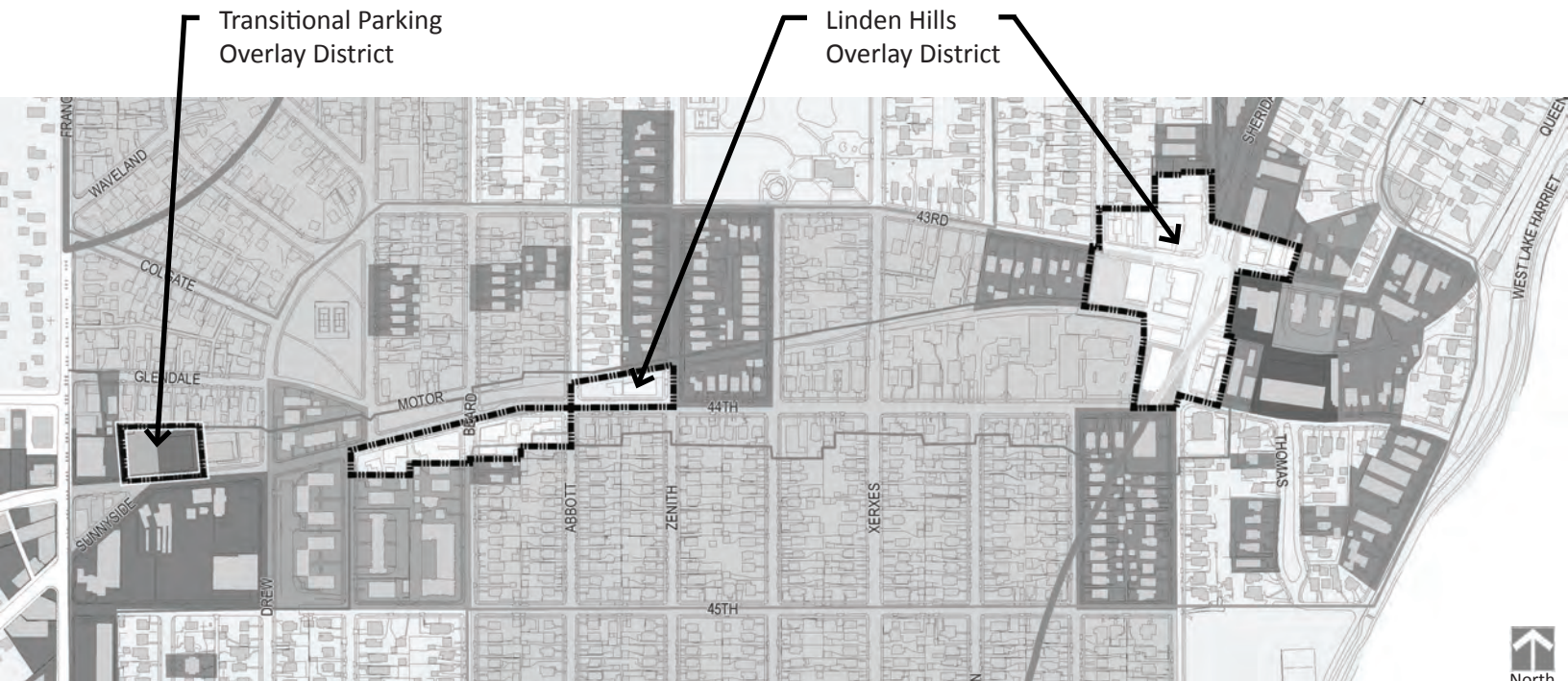
In 1999 the Linden Hills Overlay District, was applied to the 43rd & Upton node and the areas constituting the commercial area around 44th & Beard in order to,

“Preserve and promote the pedestrian character of the Linden Hills commercial districts, to establish parking

requirements for certain high impact uses, to reduce the impact of commercial uses and off-street parking and loading facilities on adjacent properties, to maintain the economic viability of the Linden Hills commercial districts while retaining a core of businesses providing neighborhood services, and to mitigate the impacts of vehicular speeds and congestion in the neighborhood.”

These regulations place additional or alternative requirements on parking, building and site design, and site plan review, ranging from a ban on drive-through services to a requirement that surface parking be located at the rear or interior side of the site. Full descriptions of zoning regulations can be found at the City web site: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/zoning/>.

Many of the Linden Hills Overlay District’s regulations are shared in the City’s other Pedestrian Overlay Districts, and advance the interest in increasing walkability through the design of development projects. Other regulations are out-of-date or counterproductive to the direction of this Plan. For example, the prohibition of bicycle and in-line skate rental shops, and requirements for increased off-street parking are unfavorable for encouraging sustainability—of access to goods, and alternative forms of transport—around the Linden Hills neighborhood. These provisions should be refined and the Linden Hills Overlay Zoning District revised to reflect the guidance of this Plan. Its application to the 44th & France Neighborhood Commercial Node should also be considered.



## LAND USE DEVELOPMENT AND INTENSITY

### Small Area Plan Goals and Policies

The following policies were developed based on the examination of current conditions, City policy, and community discussion. The policies support the goals and vision that can be found in section 2.4. Refer to sections 3.2 Building and Site Design and 3.4 Sustainability and Environment for additional relevant guidance. The goals and policies aimed at refining land use and intensity include:

#### **Goal 1. Keep and enhance what makes Linden Hills' commercial districts special.**

##### **Policies:**

**1.1** Encourage the retention, reuse, and renovation of existing buildings, especially those with historic value to the neighborhood and to the regional community.

**1.2** Facilitate the cooperation between the Linden Hills Neighborhood Council and the Linden Hills Business Association, and collaboration with the City, on strategies and programs to strengthen and retain existing businesses, as well as to recruit complementary new businesses.

#### **Goal 2. Ensure appropriately-scaled redevelopment.**

##### **Policies:**

**2.1** Encourage development that reinforces the 43rd & Upton, 44 & Beard, and 44th & France Neighborhood Commercial nodes and appropriately connects them along 44th Street.

**2.2** Promote measures to facilitate new investment that embrace economic, environmental, and social sustainability.

#### **Goal 5: Support the development of a broad spectrum of life-cycle housing options.**

##### **Policies:**

**5.1** Encourage the development of a range of housing types and sizes.

**5.2** Promote housing options that meet the needs and desires of people throughout their lives (from young adults to seniors).

**5.3** Encourage a mix of dwelling unit types and sizes within new or renovated multi-family buildings.

## Specific Implementation Recommendations

The following are specific recommendations on Land Use & Intensity. See the Building & Site Design section for related guidance.

- Study and refine the existing Linden Hills Overlay Zoning District to reflect the guidance in this Small Area Plan, including the amount and location of parking and allowed uses. The study should also consider applying the overlay district to the 44th & France Neighborhood Commercial Node to further encourage more pedestrian oriented development patterns.
- Define the existing commercial areas between Chowen and Zenith Avenues as a new mixed use Neighborhood Commercial Node.

Establishing this new node acknowledges the area's existing concentration of retail shops, restaurants, and service businesses while providing opportunities for building and business owners to take advantage of facade grants and other City sponsored business improvement opportunities. Mixed use districts benefit neighborhoods and business owners by attracting a diversity of activities, goods, and amenities, as well as providing impetus for safe pedestrian access, and experiences around the neighborhood. The proposed node is supported by three blocks of medium and high density housing to its south and east.

- Expand the southern boundary of the 44th & France Neighborhood Commercial Node to include the property at 4519 France Avenue South.

This property is currently zoned for a commercial use, is occupied by a commercial use, and was originally designed for a commercial use. The provides more clarity about the future intended activity and development intensity at this site

- Expand the southeastern boundary of the 43rd & Upton Neighborhood Commercial Node to include the property at 2720 West 44th Street.

This property is currently zoned for a commercial use, but what built and is currently operated as two-family dwelling. The property is currently within the Linden Hills Overlay District. The purpose of the overlay districts is to “preserve and promote the pedestrian character of the Linden Hills commercial districts...” The proposed change clarifies current policy to align with past recognition of this sites association with the neighborhood commercial node.

Amend the Future Land Use map to reflect the following:

- Redefine the area along France Avenue from the corner of 46th Street up to the south property line of 4519 France Aveue South as Medium Density Residential.

This area currently ranges from 2 ½ to a 3-story multi-family buildings. Allowing medium density housing would be keeping with adopted City policy and the existing character of this block of France Avenue. New housing could provide features such as single level living (multi-story with elevators, or 1-story), smaller sized dwellings and maintenance free living. This type housing would be attractive to a range of existing and new residents who prefer not to live in free standing, single family homes.

- Redefine the area along the north side of 44th Street between Drew Avenue and France 44 Liquors as Medium Density Residential.

This area currently contains a 1-story child care facility. This change would allow the child care facility to remain, but would also allow future redevelopment of the site as mixed use or multi-family residential. Allowing medium density multi-family buildings would be keeping with adopted City policy and the existing character of this portion of 44th Street West, where row houses and townhouses are currently located to the west and east of the child care facility.

- Redefine the area along the north side of 44th Street between Xerxes Avenue and St. John the Apostle Church and School as Medium Density Residential.

This area contains a mix of single family homes and 2-story apartment buildings. Allowing medium density housing would be keeping with adopted City policy and the existing character of this portion of 44th Street.



*Due to the large, 200 ft. depth of the lots, the 44th Street & Xerxes Ave area is a strong candidate for cluster development, which allows several buildings on one lot. This could allow new development to reflect existing building footprints and development patterns along 44th Street, while allowing additional development deeper in the lot. This additional development could front Xerxes and/or the former streetcar right of way to activate this section of former streetcar right of way*





**LAND USE REFINEMENTS**

- ① Existing Neighborhood Commercial Node
- ② Redefine as Medium Density Residential
- ③ Redefine as Medium Density Residential
- ④ New Neighborhood Commercial Node
- ⑤ Redefine as Medium Density Residential
- ⑥ Existing Neighborhood Commercial Node

**FUTURE LAND USE MAP**

**EDINA LAND USE**

- Commercial
- Single Family Residential
- Multiple Family Residential
- Parks and Recreation
- Public / Semi-Public

**MINNEAPOLIS LAND USE**

- Low Density Residential (up to 20 DU/acre)
- Medium Density Residential (20 - 50 DU/acre)
- High Density Residential (50 - 120 DU/acre)
- Mixed Use
- Parks / Open Space
- ..... Neighborhood Commercial Nodes



## 3.2 BUILDING AND SITE DESIGN

As described in section 3.1 Land Use and Intensity, the character and scale of the commercial nodes and corridor of Linden Hills has been shaped by historic development patterns. Building height and street length are two elements that significantly contribute to the physical character of the three commercial nodes and the community corridors within Linden Hills. Together they establish a distinct visual character, human scale, discernible rhythm, and strong sense of place which should serve as the basis of the design for new developments, substantial building renovations or additions.

In the commercial nodes of 43rd & Upton and 44th & Beard, the buildings and storefronts are approximately 50-foot wide or less. Buildings are built up to the sidewalk with

little or no setback, and range from 1 to 3-stories in height.

In the 44th & France commercial node, property sites and buildings vary significantly in their location of parking, size and setbacks. Properties adjacent to Sunnyside Avenue and the intersection of 44th Street & France Avenue are smaller and exhibit a more compact rhythm similar to those along the western frontage of France Avenue in Edina. Properties between 45th, 44th, and Drew are considerably larger with surface parking lots and variable building placements that reflective of this area's auto-oriented development pattern. Building heights throughout this node are between 1 to 2-stories.



Along the community corridors of 44th Street West and France Avenue the residential buildings range from approximately 30 feet to 70 feet wide and range in height with most buildings between 1 and 3 stories. The residential buildings typically follow a uniform setback from the street.

The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth states that smaller-scale, multi-family residential development is more appropriate along Community Corridors and Neighborhood Commercial Nodes. It further calls for new development that is compatible with the existing development in the area and provides transitions in building and site design to improve compatibility. The guidance on building design and compatibility is accompanied in The

Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth with policies that support the development of new housing of medium and high density in neighborhood commercial nodes and within a range from low to high density along Community Corridors.

