



‘Where the biggies leave off...’

# Hill & Lake Press

Published for East Isles, Lowry Hill, Kenwood Isles, & Cedar Isles Dean Neighborhoods

VOLUME 42 NUMBER 5

www.hillandlakepress.com

MAY 18, 2018

## City's Comp Plan update tackles tough issues, proposes new directions

By Michael Wilson

Minneapolis and the other 283 metro-area municipalities are required by state law to update their Comprehensive Plans every ten years. In March the city released its draft update, Minneapolis 2040, which has been in the works since 2016. It's a massive document — over 300 pages — which has garnered approval for initiatives in several planning areas. It has also sparked consternation, apprehension, and even anger for changes it proposes in other areas, particularly housing.

The Metropolitan Council does its own planning for the region every ten years, explains Paul Mogush, principal project coordinator in the Long Range Planning division of the Community Planning and Economic Development department (CPED). The regional plan forms the basis for the comprehensive plans that every municipality in the metro area is working on right now. The latest regional plan, Thrive MSP 2040, it includes forecasts for population, household, and employment growth out to 2040. It's the responsibility of each municipality to develop a comprehensive plan that anticipates the forecast growth out to 2040.

The city's previous Comp Plan update, passed by City Council in October 2009, and its March 2000 predecessor both seem rather dry and cautious compared to the draft Minneapolis 2040. This update is indeed different — and it's not just the striking graphics and interactive format.

“This is the first Comp Plan to use an equity lens — that is, this plan thinks about how to give greater access and agency to residents who have been marginalized or ignored in previous plans,” explains Mogush. “It also seeks to remedy policies, planning, and other regulatory instruments that have perpetuated disparities, driven disinvestment, or treated particular groups (based on race, income or geographic location) differently because of historic practices such as redlining, racially restrictive covenants, and other racially-based policies. These policies informed some aspects of the current zoning map, and shaped the way the city developed over time.”

This Comp Plan also tackles directly the issues surrounding climate change, seeking to align with the important work of the City over the last decade to identify and address its impacts and its implications for our community's long-term sustainability and resiliency.

### ‘New’ is an understatement.

The 2009 comp plan has served the city well in many respects, Mogush says, but its land use guidance has not been very clear. “Our intent with the proposed Land



Caption: Michael Wilson. Illustration: Minneapolis 2040

The drawing above accompanies the description of Policy 80, “Development Near METRO Stations,” and illustrates what the area northwest of Calhoun Parkway might look like under its proposed Transit 30 zoning district. Calhoun Village, for instance, has been replaced by high-rises up to 30 stories tall, which would be allowed by right under Comp Plan proposals.

Use and Built Form maps in the new draft Comp Plan is to create a user-friendly tool that is as clear as possible about what can be built on every parcel of land in the city,” he states. “We hope this will increase predictability in the development process for neighbors, developers, City staff, and elected officials.”

Much of the guidance in the draft Comp Plan's maps has been City policy for many years, according to Mogush, but until now has not been easy to access or interpret. And some of it is indeed new, based on the draft plan's new focus on racial equity, climate change, and housing access.

There is no quick and easy way to explain or understand the draft Comp Plan's proposed changes to zoning districts. You just need to go to <minneapolis2040.com> and dig in. Click on Topics, then on Land Use & Built Form.

The draft Future Land Use and Built Form Maps are the primary tools for implementing the draft Land Use and Built Form policies of the Comprehensive Plan, the website says. They also embody and implement the 97 Policies found throughout this plan, as well as the fourteen Comprehensive Plan Goals.

The draft Future Land Use Map establishes 12

Future Land Use categories and guides land use for every parcel in the city. Any changes to the use of land must be consistent with the guidance of the Future Land Use Map.

The draft Built Form Map establishes 13 Built Form districts and guides the scale of development for every parcel in the city through those 13 Built Form districts. The built form of all new and remodeled buildings must be consistent with the guidance of the Built Form Map.