Supporting and enhancing the character of Linden Hills' Community Corridors and Neighborhood Commercial Nodes through new development while respecting the scale and character of the surrounding residential properties is essential to fulfilling the vision, goals, and policies established by the neighborhood through this Small Area Plan.



Top left: The Biblot building in the 43rd & Upton node. Bottom left: Erskine Interiors in the 44th & France node. Right: Turtle Bread near 44th & Beard. All three examples are 1 to 2-story and illustrate buildings that are set to the sidewalk line, have large windows facing the street, and well-defined entrances.

## **Applicable General Policies Guiding Land Use, Commercial and Residential Intensity** *from the City's Comprehensive Plan*

The City's Comprehensive Plan provides a number of policies regarding building and site design that are applicable to this Plan. These include:

**Policy 1.11:** Preserve and enhance a system of Neighborhood Commercial Nodes that includes a mix of housing, neighborhood-serving retail, and community uses.

**1.11.2:** Support the continued presence of small-scale, neighborhood serving retail and commercial services in Neighborhood Commercial Nodes.

**1.11.4:** Encourage a height of at least two stories for new buildings in Neighborhood Commercial Nodes, in keeping with neighborhood character.

**Policy 10.4:** Support the development of residential dwellings that are of high quality design and compatible with surrounding development.

**10.4.1:** Maintain and strengthen the architectural character of the City's various residential neighborhoods.

**10.4.2:** Promote the development of new housing that is compatible with existing development in the area and the best of the City's existing housing stock.

**Policy 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.

**Policy 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.

**Policy 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.

**Policy 10.11:** Seek new commercial development that is attractive, functional and adds value to the physical environment.

**10.11.1** Require the location of new commercial development (office, research and development, and related light manufacturing) to take advantage of locational amenities and coexist with neighbors in mixed-use environments.

**10.11.2** Ensure that new commercial developments maximize compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods.

## **BUILDING AND SITE DESIGN**

### **Small Area Plan Goals and Policies**

The following goals and policies were developed based on the examination of current conditions, City policy, and community discussions during the small area planning process. These policies support the goals and vision that can be found in section 2.4. Refer to sections 3.1 Land Use & Intensity and 3.4 Sustainability and Environment for additional relevant guidance. The goals and policies aimed at clarifying neighborhood-specific building and site design include:

#### **Goal 2. Ensure appropriately-scaled redevelopment.**

**Policies:**

**2.3** Promote contextual infill redevelopment through policies and regulations that address the width, length, massing and height of new development, building expansions, and renovations.

#### **Goal 4. Promote public infrastructure and private development that reinforces an ecologically healthy neighborhood.**

**Policies:**

**4.2** Promote the use of infrastructure and building systems intended to reduce overall resource consumption.

**4.3** Encourage the use of non-motorized transportation by providing parking for bicycles in safe, convenient, and where practical, sheltered locations.

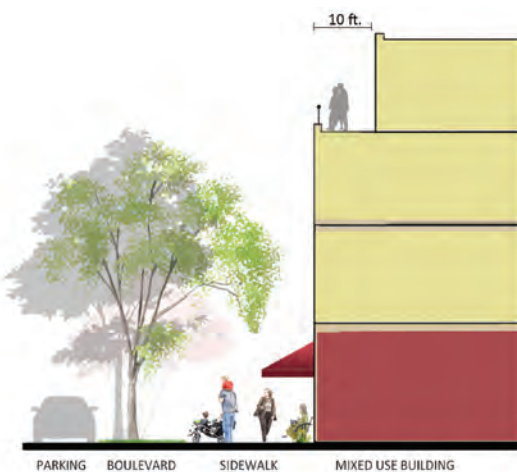
**4.4** Support healthy living and walking by providing connecting walkways between parking facilities, building entrances, and public sidewalks and pathways.

**4.5** Encourage environmentally sensitive redevelopment through the use of established green design programs and rating systems such as U.S. Green Building Council's LEED certification, MN B3 Standards, and the Green Building Initiative's Green Globes.

## Specific Implementation Recommendations

### Building Height & Length

- A maximum height of three or four stories is allowed for multifamily residential & mixed use buildings within the three neighborhood commercial nodes and along the community corridors of 44th Street West (from Upton to France Avenues) and France Avenue (Glendale to 46th Street W) where the future land use is identified as medium or high density.
- Encourage overall building heights and floor-to-floor heights that reflect the adjacent architectural context and encourage buildings that are shorter than the current Zoning Code maximums for 3 and 4 story buildings (42 feet and 56 feet respectively).
- The fourth story of any building in the three neighborhood commercial nodes and along the community corridors shall be stepped back from the street facing façade(s) of the building by at least 10 feet.
- Within the 44th & France Neighborhood Commercial Node a fourth story of a building that is not stepped back from the street façade will be considered if:
  - A publicly accessible plaza or open space is located adjacent to 44th Street
  - The non-stepped back four story portion of the building complies with the articulation requirement (see following bullet point) and does not exceed 70 feet in length along any adjacent street.



Cross section illustrating a new 4-story mixed use development with the upper story stepped back from the front facade line by 10 feet.

- The Neighborhood Commercial Nodes and Community Corridors are valued for their eclectic diversity of buildings and their scale. New development should reflect the character of the area through articulation, such as massing intervals and varied setbacks. This should be achieved through more than just a change in building materials.

Building height is one of the contributing elements to the character of the area and it affects the area's human scale and pedestrian friendliness. Building height was subject of significant community discussion. The height of buildings can be expressed in stories and in feet. In Linden Hills there are three and four story developments from different eras that have a similar height in feet but a different number of stories.

Due to the existing character and development patterns at 43rd & Upton, 44th & Beard, 44th & France and along the 44th Street and France Community Corridors allowing 3 or 4-story buildings while encouraging shorter overall building heights, as expressed in feet, is considered the most respectful of existing character. The intent is to allow for the achievable densities called for in City policies while encouraging compatible design through lower maximum foot height of building heights than allowed in the current Zoning Code. (Currently the



Existing buildings in Linden Hills with stepped back roof top additions that reduce the overall visibility of the additional story.

Zoning Code defines four story developments as having a maximum height of 56 feet.) Encouraging a lower maximum height in feet encourages new development to have shorter floor to floor heights and a lower overall building height than allowed under the current Zoning Code, which will ensure more compatible new development that is in scale with the surrounding development patterns. In addition, stepping back the fourth story of the building from street wall reduces the visibility of a fourth story from the street and the overall visual impacts of a four story building furthering the compatibility with the existing context.

A new semi-public or public plaza with public seating and green space is desired in the 44th & France Neighborhood Commercial Node. This would create an amenity for the node and would complement the pattern of public space that is found in the 43rd & Upton and 44th & Beard Neighborhood Commercial Nodes. Incorporating this public plaza space may require a development to have more units to offset the investment in this public amenity. As such, the specific recommendations of the plan allows for a variation in how the massing of a fourth story of a development is distributed.

Building length and articulation is the other key component of character that this plan focuses on. The plan recognizes that building length and building height together significantly contribute to the character of the existing development patterns for in Linden Hills. New buildings that reflect the massing patterns of existing development is paramount to context sensitive infill development. It is recognized that due to development constraints new developments cannot always be broken up into separate buildings. In contemporary designs, building articulation to break up a building’s massing is common place. However, this articulation is often made through shallow changes in the plane of the building wall and through material changes that rarely result in the development reflecting the character of the surrounding context and as a result does not meet the intent of the guidance in this plan. To ensure the context sensitive development desired in Linden Hills, the massing of new development should reflect the character established by the massing of the existing development within the Neighborhood Commercial Node or along the Community Corridor.



*Cross section of two buildings illustrating a new 3-story, mixed use building and a new 4-story, multifamily building with the upper story stepped back from the front facade.*



*43rd & Upton Neighborhood Commercial Node: Existing massing intervals*

The Neighborhood Commercial Nodes and Community Corridors are valued for their eclectic diversity of buildings and their scale. These graphics illustrate the massing intervals created by the existing development. The massing of new development should reflect the character of the area.



*43rd & Upton Neighborhood Commercial Node: Existing massing intervals*



*43rd & Upton Neighborhood Commercial Node: Existing massing intervals*





44th & Beard Neighborhood Commercial Node: Existing massing intervals



44th & Beard Neighborhood Commercial Node: Existing massing intervals

## Transition Areas

- When a new three or four story building is adjacent to single- or two-family structures, the top floor shall be setback an additional 10 feet from the required rear and side yards of the property. Adjacent structures are defined as properties that share a side or rear property line or an alley with the subject property.
- Encourage building designs that articulate or enliven the rear façade.
- Encourage site designs that use vegetative buffers to reduce the visual impacts of higher density development on adjacent lower density development.

While the three Neighborhood Commercial Nodes and the community corridors of France Avenue & 44th Street have their distinct commercial character they are surrounded by low-scale, one to two-family residential areas that have their own distinct character and rhythm. In many locations, larger more dense commercial, mixed use, and multi-family residential structures share an alley or side and rear lot lines with these lower scale uses. This was a topic of concern for the community. Transition issues include: negatively affecting the overall character of the block, shading of back yards caused by taller adjacent buildings, disruption and degradation of views, loss of privacy, and increases in noise and traffic. These concerns and issues are reflected within City policies that encourage transitions between higher density and lower density development.



*Stepping back upper stories and articulating the rear facade can reduce the overall mass and scale of new development. This is especially important in transition areas.*



*Cross section illustrating the transitional zone between the back side of 3-story development and existing single family residential featuring vegetative buffers, a drive aisle and no alley.*



### 3.3 MOVEMENT, CONNECTIVITY AND PARKING

The Linden Hills neighborhood is served by a comprehensive transportation system comprised of a series of integrated set of street, alley, sidewalk, transit, parking, and bicycle networks. Together, these networks provide a range of movement choices for connecting people, goods, and services within the neighborhood and throughout the region. The Small Area Plan explored a range of issues and ideas identified by Steering Committee members and other planning participants for improving aspects of movement, connectivity, and parking.

**Street Network:** The three commercial areas of Linden Hills are connected by 44th Street, the major east-west street connection through the neighborhood. France and Upton Avenues serve as the north-south street connections. Another significant street connection is Xerxes Avenue.

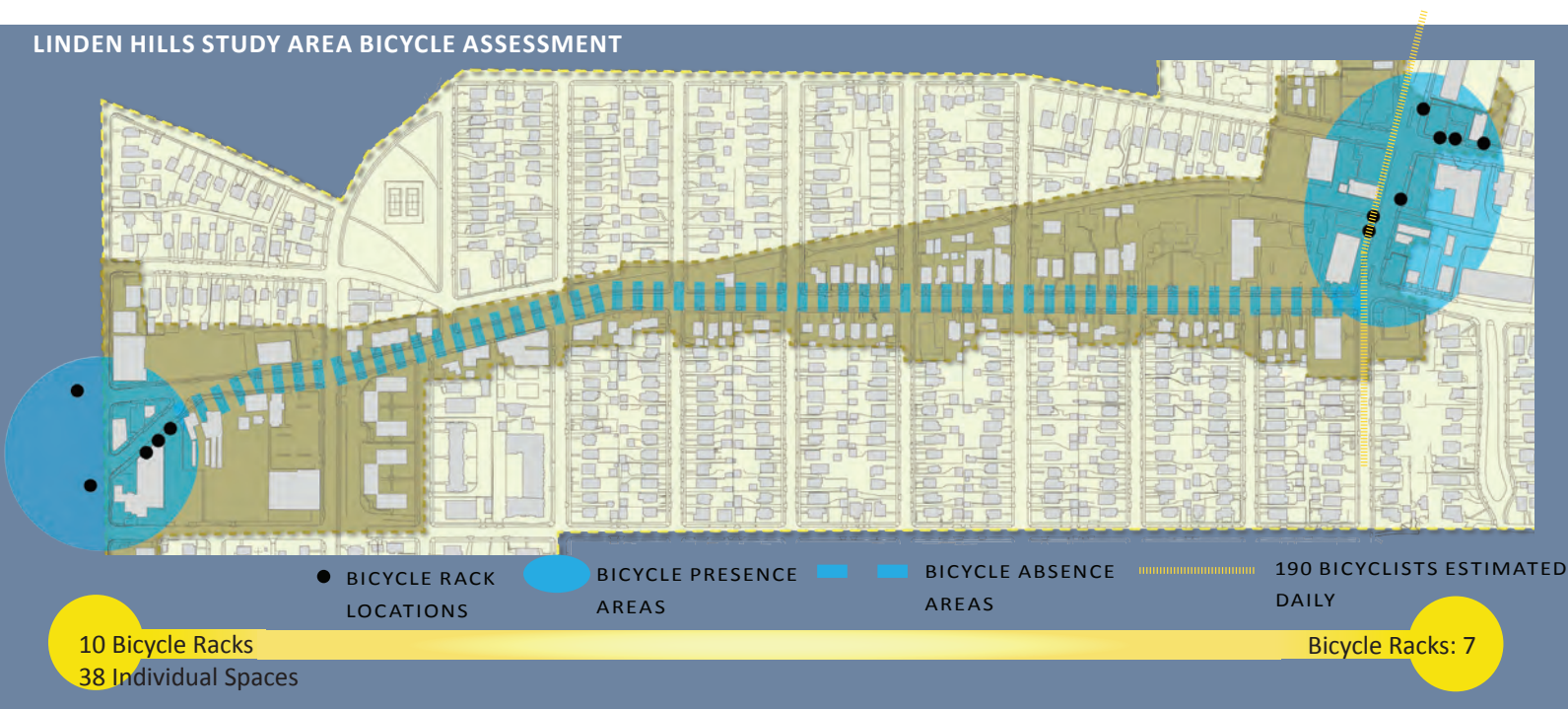
The City of Minneapolis' Transportation Action Plan, Access Minneapolis, classifies 44th Street and France Avenue as Community Connectors. The Citywide classifications indicate a hierarchy of activity and design of the roadways in Minneapolis and guide decisions about

the designs of streets, sidewalks, and cycling facilities. Community Connectors are designed as medium capacity streets that connect neighborhoods and commercial corridors and districts. They also serve and functions as traditional main streets within Neighborhood Commercial Nodes. Sheridan, Upton, and Xerxes Avenues are classified as Neighborhood Connectors, intended as low capacity streets that connect neighborhoods together.

The intersection of 44th Street and Beard Avenue has curb extensions defining the parallel parking areas. The curb extensions slow and calm traffic along 44th Street and facilitate an easier and safer crossing for pedestrians. Curb extensions and larger pedestrian zones such as these, are identified as appropriate traffic calming measures on Community and Neighborhood Connector streets in the City's Street Transportation Plan and Street Design Guide.

**Bicycle Network:** The Minneapolis Bike Master Plan identifies 44th Street, Xerxes, Sheridan, and Upton Avenues as having pavement markings identifying shared vehicle and bike lanes. A portion of the Plan will be implemented on 44th Street, Sheridan, and Upton Avenues when they

#### LINDEN HILLS STUDY AREA BICYCLE ASSESSMENT



receive the shared pavement markings in 2013. The Plan also calls for France Avenue to have dedicated bike lanes.

**Pedestrian Network:** Walkability is a character-defining feature of Linden Hills. During the planning process, 72% of survey participants identified walking as a primary mode of transportation during the warmer months. A tool used to measure walkability, the Walk Score, is based on a concept that the number of nearby amenities is the leading predictor of walking and provides a score for distance to amenities. The average Walk Score of Linden Hills is 72 out of a possible total of 100. The Walk score of 43rd & Upton node is 78. Walk score of 44th & France node is 74. For comparison, the Walk Score for the Uptown activity center area at Hennepin and Lake is 98. The score provides a good metric for understanding comparisons between places, by focusing on features such as density of intersections and the number of nearby shops and restaurants. Walk Score does not take into account the quality of actual pedestrian facilities such as sidewalk condition or presence of ADA compliant curb ramps.

**Transit Network:** France Avenue is identified as part of the City's Primary Transit Network and carries one of the #6 bus routes. The #6 route supplies transportation between Southdale Mall in Edina and the University of Minnesota Twin Cities East Bank campus. Over its route it covers the Uptown and Downtown activity centers via Hennepin Avenue passing by the Walker Art Center and through the Chain of Lakes. The route connects directly to multiple other bus lines at the Uptown Transit Station as well as the downtown Light Rail. The 2010 Census reveals that 10% of the Linden Hill's population uses transit.

**Former Street Car Network:** Since the streetcar system was dismantled, the former right of way has been divided—some pieces of land were sold to private property owners and the remainder is held by the City of Minneapolis. Its full historic path has been disrupted by developments at its east and west ends and is also interrupted by a gate between Xerxes and Upton Avenues. The current right of way extends from southwest of Linden Hills Boulevard to Abbot Avenue South. The width and use of the right of way also varies. In the 43rd & Upton commercial area



Portion of streetcar right of way between Xerxes and Zenith Avenues that has a multi-use path, pedestrian lighting and gardens.

the publicly owned portion is 16-feet wide and is used to access parking for residences and businesses. West of the commercial area the right of way is approximately 50-feet wide. It is used as an alley (or driveway) to access several residential garages and parking areas, a public parking lot at 44th & Beard, and a public green space at 44th & Beard. A two block portion the right of way between Xerxes and Zenith has been transformed into a landscaped walking and biking path. The 1997 Linden Hills Design Framework included a vision for the former streetcar right of way to better connect the nodes through a continuous, dedicated walking and biking path.

The analysis of existing conditions revealed a range of traffic

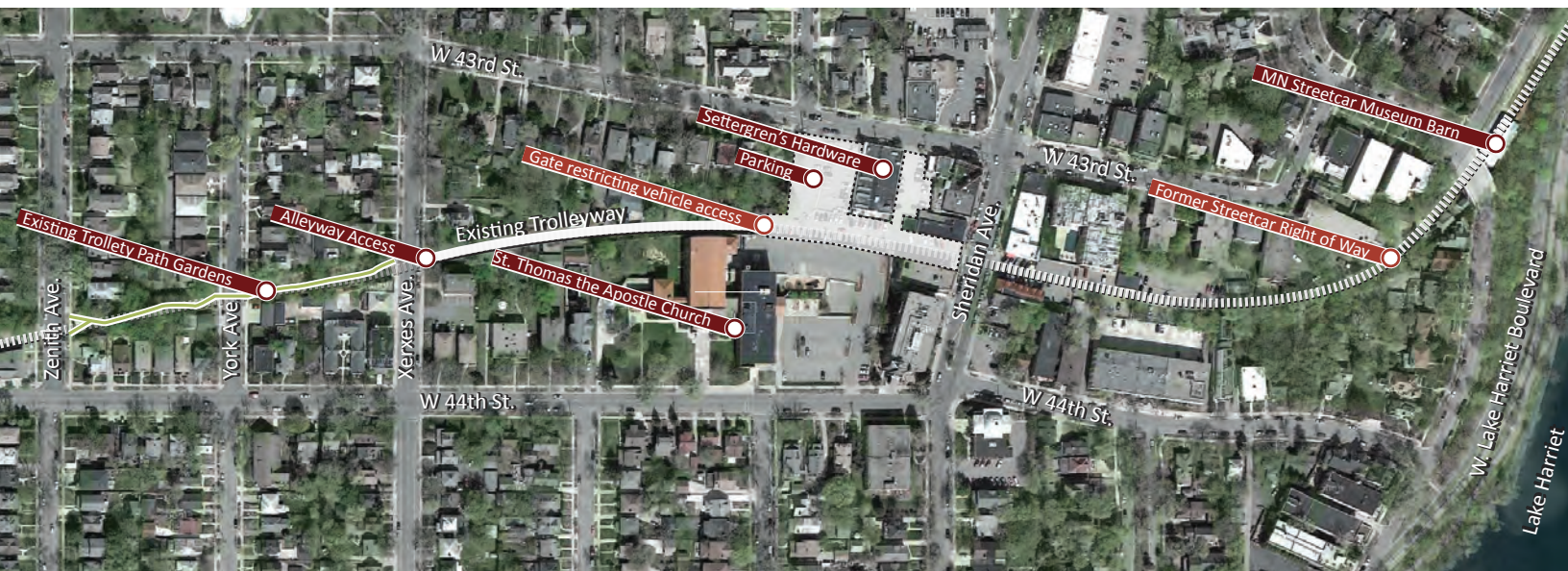
flow considerations concerning public commercial parking and access within the portion of former trolley right of way/alleyway that runs between Upton and Xerxes Avenues. The current gate along the right of way separates the commercial and residential uses. Commercial parking is accessed from Upton Avenue to the east, St. Thomas the Apostle Church sits to the south, private business parking lots are to the north, and residential garage and parking is accessed from Xerxes Avenue to the west. This current configuration and use of the commercial portion of the right of way is not sustainable as it currently routes delivery trucks and customers from the public right of way parking area through a privately controlled parking lot (Settergren’s Hardware) to access 43rd Street.



The single access to public parking within the former trolley right of way intersects with the heavily used pedestrian system along Upton Avenue.



Existing gate in the former streetcar right of way that separates residential and commercial uses. Image is looking toward residences, St. Thomas the Apostle Church is to the left.



Map of portion of former street car right of way.

## Internal Versus External Street Connectivity

Internal street and sidewalk connectivity (connection within the neighborhood) is good in Linden Hills: the connectivity index is 1.17 (for urban conditions, 1.0 is average – 1.5 is best). The index measures how well a street network connects with destinations. A fine grain of urbanism supports high internal connectivity between multiple interior nodes, or commercial areas, with convenient connections to adjacent neighborhoods, including the City of Edina’s Morningside and 50th and France business districts. This connectivity is a crucial component of Linden Hills’ urban design and enriches its character. It contributes to sustainability by enabling residents to easily access different areas of the neighborhood on foot. While street and sidewalk connectivity is high, connectivity for bicyclists is low, as dedicated bicycle lanes and trails are sparse within the neighborhood.

External street and sidewalk connectivity (connection between Linden Hills and other neighborhoods) is moderate. Due to Lake Calhoun and Lake Harriet there are limited connections from Linden Hills to the outer street network. The three primary street connections are France Avenue, Richfield Road, and Lake Harriet Parkway. While limited external connectivity is somewhat inconvenient for access to other parts of the City where residents might work or travel to, the physical separation supports a strong sense of community, personal safety and neighborliness (supported by neighborhood surveys).

External connectivity for bicyclists is high as evidenced by a bike lane on Xerxes Avenue, shared bike and travel lanes on 44th Street and the trail around Lake Harriet which connects to the 50+ miles of trails through Minneapolis and Saint Paul.

## Parking

The Linden Hills Overlay Zoning District places a higher parking requirement for restaurant uses within the 43rd & Upton and the 44th & Beard commercial area than required in the underlying zoning district requirements. As a result, many restaurants and other businesses have had to lease additional parking spaces in available lots, where not permitted by zoning code. This kind of parking solution—the shared use of privately owned parking lots,—is a common tool used throughout Minneapolis and the country, as a way to better manage the supply of parking. It encourages private property owners to either share their parking or lease parking spots to other businesses. It also necessitates signs and other wayfinding strategies to direct vehicles to those available spaces. The effectiveness of the current parking supply, location and configurations were discussed with neighbors, business owners, and Steering Committee members as part of the Small Area Plan process.

Parking for business patrons is available on-street and off-street in a variety of small parking lots. On-street parking is free, but limited along most of 44th & 43rd Streets and Upton Avenue, by time of day restrictions. Parking data for the neighborhood was acquired through consultant team field counts and photo inventory.

**44th & France Node:** 267 off-street parking spaces; 129 on-street parking spaces; 38 bike parking spaces

**44th & Beard Business Area:** 25 off-street parking spaces; 42 on-street parking spaces; no bike parking spaces

**44th & Upton Node:** 392 off-street parking spaces; 83 on-street parking spaces; 35 bike parking spaces. Current cost to construct structured parking: \$20,000-\$30,000 a parking space, depending upon design



● Denotes off-street parking numbers



Off Street Parking Numbers at Location: 392 Total Off Street Parking Spaces  
On Street Parking Locations: 83 Total On Street Parking Spaces



Surface parking lot off of 43rd Street in 43rd & Upton commercial node with 16 spaces.