### Hill and Lake area has 7 Built Form districts.

The four Hill and Lake neighborhoods encompass seven of the 13 Built Form districts. (See Built Form map accompanying this article.) All seven districts allow for greater bulk and more dwelling units than current code does. All except Interior 2 allow for greater height. All single-family and duplex residential parcels throughout the city can increase to four dwelling units.

In some areas, such as along Hennepin Avenue and West Lake between Holmes and Knox (Corridor 6), greater height and density might seem to make sense — but six stories by right? The prospect of block after block of streetscape taken over by hulking, wood-frame, Greenway-style apartment buildings gives pause.



# City's Comp Plan update continued



Photo and caption: Michael Wilson.

Paul Mogush, principal planning coordinator with the city's Long Range Planning division, explains an aspect of the draft Comp Plan update at an information session on May 12. One information session remains, on May 31 at the Powderhorn Rec Center, 3400 - 15th Ave. S., from 5:30 to 8:00 pm.

And Corridor 6 heights along St. Louis Avenue and on West Lake between Chowen and France seem excessive.

Lowry Hill and Kenwood residents say that the Corridor 4 designation of Franklin Avenue and West 21st Street as a "high frequency transit route," bringing with it the prospect of four-story multi-family dwellings on combined lots by right, is absurd. Route #25's ten daily trips — five in the early morning eastbound, five in the late afternoon westbound — hardly even qualify Franklin and West 21st as a "low frequency transit route."

The proposed Corridor 4 district not only cuts a wide swath through Kenwood, it also continues south alongside the Kenilworth Corridor clear down to the Kenilworth Channel. Residents were dismayed that the city would flout the spirit and intent of its own 2014 Memorandum of Understanding with the Met Council in which "[t]he parties agree that the Kenilworth Corridor is located in a park-like setting. In the event that LRT is constructed in the Corridor with co-location of LRT, freight rail and a bicycle and pedestrian trail, the Corridor shall be designed to a park-like level of amenity, not only restoring, but improving pre-existing conditions."

### 30-story towers on Calhoun Village site?

Cedar-Isles-Dean and West Calhoun residents were appalled to see the crescent of land between the Midtown Greenway and Excelsior Blvd., stretching from Dean Parkway to West 32nd St., proposed as a Transit 30 district — the only currently-developed area in the city outside downtown and the East Bank to be given this designation. Even the BP/fire station triangle, where an eight-story hotel is now working its way through the approval process, could have a 30-story tower by right.

The Transit 30 district designation would effectively

nullify the Shoreland Overlay ordinance, which just marked its 30th year of passage on May 13, 1988. While the ordinance was grounded in state law requiring the protection of bodies of water, its greatest accomplishment, many feel, has been to prevent the lake and the park-going experience from being overwhelmed by ranks of towering luxury high-rises.

While residents throughout the city are entitled to, and should, focus on their own dwellings and neighborhoods, we also need to engage in the larger conversation about confronting parts of our city's past and figuring out how to guide Minneapolis to become the city we want it to be in the future.

The draft Comp Plan documents contain a wealth of data that lays out the facts and the challenges of our current housing crisis. Here are just a few.

### Where are 49,000 more people going to live?

We know that our city is growing steadily. In its instructions to the city for the Comp Plan update, the Met Council pegged the city's current population at 415,000 and directed long-range planners to accommodate a projected 2040 population of 464,000. That's going to require a lot of additional housing that we don't now have.

We know that housing at all levels is becoming unaffordable for many and difficult to afford for many more.

We know that large areas in the south, north, and northeast ends of the city contain predominantly single-family or side-by-side houses where additional housing options could allow current residents to "age in place" and help others to defray their own housing costs by taking in tenants.

We know that our four Hill and Lake neighborhoods

already contain significant numbers of duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes, not just on the outer edges but in the interiors of our neighborhoods as well.

Most importantly, we know that Minneapolis has long been called one of the most segregated cities in America. Our city's history of redlining and restrictive covenants is real and, though now illegal, continues to have an outsized impact on the racial and economic segregation that characterize our city today. Go to <minneapolis2040.com>, click on Topics and then on Housing to learn more.

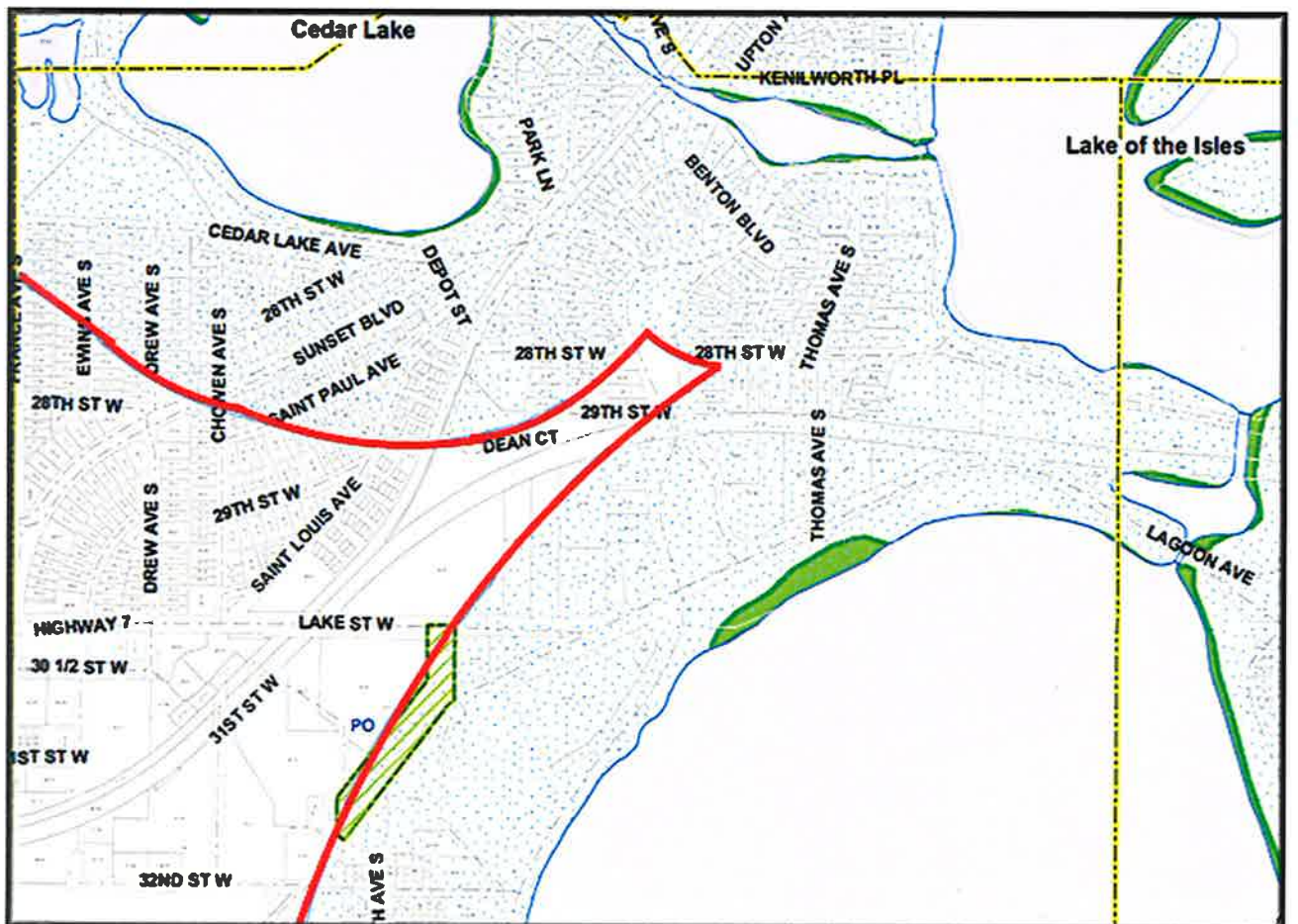
### Don't sit on your hands — speak up!