Off Street Parking Numbers at Location: 25 Total Off Street Parking Spaces  
On Street Parking Locations: 42 Total On Street Parking Spaces



On-street parking on 44th Street near 44th & Beard.



Off Street Parking Numbers at Location: 267 Total Off Street Parking Spaces  
On Street Parking Locations: 129 Total On Street Parking Spaces



The surface parking lot provides 67 spaces (former grocery store) at the corner of 44th and Drew.

## **Applicable General Policies Guiding Movement, Connectivity, and Parking from the City's Comprehensive Plan**

The City of Minneapolis' Comprehensive Plan, The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth, provides a policy framework to inform the recommendations of this Small Area Plan regarding Movement, Connectivity, and Parking.

**Policy 2.2:** Support successful streets and communities by balancing the needs of all modes of transportation with land use policy.

**2.2.1:** Identify modal priorities on each street to improve the overall effectiveness of each element of the transportation network.

**2.2.3:** Promote street and sidewalk design that balances handling traffic flow with pedestrian orientation and principles of traditional urban form.

**Policy 2.3:** Encourage walking throughout the City by ensuring that routes are safe, comfortable, pleasant, and accessible.

**2.3.1:** Ensure that there are safe and accessible pedestrian routes to major destinations, including transit corridors, from nearby residential areas.

**Policy 2.5:** Ensure that bicycling throughout the City is safe, comfortable, and pleasant.

**2.5.1:** Complete a network of on- and off-street primary bicycle corridors.

**2.5.2:** Strive to accommodate bicycles on all streets. When other modes take priority in a corridor, provide accessible alternate routes

**Policy 2.8:** Balance the demand for parking with objectives for improving the environment for transit, walking and bicycling, while supporting the City's business community.

**2.8.1:** Implement off-street parking regulations which provide a certain number of parking spaces for nearby uses, while still maintaining an environment that encourages bicycle, pedestrian, and transit travel.

**2.8.2:** Design and implement incentives for shared parking and on-site car sharing programs, as well as carpooling and vanpooling.

**2.8.3:** Maximize the efficient use of off-street parking by developing district parking strategies in high density mixed use areas such as Activity Centers and Growth Centers.

**2.8.6:** Encourage management of on-street parking in commercial areas primarily for short-term use by adjoining land uses.

**2.8.7:** Promote transit, walking, and biking as safe and comfortable transportation alternatives through reduced parking requirements, encouragement of employee transit incentive programs, and improved facilities.

**Policy 7.6:** Continue to beautify open spaces through well designed landscaping that complements and improves the City's urban form on many scales—from street trees to expansive views of lakes and rivers.

**7.6.1:** Where open spaces and the built environment interface, seek greater design integration between them to create interesting spaces for active and passive use.

**7.6.3:** Invest in the greening of streets, particularly those that connect into and supplement the parks and open spaces network.

**7.6.4:** Provide private landowners and developers with incentives to create and maintain publicly accessible open spaces or green infrastructure.



## MOVEMENT, CONNECTIVITY, AND PARKING

### Small Area Plan Goals and Policies

This Small Area Plan identifies a comprehensive set of goals, policies, and facility enhancements aimed at improving connectivity through expanding multimodal transportation choices and improving multimodal transportation and parking facilities within Linden Hills:

#### **Goal 2. Ensure appropriately-scaled redevelopment.**

##### **Policies**

**2.4** Ensure that parking facilities maintain and enhance the character of Linden Hills through their location, design and the types of facilities.

#### **Goal 3. Encourage complementary uses, activity, and public realm enhancements.**

##### **Policies**

**3.1** Facilitate the expansion of alternative transportation choices and infrastructure including walking, cycling, and transit to support active living, public health, and environmental quality.

**3.2** Promote a pedestrian-friendly, attractive public realm.

**3.3** Calm vehicle traffic to better accommodate walking and cycling while making them safer.

**3.4** Manage and reconfigure existing overall supply of parking resources to their maximum potential while also seeking opportunities for expanding car share, bike rental and neighborhood transit circulator service.

#### **Goal 4. Promote public infrastructure and private development that reinforces an ecologically healthy neighborhood.**

##### **Policies**

**4.6** Link open spaces and transportation networks into an ecologically interconnected system.

## Specific Implementation Recommendations

The following are specific recommendations that provide more detail to implementation of the goals and policies as well as provide more context of the analysis that led to these recommendations.

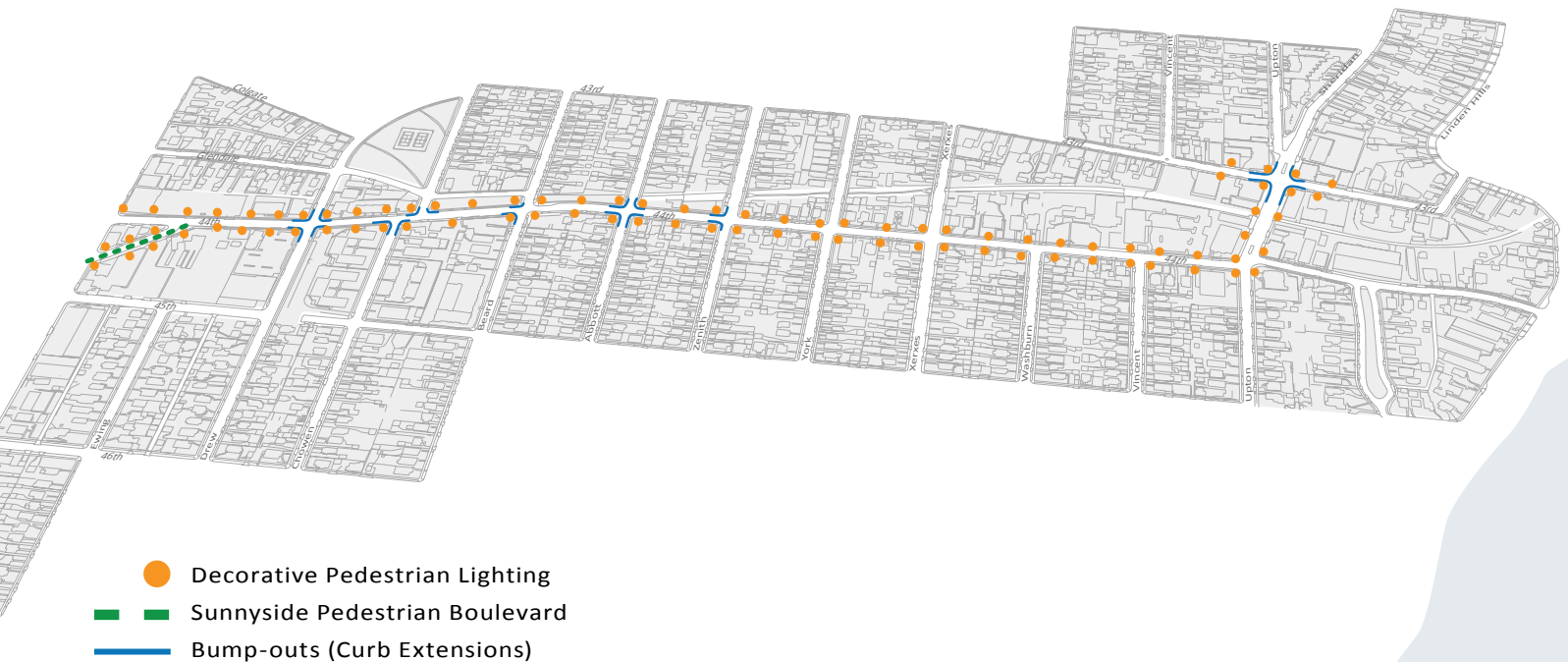
### Pedestrian Infrastructure Improvements

- Add curb extensions (bump-outs) at key intersections along 44th Street and at 43rd & Upton to improve pedestrian safety, help calm traffic, and enhance the overall streetscape.

Addressing these factors can help foster more pedestrian movements and better connect the three Neighborhood Commercial nodes. Curb extensions help to increase visibility of pedestrians by drivers, shorten pedestrian crossing distances, and provide additional space for transit and streetscape furnishings or plantings. Intersections within the mixed use commercial areas

identified for this treatment exhibited a similar set of characteristics such as the presence of on-street and off-street parking, transit, cycling facilities, and high levels of pedestrian activity. These include: 43rd Street and Upton Avenue, 44th Street and Zenith Avenue, the west side of 44th Street and Abbott Avenue, west side of 44th Street and Beard Avenue, 44th Street and Chowen Avenue, and 44th Street and Drew Avenue.

Design and installation of curb extensions along roadways such as 44th Street may involve intersection redesign including storm sewers, curb and gutter, pavements, regulatory signs, and safety markings. While it's typical for the installation curb extensions to be included as a part of comprehensive street improvement projects, depending upon the complexity of their design, they can sometimes be independently retrofitted into the existing streetscape.



*Enhancing the functionality and attractiveness of the public realm has positive impacts on walkability, pedestrian safety, and business activity.*

*Implementation of enhancements requires additional engineering study and potential establishment of a special service district for attending to proper maintenance.*

- Explore the installation of decorative pedestrian lighting from Upton Avenue and 43rd Street to 44th Street and France Avenue.

Decorative pedestrian lighting would provide a more unified physical connection between the three commercial nodes and improve pedestrian safety at night. The minimization of light pollution should be considered in the design and application of street lighting. Typically this type of improvement requires property owners and the Public



Example of pedestrian light fixture commonly found in other Minneapolis commercial districts.

Works Department to collaborate in establishing a Special Service District, and to agree upon funding, operations, and maintenance procedures.

- Expand the quantity and distribution of bike parking facilities.

Cycling becomes a more convenient and viable transportation alternative when supportive infrastructure is more prevalent. Currently there is a lack of bike parking within the 44th & Beard commercial node area. Adding bike racks in several locations along 44th Street between Beard and Zenith would make businesses in this area more accessible to cyclists.

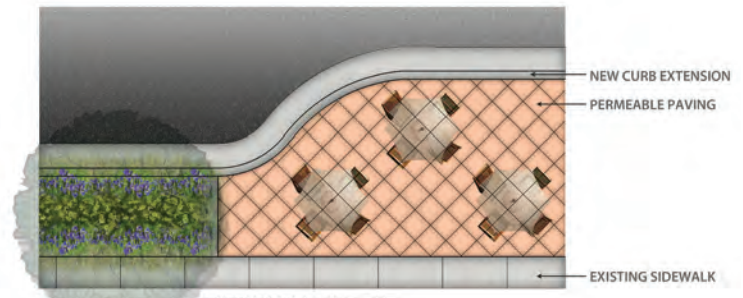


Image above: Plan view of curb extension/bump-out serving as outdoor patio space. Image below: People utilizing curb extension as patio.



Curb bumpouts can be utilized to provide stormwater benefits.



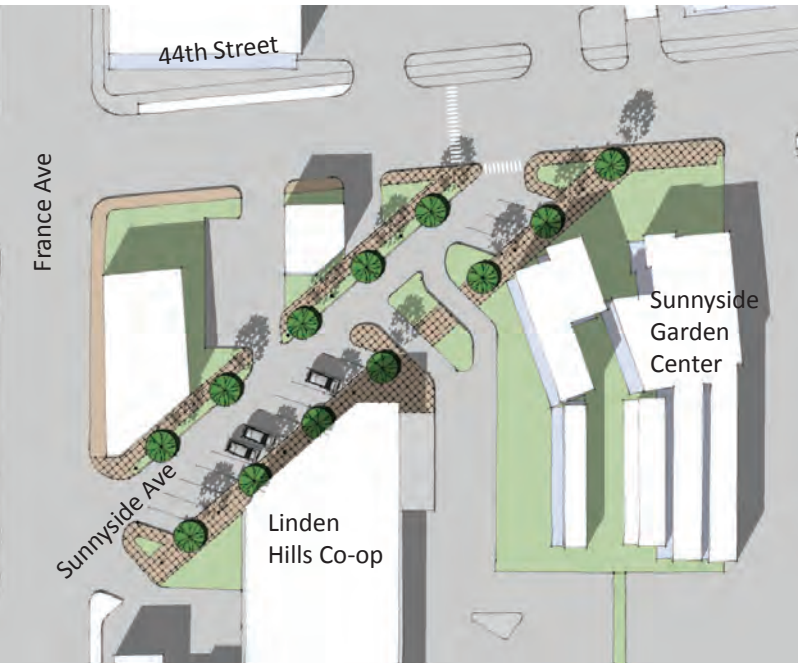
## Sunnyside Avenue

- Improve safety and convenience for pedestrians crossing between Sunnyside Avenue and 44th Street by enhancing or redesigning Sunnyside Avenue between France Avenue and 44th Street as a more pedestrian-oriented facility.
- The design and function of this street was explored in the planning process due to the challenges its current design poses for pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular movements at the intersections of 44th & Sunnyside and France & Sunnyside. Several alternatives were explored that modified access and reconfigured pedestrian space and parking layouts within the street right of way. These and additional alternatives could be explored and analyzed in greater detail using traffic engineering and landscape architectural best practices.