Minneapolis 2040 is raising difficult issues and proposing sometimes controversial action steps. Many of us might be content with a Comp Plan update that just nibbled around the edges of the status quo. But many others make it passionately clear that they want far-reaching change, and they want it now.

Our Hill and Lake neighborhoods have unfortunately become the target for the anger many activists feel about the scant progress being made to address the problems in minority-heavy or income-challenged neighborhoods. We're referred to sneeringly as "the mansion district." As one Kenwood resident says, "It's hard to have productive conversations with people who are angry with us because of who we are." But the city belongs to all of us, and we need to at least try.

A big question mark for many people concerns what the underlying agendas are for some city leaders. It's known, for example, that some leaders view neighborhood associations as white, homeowner-dominated groups that try to hinder progress and preserve the sta-

Continued on page eight



Caption: Michael Wilson. Map: City of Minneapolis.

The Shoreland Overlay ordinance was passed 30 years ago, on May 13, 1988. The ordinance's height limit guidance has served to dampen the rush to surround Lake Calhoun with towering high-rises. By proposing to turn the area northwest of Calhoun Parkway and south of the Greenway into a Transit 30 zone, the draft Comp Plan would effectively nullify the Shoreland Overlay district in this area. The heavy line on the map shows the area currently inside the Shoreland Overlay District.





The map above shows the built form zoning districts proposed in the draft Comp Plan for our four Hill and Lake neighborhoods. Match the colors with the description boxes on this page and elsewhere in this issue. For greater detail, go to <minneapolis2040.com>. Click on Topics, then Land Use & Built

**Transit 15**

The Transit 15 district is typically applied along high frequency transit routes, adjacent to METRO stations, in neighborhoods near downtown, and in downtown.

**Built Form Guidance:** New development in the Transit 15 district should reflect a variety of building types on both moderate and large sized lots. As the lot size increases in this district, allowable building bulk should also increase. The length of buildings along the street should be limited in order to support a comfortable pedestrian environment. Building heights should be 4 to 15 stories. Building heights should be at least 4 stories in order to best take advantage of the access to transit, jobs, and goods and services provided by the Transit 15 district. Requests to exceed 15 stories will be evaluated on the basis of whether or not a taller building is a reasonable means for further achieving Comprehensive Plan goals.

**Corridor 4**

The Corridor 4 district is typically applied along high frequency transit routes that are on narrower rights of way as well as select streets with local transit service. It is also applied near downtown in areas between transit routes, and serves as a transition between lower intensity residential areas and areas immediately surrounding METRO stations.

**Built Form Guidance:** New development in the Corridor 4 district should reflect a variety of building types on both small and moderate-sized lots, including on combined lots. The length of buildings along the street should be limited in order to support a comfortable pedestrian environment. As the lot size increases in this district, allowable building bulk should also increase. Building heights should be 1 to 4 stories. Requests to exceed 4 stories will be evaluated on the basis of whether or not a taller building is a reasonable means for further achieving Comprehensive Plan goals.

tus quo. By greatly broadening the definitions of what developers can do by right in the new Built Form districts, the reasoning goes, these city leaders can neutralize the associations' Land Use Committees. "There's nothing to oppose or negotiate if everything can be done by right," one neighborhood board member says.