Elements of more detailed exploration and analysis include:

- Conversion to direction of travel (one-way east, west, and two-way) together with parallel or angled parking
- Number of driveway curb cuts
- Sidewalk and boulevard planting widths
- Location and number of bike parking spaces
- Traffic calming with curb extensions and/or raised Platform pedestrian crossings
- Conversion of a portion of the street area to a pocket park/plaza space

Impacts to existing businesses need to be included in the analyses to ensure their operations are not compromised.



Plan View

The top two images show Sunnyside Avenue as a one-way with angled parking, an addition of a curb extension, and pedestrian crosswalk. The image on the bottom right shows Sunnyside Avenue as a one-way with parallel parking on one side of the street, an addition of a small plaza, and pedestrian crosswalk.



Perspective View looking northeast toward 44th Street



Perspective View looking northeast towards 44th Street

## Former Streetcar Right of Way

- Explore the formalization of pedestrian and bicycle use of former streetcar right of way between Xerxes and Upton Avenue through infrastructure improvements.
- Ensure site improvements and designs within and adjacent to the streetcar right-of-way that increase the real and perceived safety of users of the streetcar right of way
- Analyze options for refining the function and design of the former street car right-of-way to accommodate vehicle traffic associated with the parking and access of the commercial uses within the 43rd & Upton neighborhood commercial node while not compromising the desire for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure that is safe and inviting.

The former street car right of way is an amenity to the neighborhood and the City. Due to its function that is more akin to a residential and commercial alley this section of right of way between Upton and Xerxes Avenues performs differently than other sections that have been utilized for greening and a pedestrian and bicycle path. However, the addition of greening, pedestrian and bicycle uses of the other segments of the right of way should be explored on the Upton to Xerxes segment.

The planning process explored three alternatives for the design and use of this portion of the right of way. Two concepts were developed for opening the gated portion (west of St. Thomas the Apostle) and allowing access to and from the 43rd & Upton commercial area to Xerxes Avenue. These options included shared and separated vehicle and pedestrian pavements with enhanced plantings and traffic calming to mitigate impacts on adjacent residences.

A third option was examined that maintained the separation between the commercial and residential areas and introduced the a paved turn-around to allow vehicles parked along the right of way to exit onto Upton Avenue.

Overall community input was in favor of opening the gate, however the adjacent property owners were not in support of this. Concerns regarding the opening of the gate include the loss of opportunity to better utilize an historic community asset, disconnection between the commercial node's sidewalks system and the enhanced pedestrian path running within the former streetcar right of way between Xerxes and Zenith Avenues, negative impacts to business operations within the 43rd & Upton Neighborhood Commercial Node by restricting vehicular loading movements, parking ingress and egress, and increasing pedestrian and vehicle conflicts at the driveway curb cut along Upton Avenue.

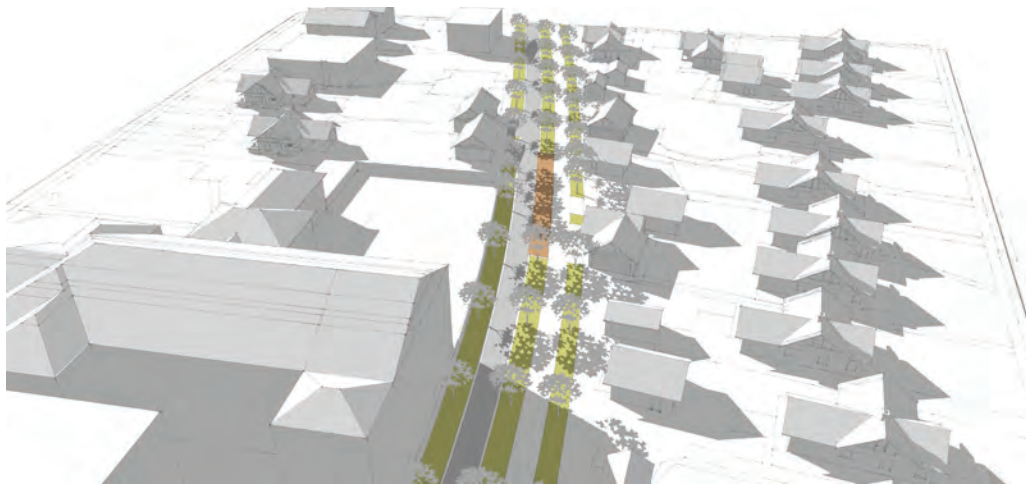
Before a thoroughly vetted decision can be made about allowing through traffic in the right of way significant additional technical analysis and community dialogue is needed before any option is fully considered, selected, and implemented. This analyses should consider direction of travel (one-way east, west, and two-way), traffic projections, inclusion of pedestrian and bike facilities, traffic calming, paving treatments, access to private garages, commercial loading, deliveries, parking, street ingress and egress, landscape enhancements, and routine maintenance.



*Left: View from former street car right of way toward surface parking lot behind Settergrens Hardware. Right: View of right of way access from Xerxes Avenue that currently serves six residences as garage and parking access.*



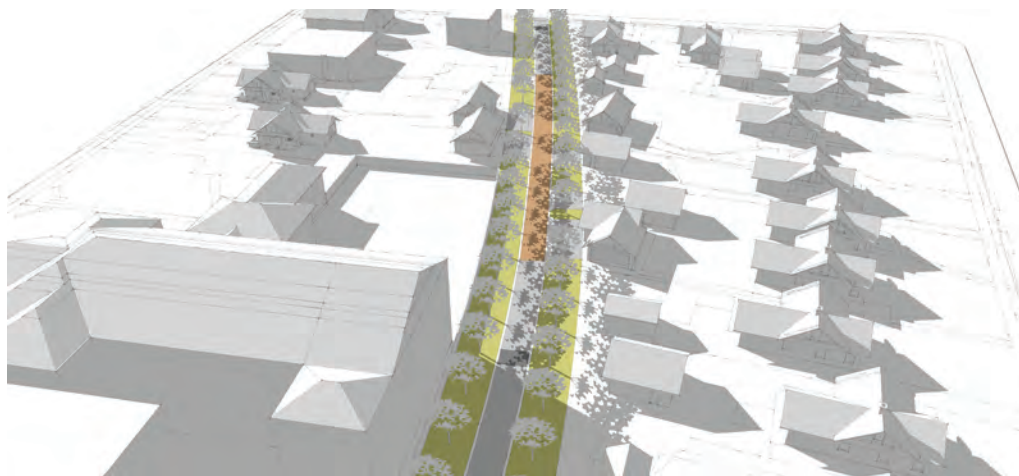
Conceptual plan (image above) and perspective (image below) illustrating an option for opening the trolley right of way as a multi-use facility with separated vehicular and pedestrian/bicycle pathways, landscaping, and traffic calming.



Examples of multi-use alleyways with variable pavement textures, parking bays, and landscaping.



Conceptual plan (image above) and perspective (image below) illustrating reopening the trolley right of way as a single facility with traffic calming and landscaping.



Example of alleyway using rough textured paving and landscaping as traffic calming.



Example of raised table speed hump to calm traffic.

## Parking

- Manage and reconfigure existing supply of parking resources to their maximum potential while also seeking opportunities for expanding car share, bike rental, and neighborhood transit circulator service.

Parking has been a perennial concern in Linden Hills. This is a common issue experienced by urban commercial districts developed during the streetcar era when automobile use was less prevalent. Public parking for commercial businesses in Linden Hills is provided on public streets or in small surface lots to the back or sides of buildings. Customers often have to circumnavigate the block or drive through alleyways to secure a space during the holiday shopping season or on weekends. While these facilities have served customers for many years, they are less convenient than their modern parking garage counterparts. Introducing structured parking facilities into the neighborhood's commercial nodes either as free standing garages or in conjunction with mixed use development was explored during this planning process. Strong concerns regarding parking structures were expressed by planning participants including:

- Negative visual impacts associated with their large size and design
- Concentration of vehicle movements and noise
- High cost of construction, operations and maintenance which directly impacts businesses associated with the parking facility in the form of higher rents or higher taxes
- Potential loss of business from customers who don't want to pay for parking, especially when there is free parking on the street or in small surface lots
- The three commercial areas of Linden Hills contain over 900 on-street and off-street parking spaces on both privately and publicly controlled property. These parking areas can be better utilized through design improvements which could include angled on-street parking, and parking agreements between business and parking lot owners. Consideration could also be given to refining the zoning regulations to allow for reductions in minimum parking requirements, provisions for bicycle parking and expanded use of off-site parking options.



*Introducing this type of facility into the neighborhood is not supported by Small Area Plan participants.*



- Ensure that parking facilities maintain and enhance the character of Linden Hills through their location, design and the types of facilities.

The character of Linden Hills is defined by its walkable pedestrian friendly, public realm and its eclectic mix of buildings. Parking lots that front the street and stand-alone parking structures negatively impact pedestrian friendliness and visual character. Parking facilities should be located within buildings (at grade or underground) where practical. Where this is impractical, surface parking lots should be heavily landscaped and located to the interior or rear of the site. The development of large parking lots (over ¼ acre) and stand-alone parking structures should be avoided and is strongly discouraged. The integration of structured parking facilities (public or private) within new development projects as a substitution for surface parking lots should be explored

and evaluated. As part of their evaluation, the design and financing impacts of potential structured parking facilities needs to strongly consider supporting the vision, goals and policies of this Small Area Plan.



*An example of bicycle storage lockers: these facilities support bicyclists by ensuring the security of bicycles and providing protection in inclement weather.*



*Bike Parking at the Linden Hills Co-op in the 44th & France commercial node.*

## Connectivity

- Improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to, from, and within the three commercial nodes.

This Plan recommends and supports infrastructure improvements aimed at making walking and biking more appealing. Implementing these improvements can also help to reduce the need for automobile parking. Enhancing the sidewalk and pathway systems by filling in gaps, adding wayfinding signage, pedestrian scale lighting, and seasonal, environmentally responsive landscaping will strengthen the neighborhood's year-round walkability. Adding and enhancing bike facilities including more bike parking in the commercial nodes will further expand cycling beyond recreational and fair weather use to become a viable transportation alternative to the automobile



*Signs and wayfinding techniques help residents and visitors easily navigate the neighborhood.*



*Bike Parking at Sebastian Joes in the 43rd & Upton commercial node.*

- Enhance the “Christmas Tree” public green space along 44th Street between Chowen and Beard Avenues.

The lack of informal, outdoor gathering space within this commercial area was identified during the Small Area Plan process. Introducing a pedestrian walkway with small seating areas that connects the node to the businesses along 44th Street and to Waveland Park would provide a modest outdoor gathering space for neighborhood youth and others. Use of decorative, permeable brick pavers and shade tolerant rain garden plantings to filter stormwater runoff would help promote improved stormwater management practices. Additional attention should be

given to avoid impacts to the maturing trees within this green space. Ongoing management and maintenance of this urban forest is important to avoid negative impacts from invasive species such as emerald ash borer. Any actions should still allow for the site’s use as a Christmas tree sales lot.



*The "Christmas tree lot" on 44th Street between Beard and Abbott Avenues plays an important role as a neighborhood passive green space and urban forest. It is also used for selling Christmas trees each year in December.*



### *3.4 Sustainability and the Environment*

Linden Hills’ neighbors and businesses have shown a long-standing interest and commitment in sustainability and environmental stewardship, from education and promotion of Lake Harriet water quality and healthy urban forests, to supporting the Como-Harriet Streetcar. Through its Environmental Committee, the neighborhood has undertaken initiatives on important environmental and quality-of-life issues including the eradication of invasive species such as buckthorn and garlic mustard and the development of a position statement on green house gas reduction.

Aspects of sustainability for the Linden Hills neighborhood are described within four topic areas: Social, Transportation, Economic, and Environmental. These descriptions provide a brief overview regarding community support, housing cost and choices, economic competition, transportation choices, and environmental quality. In concert, the elements of sustainability support an improved environment, healthy community growth, prosperity, and stability. Transportation and housing are addressed in greater detail in sections 3.3 and 3.1 of the Small Area Plan.

#### **The Social Sphere**

High levels of community activity can be found within the Linden Hills neighborhood as evidenced by numerous social opportunities provided through a variety of community interest groups and neighborhood amenities. For example, the Linden Hills Business Association, Southwest Activities Council and the Linden Hills Neighborhood Council’s (LHiNC) board and committees offer opportunities for social interaction and community involvement. The neighborhood non-profit organization, Linden Hills Power and Light has taken direct interest and action in Linden Hills’ sustainability providing composting and waste reduction education and programming, energy efficiency education and programming, and alternative transportation advocacy. Linden Hills Park hosts a number of offerings from preschool and teen activities to adult health and wellness programs. Lake Harriet and the Grand Rounds Scenic Byway provide convenient connections to local and regional public open spaces and outdoor activities including the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area.

## Transportation

Transportation options in Linden Hills continue to diversify, and thereby play a strong role in promoting neighborhood sustainability by providing viable alternatives to automobile travel. Transit service is provided by Metro Transit's bus route #6 which runs between Southdale Mall in Edina and the University of Minnesota Twin Cities East Bank campus. A relatively new car sharing program supports residents with limited or no access to personal motor vehicles. Internal neighborhood connectivity is fairly strong and shared bicycle lanes with numerous bicycle parking facilities support cycling as a viable

transportation option. Close proximity and easy access to the Minneapolis Grand Rounds parkway and bikeway system provides convenient access to downtown and many other City commercial nodes, as well as connections to the Chain of Lakes and regional trail facilities. Shared bicycle/traffic lanes (to be installed in late 2013) along 44th Street and Upton Avenue throughout the business districts will further enhance accessibility and safety for bike travel in and around Linden Hills. A Nice Ride bicycle rental station also supports car-free travel between Linden Hills and 170 other destinations within Minneapolis and Saint Paul.



## Economy

Economic synergies and competition exists within the three distinct commercial areas as evidenced by the approximate 125 small businesses. These businesses support the local and regional economy by providing approximately 900 full time jobs, a variety of goods and services, and payment of license fees and taxes. Job opportunities range from retail trade, accommodation, and food services to health care and professional services. Additional socioeconomic and market information is summarized in the Market Overview included in the Appendix.

Housing diversity is moderate within the neighborhood with approximately 64% of existing housing defined as single family and 60% of households claiming an income of over \$100,000. Providing new housing for people who currently commute into the neighborhood to work, as well as jobs that attract current residents would increase the independent financial stability of the neighborhood. Providing new housing targeted to the needs and desires of the neighborhood's aging population (60 + year olds) would allow more residents to remain in the neighborhood as they age.



## Environment

Linden Hills' residents continue to give serious consideration to the quality of their natural and built environment as seen in the variety of programs and activities of LHiNC's Environmental and Transportation committees as well as those of Linden Hills Power and Light. Many environmental issues and concerns require ongoing attention in the form of partnerships with related organizations or recruitment of volunteers to execute projects or undertake seasonal maintenance. There is still work to be done in the neighborhood to better manage stormwater runoff with alternative green infrastructure and best management practices and to support green building practices. In the past the neighborhood has addressed sustainability and environmental stewardship through a number of initiatives and programs including:

- Education: energy efficiency workshops through LHiNC's Environment Committee and other community groups and environmental project to engage "Rec+" students and other Linden Hills youth.
- Stewardship: volunteer opportunities from tree and shrub planting at Roberts Bird Sanctuary and eradicating garlic mustard to maintaining the 44th Street pathway plantings.
- Imperviousness: a project with Metro Blooms to create rain gardens for reducing imperviousness and filtering stormwater runoff .
- Waste Removal/Recycling: Linden Hills is one of three neighborhoods in Minneapolis that supports curbside collection of compostable items.
- Over 1400 residents currently curbside compost solid food waste materials.
- Global Warming: The neighborhood developed a position statement and commitment to reduce green house gas emissions by 60% - 80% by year 2050.

## **Applicable General Policies Guiding Sustainability and the Environment** *from the City's Comprehensive Plan*

The City of Minneapolis' Comprehensive Plan, The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth, provides a policy framework supporting recommendations of this Small Area Plan pertaining to Sustainability and the Environment.

**Policy 6.2:** Protect and enhance air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

**6.2.2:** Support energy efficiency and resource conservation.

**6.2.6:** Support the development of multimodal transportation networks.

**6.2.7:** Promote the development of sustainable site and building standards.

**Policy 6.3:** Encourage sustainable design practices in the planning, construction and operations of new developments, large additions, and building renovations.

**6.3.2:** Ensure that developments use stormwater BMPs (Best Management Practices).

**6.3.10:** Promote climate sensitive site and building design practices.

**6.5.2:** Encourage development projects that maximize the development capacity of the site while at the same time reducing non-renewable energy needs.

**Policy 6.8:** Encourage a healthy thriving urban tree canopy and other desirable forms of vegetation.

**6.8.2:** Achieve, at a minimum, no net loss of the urban tree canopy by maintaining and preserving existing trees and planting new trees on public and private property.

**6.8.6:** Continue to recognize the functions and values of the urban forest and tree canopy which provide many economic and ecological benefits such as reducing stormwater runoff and pollution, absorbing air pollutants, providing wildlife habitats, absorbing carbon dioxide, providing shade, stabilizing soils, increasing property values, and increasing energy savings.

**Policy 6.9:** Be a steward of clean water by protecting and enhancing its surface and groundwater systems.

**Policy 6.15:** Support local businesses, goods, and services to promote economic growth, to preserve natural resources, and to minimize of the carbon footprint.

**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 neighborhoods.

**8.7.6:** Encourage the recycling and reuse of building materials from demolitions and remodels in order to conserve natural resources and remove material from the waste stream.

**8.7.7:** Work with private and public sector stakeholders to develop a salvage system that minimizes the loss of building materials, promotes the reuse of materials, and requires recycling containers to be present on-site with guidance on their use.

**8.7.8:** Develop a salvage process for materials from any City-initiated demolitions.

## SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

### Small Area Plan Goals and Policies

Recommendations for improving the neighborhood's sustainability and environment address aspects of private development and the public realm and focus on an integrated approach to stormwater management, site development and green building programs.

#### **Goal 4: Promote public infrastructure and private development that reinforces an ecologically healthy neighborhood.**

##### **Policies**

**4.7** Cultivate a visually appealing public landscape that protects and enhances the ecological function of the neighborhood's natural resources, such as soils, hydrology and urban forest.

**4.8** Encourage and support the establishment of private gardens for the growth of food.

**4.9** Encourage and support the sale of locally grown food and food products.

**4.10** Link open spaces and transportation networks into an ecologically interconnected system that mitigates the effect of stormwater runoff, urban heat island and air pollution while providing natural habitat.

**4.11** Promote internal connectivity, where it is lacking, for non-motorized modes of transport to improve accessibility to all areas of the neighborhood by pedestrians and cyclists.

**4.12** Promote the use of infrastructure and building systems (permeable paving, green roofs, recycled building materials, daylighting, etc.) intended to reduce overall resource consumption.



## Specific Implementation Recommendations

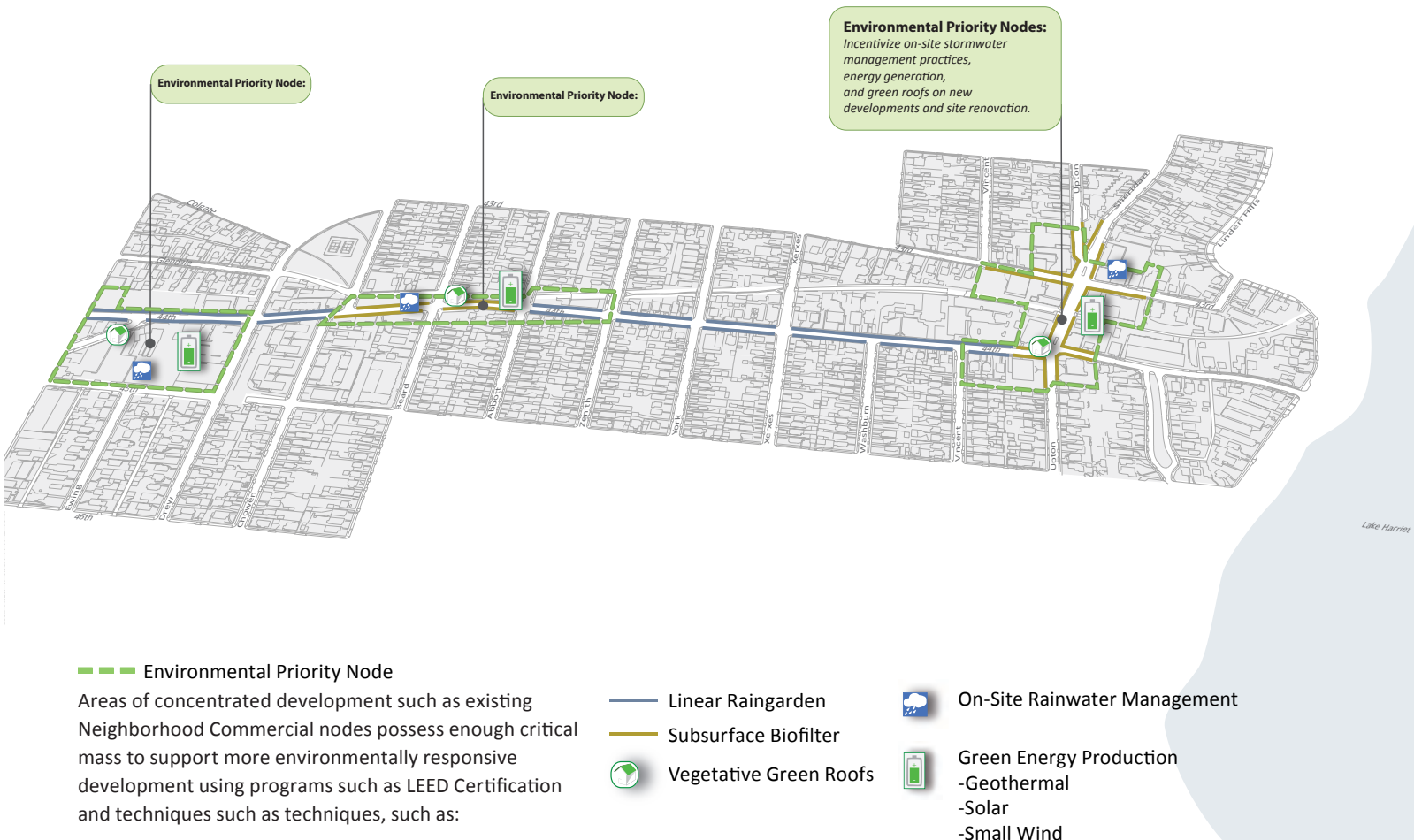
The following specific recommendations provide greater detail for implementing the Plan's goals and policies. Additional background pertaining to the discussions and analyses leading to these recommendations is also provided.

- Provide access via web links to green building organizations' information (USGBC LEED, MN B3, Green Globes, etc.) on the neighborhood's web site to further educate and promote sustainable, green building practices.