The City Council must take action on the Comp Plan in December and send it to the Met Council by the

end of the year. In 2019, concurrent with the year-long Met Council review, planners will begin rewriting the zoning codes. The devil's in the details, and that's when the real intentions of city leaders will become apparent. We've already been told that new residential development will not need on-site parking. How close to the lot lines can new fourplexes come? Can four-story buildings have a tuckaway fifth story, as is currently being

done with the 3612-16 Bryant project? These and scores of other decisions go into the writing of the new zoning code. The amount of public input allowed at that stage is unclear.

Green comment boxes are placed throughout the online Minneapolis 2040 document. City planners say that they read, categorize, and archive all comments, thousands of them. It is critical that both proponents and opponents of the Comp Plan's many Topics, Goals, and Policies be heard. Comments can be entered through July 22. You can sign your comments or submit them anonymously. So go to <minneapolis2040.com>, dig in, and make your views known.

**Interior 2**

The Interior 2 district is typically applied in parts of the city that developed during the era when streetcars were a primary mode of transportation, in the areas in between transit routes.

**Built Form Guidance:** New buildings in the Interior 2 district should be small-scale residential structures on traditional size city lots with up to four dwelling units, as well as multifamily buildings on a limited number of combined lots. Building heights should be 1 to 2.5 stories.

**Interior 3**

The Interior 3 district is typically applied in parts of the city closest to downtown, in the areas in between transit routes. It is also applied adjacent to the Corridor 4 and 6 districts, serving as a transition to lower intensity residential areas.

**Built Form Guidance:** New development in the Interior 3 district should reflect a variety of building types on traditional size city lots, along with combining of parcels for multifamily buildings. As the lot size increases, allowable building bulk should also increase. Building height should be 1 to 3 stories.

**Corridor 6**

The Corridor 6 district is typically applied along high frequency transit routes as well as in areas near METRO stations.

**Built Form Guidance:** New development in the Corridor 6 district should reflect a variety of building types on both moderate and large sized lots. As the lot size increases in this district, allowable building bulk should also increase. The length of buildings along the street should be limited in order to support a comfortable pedestrian environment. Building heights should be 2 to 6 stories. Building heights should be at least 2 stories in order to best take advantage of the access to transit, jobs, and goods and services provided by the Corridor 6 district. Requests to exceed 6 stories will be evaluated on the basis of whether or not a taller building is a reasonable means for further achieving Comprehensive Plan goals.

**Transit 10**

The Transit 10 district is typically applied along high frequency transit routes, adjacent to METRO stations, in neighborhoods near downtown, and in downtown.

**Built Form Guidance:** New development in the Transit 10 district should reflect a variety of building types on both moderate and large sized lots. As the lot size increases in this district, allowable building bulk should also increase. The length of buildings along the street should be limited in order to support a comfortable pedestrian environment. Building heights should be 2 to 10 stories. Building heights should be at least 2 stories in order to best take advantage of the access to transit, jobs, and goods and services provided by the Transit 10 district. Requests to exceed 10 stories will be evaluated on the basis of whether or not a taller building is a reasonable means for further achieving Comprehensive Plan goals.

[minneapolis2040.com](http://minneapolis2040.com)

**Transit 30**

The Transit 30 district is typically applied along high frequency transit routes, adjacent to METRO stations, in neighborhoods near downtown, and adjacent to the downtown office core.

**Built Form Guidance:** New development in the Transit 30 district should reflect a variety of building types on both moderate and large sized lots. As the lot size increases in this district, allowable building bulk should also increase. The length of buildings along the street should be limited in order to support a comfortable pedestrian environment. Upper floors of taller buildings should be set back to increase access to light and air. Building heights should be 8 to 30 stories. Building heights should be at least 8 stories in order to best take advantage of the access to transit, jobs, and goods and services provided by the Transit 30 district. Requests to exceed 30 stories will be evaluated on the basis of whether or not a taller building is a reasonable means for further achieving Comprehensive Plan goals.

Caption: Michael Wilson. Poster: N4MN.

Do shaming and race- and class-baiting have a useful role in civil discussions about the city's future? At least one activist group says yes.