Community involvement activities (issue surveys, planning workshops, open houses, etc.) conducted

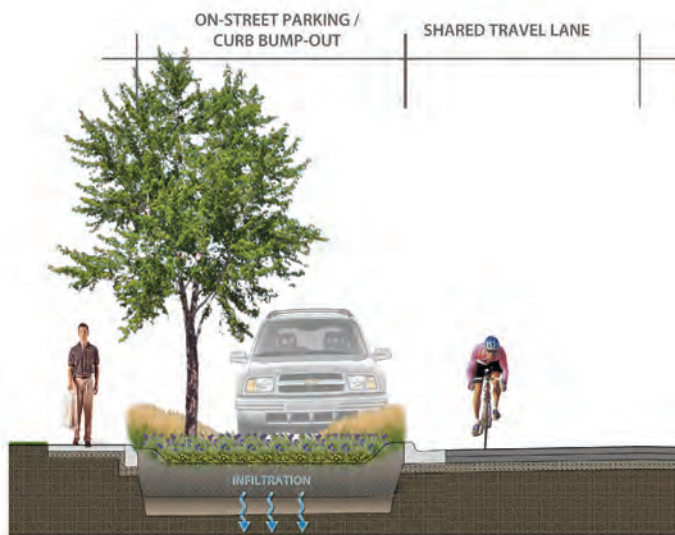
during the planning process expressed strong support for introducing a range of interrelated elements, from protecting Lake Harriet's water quality to employing green building programs and stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs). Promoting the understanding, benefits and use of sustainable, green-building practices would signal to prospective developers and their designers that the neighborhood has a serious interest in reducing green house gas emissions and enhancing livability for future generations.

*This Plan illustrates areas within the public realm that could be used to provide ecological services such as treating and reducing rainwater runoff, increasing habitat for pollinators, and reducing the effect of urban heat island.*



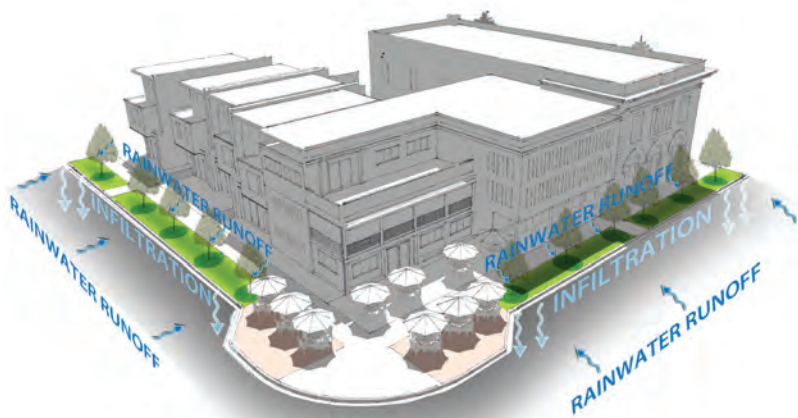
- Integrate stormwater best management practices (BMPs), such as rain gardens, permeable paving, and vegetative green roofs, as components of new development and significant renovations or additions to existing sites and buildings.

These types of stormwater BMPs have proven successful in trapping sediment and associated pollutants as well as reducing runoff quantities. Where applicable, this feature should be coordinated with the design and implementation of curb extensions (bump-outs) at selected intersections. Ideally, the timing of these enhancements would be integrated into a street paving or other street improvement project programmed by Minneapolis Public Works to leverage funding and consolidate disruption from construction.



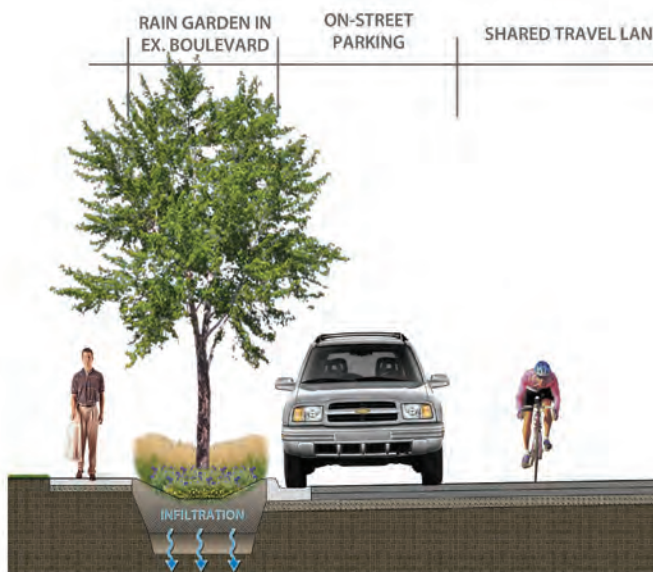
SECTION: TYPICAL CURB EXTENSION / BUMP-OUT

*Examples of curb extension serving to improve stormwater management, enhance the public realm, and perform ecological function.*



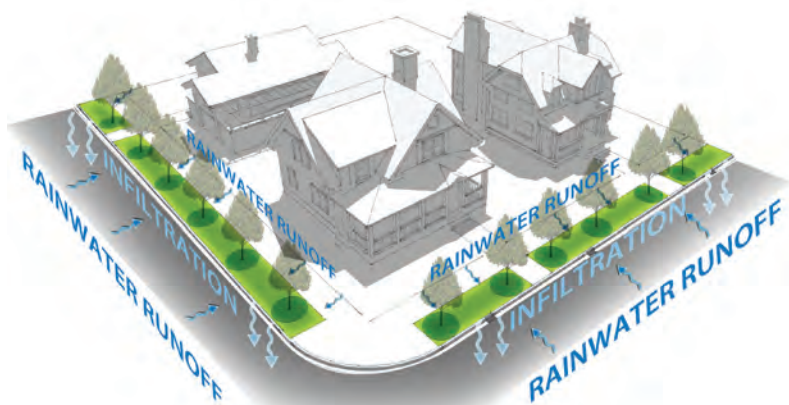
- Convert tree-lawn boulevards along 44th Street to linear rain gardens (vegetated bio-swales), where practical.
- Expand on the program of hosting topical presentations to the neighborhood by renowned experts in the fields of sustainability and green design.

An aspect of the LHINC Environment Committee’s mission is to “educate residents about more sustainable ways of interacting with the environment and organizing and empowering residents to work on environmental issues of concern to them.” Promoting and or sponsoring lectures/presentations on the detailed aspects and benefits of green design and sustainability could help in promoting action on achieving the neighborhood’s green house gas reduction targets.



**SECTION: TYPICAL BOULEVARD RETROFIT**

*Example of boulevard plantings that help improve stormwater management, enhance the public realm, and perform ecological function.*





## 3.5 Heritage Preservation

### Existing Conditions

Shaped by the development of the Twin Cities-wide streetcar system in the late 19th and early 20th century, the Linden Hills commercial districts helped establish the neighborhood's character and strong sense of place. The three districts evolved in a linear fashion along the former streetcar right of way, which itself is historic and still exists along most of its route through the neighborhood. The size, type, and scale of the buildings in the commercial districts were also influenced by the streetcars as well: 1 to 3-story predominately brick walk-up commercial buildings with offices or residential units on the upper floors.

During the Small Area Plan process, there were many comments about the desire to maintain the “quaint”, “charming”, or “small town” character of the Linden Hills business districts. There currently is one planning tool already in place in Minneapolis that could be used to facilitate that goal: the designation of individual historic buildings or historic districts. There is a second planning tool being considered by the City: the creation of conservation districts. Information is readily available for the former, but less exists for the latter because it is a work in progress.

### Historic Preservation Designation of Buildings and Districts

There are only a few buildings in Linden Hills that are currently designated historic, and of those, two are within the Small Area Plan study boundary. However, a 2005 survey of Southwest Minneapolis by the consulting firm Mead and Hunt identified a number of additional buildings that are potentially eligible for local and/or national historic designation, as well as one potential historic district. These are listed below and are illustrated on the accompanying maps and graphics, as follows:

#### Linden Hills Historic Sites within the Study Area or Area of Influence [On the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) List]

- Fire Station #28 (Currently Harriet Brasserie, etc.)
- Linden Hills Library (43rd Street and Vincent Avenue)

*Fire Station # 28 (left) and the Linden Hills Library (right) are two buildings that are designated historic within the area of influence.*



**Linden Hills Historic Sites Adjacent or Near to the Area of Influence (On the Minneapolis HPC List)**

- Lake Harriet Park Picnic Pavilion (Beard’s Plaisance at 46th Street & Upton Avenue)
- Women's and Men's Restroom Buildings (Lake Harriet Bandstand area)
- Como-Harriet Street Car Line (Working section from Lake Calhoun to trolley shop at Linden Hills Blvd bridge)
- Chadwick Cottages (On 40th Street between Sheridan & Thomas Avenues)

**Potential Linden Hills Historic Resources within the Study Area or Area of Influence (2005 Survey of SW Minneapolis by Mead and Hunt)**

- Potential Motor Place Historic District
- 2726-32 43rd Street West, Tri-State Telephone Co. (Coffee & Tea, Tilia, etc.)
- 2620 44th Street West (House)
- 2716 44th Street West (Apartment)
- St. Thomas the Apostle Church
- 4410 & 4414 Beard Ave S (Apartments)
- 4312 Linden Hills Blvd, Dakota Bldg. (Apartment)
- 4401 Upton Ave S, Lake Harriet M.E. Church (Currently Linden Hills Spiritual Community)



726-32 43rd Street Tri-State Telephone Co. (Coffee & Tea, Tilia etc.)



4401 Upton Avenue Lake Harriet ME Church



Potential Motor Place Historic District



St. Thomas the Apostle Church

## Other Linden Hills Cultural Resources or Valued Places (Consultant Team Windshield Survey)

Designated historic buildings or districts traditionally are examples of an architectural style, were designed by a significant architect, or are associated with a certain time period, event, or important person. Over the past 20 to 30 years, the definition of historical resources has expanded to include a more enriching scope of historical assets, such as landscapes or sites that have contributed to social patterns of development. Typically, buildings and sites need to be at least 50 years old to be given the designation, historic. This means that buildings built in the 1950s and 60s are now within that 50 year window.

During the Small Area Plan process, members of the consulting team performed a windshield survey of the Study Area and Area of Influence and identified additional properties that may qualify as historic or cultural resources. These became designated “valued places” for this project, because they significantly contribute to the character of Linden Hills. These are listed below and are illustrated on accompanying maps and graphics. The reason for their inclusion is also noted.

1. 3136 West 44th Street (Unique style of multi-family building—California-style Bungalows—uncommon in Minneapolis)
2. 4314-18 Upton Avenue (Currently Great Harvest, etc. Cited for its architecture)
3. 2720 43rd Street (Currently Wild Rumpus, etc.—Cited for its architecture and designed by same architects, Downs & Eads, as 2726-32 43rd Street listed by Mead and Hunt)
4. 4289 Sheridan Avenue (Currently Roots, etc.—Cited for its architecture and designed by same architects, Downs & Eads, as 2726-32 43rd Street listed by Mead and Hunt)
5. 4300 Block of York Avenue (Collection of mid-20th Century ramblers. One of few remaining examples of a building type from that era. Could be threatened by tear-down pressures.)
6. 44th Street between Zenith and Abbott Avenues (Interesting, small commercial strip)
7. Original streetcar right of way:\* between Linden Hills Boulevard and Chowen Avenue, particularly the concrete wall and right of way between Upton & Xerxes Avenues behind St. Thomas the Apostle Church and other residential properties (Cultural resource associated with social patterns of development)
8. 43rd & Upton Business District:\* (Cultural resource associated with social patterns of development)

\*As part of its preservation planning, Minneapolis has already had “Context Studies” prepared for Commercial Districts and Street Railways within the City. Both the trolley line as it passes through Linden Hills and the 43rd & Upton business district, are included in those studies. The context studies could form the basis for those areas’ consideration as future historic districts.



4289 Sheridan Avenue



4410 and 4414 Beard Avenue South



3136 44th Street.



Original trolley wall and right of way between Upton and Xerxes Avenues.

## Conservation Districts

Historic designation of buildings or districts may not be possible or appropriate for some of the valued places in Linden Hills. In those cases, the City is exploring ways to conserve such resources City-wide through the creation of an ordinance that permits the future designation of Conservation Districts. Conservation Districts promote sustainable neighborhoods by protecting important physical features and conserving resources in a manner that offers more protections than the Zoning Code, but fewer protections than historic guidelines.

Beginning in November, 2012, the City of Minneapolis began conducting public meetings to seek input from residents on establishing Conservation Districts. As of the time this document was written, the main features of the districts would be:

- Focused on conserving visual character, as opposed to preserving history, like the HPC regulations, or good urban design, like the Zoning Code.
- Areas of at least one block face with two or more principal buildings (residential, commercial, or other) and key intersections.
- Self-nominated by owners, with the Planning Commission, HPC, and SHPO recommending establishment to the City Council, who has the final say.
- Design guidelines, which specify elements that can be reviewed administratively and those that require a public hearing.

- Generated with strong public input prior to establishment.

The City is working with its Technical Advisory Team to develop a draft for public comment. There is no assurance that Conservation Districts will be adopted.

## Adaptive Reuse and Renovation

One of the advantages of older buildings is that they were often built by craftspeople using durable, high quality materials. In addition, many commercial and civic structures of the late 19th and early 20th century were designed with open floor plates that allow them to be adapted and reused for a variety of uses. Fire Station #28, with its professional offices and café, is a prime example of this. It's also widely acknowledged that reusing existing buildings is highly sustainable, as they possess large amounts of embedded energy and exhibit a very low carbon footprint. Additionally, renovating and repurposing existing buildings can also be a way to restrain commercial lease rates (as compared to new construction), which in turn helps to support and sustain the small, independent, niche businesses so highly valued by neighborhood residents.

## Applicable General Policies Guiding Heritage Preservation *from the City's Comprehensive Plan*

Detailed guidance on heritage preservation within this Small Area Plan builds upon goals and policies established in the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth and research and analysis described within this section of this Plan. This additional detail is provided through neighborhood-specific goals, policies, plans, illustrations and photographic examples.

**Policy 8.1:** Preserve, maintain, and designate districts, landmarks, and historic resources which serve as reminders of the City's architecture, history, and culture.

**8.1.3:** Encourage new developments to retain historic resources, including landscapes, incorporating them into new development rather than removal.

**8.1.4:** Designate resources recommended for designation from historic surveys and listed on the National Register of Historic Places which have no local protection.

**Policy 8.2:** Continue to evaluate potential historic resources for future studies and designation as the City ages.

**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 neighborhoods.

**8.7.1:** Protect historic resources from demolition and explore alternatives to demolition.

**8.7.6:** Encourage the recycling and reuse of building materials from demolitions and remodels in order to conserve natural resources and remove material from the waste stream.

**Policy 8.8:** Preserve neighborhood character by preserving the quality of the built environment.

**8.8.1:** Preserve and maintain the character and quality of residential neighborhoods with regulatory tools such as the zoning code and housing maintenance code.

**8.8.2:** In addition to local designation, develop other preservation tools, like conservation districts, to preserve the historic character of neighborhoods and landscapes.

**Policy 8.10:** Promote the benefits of preservation as an economic development tool and a method to achieve greater environmental sustainability and City vitality.



## Small Area Plan Goals and Policies

**Goal 1. Keep and enhance what makes Linden Hills commercial districts special.**

### Policies

**1.3** Encourage the protection, preservation, and proper maintenance of historic buildings and landscapes.

**Goal 2. Ensure appropriately-scaled redevelopment.**

**2.6** Building renovations and additions of should use durable materials in a manner that respects the construction traditions and methods of the existing building.



### IN LINDEN HILLS...

*Historic buildings, or contributing buildings within historic districts, can qualify for tax credits and other forms of grants and other funding. With that potential comes the restriction that the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) has Building Permit review jurisdiction; and the design and construction work needs to be done to applicable historic guidelines.*

*Minneapolis is also studying the concept of less restrictive and less review-intensive "Conservation Districts". However, no information is available yet as to what form these new districts may take.*



1



2



3



4

## Specific Implementation Recommendations

Based on the public input received during the Small Area Plan process, the creation of historic or similar protection for buildings and/or areas within the Linden Hills business districts received strong support (89 out of 113 respondents expressed support). With further research and study, some of the sites identified within this Plan may be determined as eligible historic properties or districts, others may be determined not as historic but as valued resources that help define the character of Linden Hills, others may be dropped from consideration, and still others may be added.

- Seek funding for and implement a study by qualified consultants to determine the eligibility of properties and/or districts within the Small Area Plan Study Area and the Area of Influence.

Including more historic properties and/or districts in Linden Hills could have the dual effect of increasing protection to the character of Linden Hills while providing financial tools such as historic tax credits or facade grants to assist the effected property owners in maintaining their buildings.

- Explore the creation of Conservation Districts in areas valued for their distinctive development patterns.
- Use the results of the historic designation study as the basis for identifying and creating Conservation Districts in Linden Hills as another tool to protect its character.

The establishment of Conservation Districts within the City's heritage planning and historic preservation programs would provide another option to building owners and developers interested in protecting and conserving historic resources.

Some developers may feel that historic preservation guidelines and designations are too restrictive for their development strategies. Others may embrace them. The neighborhood should stress to potential developers and property owners the value of Linden Hills' historic resources and inform them of the potential financial benefits available for designated historic properties. See Appendix for detailed information regarding historic tax credits.

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## *4. IMPLEMENTATION*





A Small Area Plan provides a guide for continued reinvestment and revitalization. It addresses both public and private initiatives and improvements. Therefore, a Small Area Plan must not only provide a vision, goals and policies, it must also identify actions necessary for achieving its intended outcomes. As with other policy plans, successful implementation of the Linden Hills Small Area Plan requires close cooperation between the neighborhood and its stakeholders, City staff, public officials, and the private sector.

## 4.1 Implementation Strategies

Implementation strategies fall into five primary categories:

- Planning
- Zoning
- Development Review
- Incentives
- Public-Private Initiatives

### Planning

The Minneapolis Planning Commission can adopt the Small Area Plan and amend the land use section of Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan to reflect recommended land use refinements identified in the Linden Hills Small Area Plan. Land refinements recommended in the Plan utilize standard categories in use by the City to technically support the land use amendment process.

### Zoning

While Land Use, Development Intensity, and Building and Site Design policies, and land use refinements recommended in the Small Area Plan provided more detailed guidance within the City's Comprehensive Plan, modifying the zoning in certain locations is desirable to further support their implementation. Once the Small Area Plan is adopted, the project study area would benefit from a detailed zoning study (including the Linden Hills Overlay District) to better align it with the vision and goals of this Plan. The study should expand on topics such as parking, uses, and building height, and an application of an overlay zoning district to 44th & France should be considered.

It is recognized that elements of the building & site design guidance are not entirely implementable through the current Zoning Code and that some changes may need to be explored by the City to fully implement the guidance of this plan.

### Development Review

The goals, policies, and recommended refinements in this Plan are intended to provide a contextually sensitive policy framework for guiding developers or business owners wishing to propose expansions, renovations, or new development, and assisting residents and the City in evaluating development proposals. The Plan should become a working document for the Zoning Committee of the Linden Hills Neighborhood Council (LHiNC) to aid in its review of project proposals with the Neighborhood Commercial Nodes and community corridors.

Detailed requirements for Site Plan Review within the City can be found on the City's web site:

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/cped/planning/#development>

### **Incentives**

Through the Neighborhood Revitalization Program and using the LHiNC organization, Linden Hills can continue to use organizational or grant funds to help incentivize the implementation of various projects recommended in the Small Area Plan. Additionally, the neighborhood can chose to support or endorse specific redevelopment or other projects that include neighborhood betterments or enhancements.

### **Public-Private Initiatives**

Implementation of policies and recommended refinements described in this Plan can be initiated and undertaken by a range of parties, including the LHiNC and the Linden Hills Business Association. These include continuing current partnerships with organizations such as the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Nice Ride, and Hour Car, as well developing new relationships with expertise or programs that align with the neighborhoods goals such as the Minnesota chapters of the U.S. Green Building Council or Urban Land Institute.

Additionally, the Linden Hills Neighborhood Council and its topic committees, such as the zoning and environmental committees, can use this Plan to review development proposals, and to seek funding for public-space and greening initiatives.

## ***4.2 Priorities and Phasing***

Strategic implementation is needed to identify the timing and sequence of these actions and the parties responsible for carrying them out.

Refer to the following figures for implementation strategies and timeline.

### **Implementation Matrix**

The following Implementation Matrices organize the recommended implementation actions as short-term, mid-term, or long-term, and identify responsible and supporting parties to each action. This strategy is intended to help effectuate the goals highlighted in the Plan, and to encourage coordination among the responsible parties.

PRIORITY TIME FRAME	PLAN ELEMENT	ACTION	PARTIES INVOLVED
Short Term Actions (1-4 years)	Land Use	Adopt Final Linden Hills Small Area Plan (LH SAP) (supplement to the Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan)	CPED, Minneapolis Planning Commission, City Council Metropolitan Council LHiNC Local Stakeholders
		Amend land use section of Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan to reflect and be consistent with LH SAP	
		Initiate zoning study within neighborhood commercial nodes and community corridors to synchronize with the visions, goals, policies, and recommendations of the Small Area Plan.	
	Land Use Building and Site Design	Pursue mixed use and other desirable development for life-cycle housing and neighborhood services. Encourage environmentally sensitive renovation of existing buildings.	LHiNC Local Stakeholders
	Movement, Connectivity, & Parking	Explore and refine options for former streetcar right of way and develop strategies to implement agreed upon refinements.	LHiNC; LHBA Public Works CPED Local Stakeholders
		Explore strategies to maximize existing supply of parking resources and seek opportunities for expanding car sharing, bike rental, and neighborhood transit circulator service.	LHiNC; LHBA CPED Public Works Local Stakeholders
		Work to expand the quantity and distribution of bike parking facilities	LHiNC; LHBA CPED Public Works Local Stakeholders
	Sustainability & the Environment	Provide access via web links to green building organizations' information (USGBC LEED, MN B3, Green Globes, etc.) on the neighborhood's web site to further educate and promote sustainable, green building practices.	LHiNC
		Work to integrate stormwater best management practices (BMPs), such as rain gardens, permeable paving, and vegetative green roofs, as components of new development and significant renovations or additions to existing sites and buildings.	LHiNC CPED Public Works Local Stakeholders
	Heritage Preservation	Commission a study to determine eligibility of potentially historic properties.	LHiNC Linden Hills History Study Group LHBA CPED Local Stakeholders
		Explore the creation of a historic or conservation district at 43rd & Upton.	
		Encourage building owners to seek designation status on the state and/or national historic register.	



PRIORITY TIME FRAME	PLAN ELEMENT	ACTION	PARTIES INVOLVED
<b>Mid-Term Actions (5-10 years)</b>	Land Use	Facilitate collaboration between LHiNC and LHBA on strategies and programs to strengthen and retain existing businesses as well as recruit new businesses	LHiNC LHBA CPED
	Land Use Building and Site Design	Pursue mixed use and other desirable development for life-cycle housing and neighborhood services. Encourage renovation of existing buildings.	LHiNC CPED Local Stakeholders
	Movement, Connectivity, & Parking	Improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to, from, and within the three commercial nodes.	LHiNC; LHBA Public Works CPED Local Stakeholders
		Explore the installation of curb extensions at 43rd & Upton, 44th & Zenith, the west side of 44th and Abbott, west side of 44th & Beard, 44th and Chowen, and 44th & Drew.	
		Explore the installation of decorative pedestrian lighting from Upton Street and 43rd to 44th Street to France Avenue.	
		Improve safety and convenience for pedestrians crossing between Sunnyside Avenue and 44th Street	
		Explore the enhancement or redesign of Sunnyside Avenue between 44th Street & France Avenue as a more pedestrian-oriented facility.	
	Sustainability & the Environment	Analyze options for refining the function and design of the public alleyway between Xerxes and Upton Avenues.	LHiNC Public Works CPED Local Stakeholders
Explore options for the “Christmas tree lot” at NW corner of 44th and Beard for multi-generational gathering place.			
<b>Long-Term Action (11-20 years)</b>	Land Use Building and Site Design	Pursue mixed-use and other desirable development for life-cycle housing and neighborhood services. Encourage renovation of existing buildings.	LHiNC CPED Local Stakeholders

LHBA: Linden Hills Business Association  
 CPED: Community Planning and Economic Development, City of Minneapolis  
 Public Works, City of Minneapolis  
 Local Stakeholders: residents, business owners, property owners, other organizations within the community