



Plan Policies

The 38th Street Station Area Plan is guided by the following development and urban design policy areas.

1. Redevelopment, Land Use Changes and Zoning
2. Preservation of Residential Neighborhood Core
3. Neighborhood-Scale and Mixed-Use Nodes
4. Renovation and Adaptive Reuse
5. Station Block Development as Focal Point
6. Building Heights and Neighborhood Context
7. Large-scale Redevelopment in Milling District
8. Urban Design and Irregular Street Angles
9. Quality and Character of Pedestrian and Bicycle Routes
10. Landscaping and Open Space
11. Parking and Traffic

1. Redevelopment, Land Use Changes and Zoning

- 1.1** Designations in the plan do not mean that uses will or must change, but that the City will use its resources and authority to support these designations.
- The City has a number of tools to influence and guide change, including land-use regulation (zoning and subdivision ordinances), redevelopment authority, subsidies (e.g., tax increment financing, grants and loans), public capital improvements and regulatory enforcement (e.g., building code and site plan enforcement). The City will use these tools to support changes consistent with the plan. Many factors influence how much changes will occur. These include the rights and preferences of individual property and business owners, limited public resources and the strength of the real estate market.
- 1.2.** Some land-use changes will depend on larger-scale redevelopment schemes that are consistent with the vision established in the plan.
- The current configuration of public infrastructure and land ownership may not readily support the plan’s changes. The City will support rezoning or subdivision of parcels in conjunction with land assembly and project proposals that meet the land use, density, and urban design objectives of this plan.
- 1.3.** City support for zoning changes will be consistent with the plan.
- When zoning changes are necessary for a development project, the City will base its evaluation on the vision established in the plan.
- 1.4.** City financial support for redevelopment projects will be contingent upon meeting the policies in the plan.
- In some cases, the City may be involved in land assembly, the creation of redevelopment and tax increment finance districts and application for redevelopment-related loans and grants. The City will engage in such activities only for projects that are substantially consistent with the vision and policies established in the plan.

1.5. Property acquisition for land-use changes shall generally be done on a voluntary basis. Use of eminent domain shall be limited to situations where the public need is clearly demonstrated.

The plan is a broad vision intended to guide the evolution of the area. Change will happen over many years. Some change envisioned in the plan may not happen at all. The plan does, however, identify particular sites or situations that inhibit broader change in the area. These include abandoned or blighted industrial property, blighted residential or commercial property, or where new public rights of way are needed to realize implementation of the plan. The City will consider use of eminent domain in these cases.

1.6. Rezoning initiated by the City may or may not create non-conforming uses. In some cases, though current zoning may be inconsistent with the long-term vision identified in the plan, it may be appropriate for the time being.

Creating non-conforming uses through rezoning does not force a use to leave or change. Rather, it creates a legal non-conforming use. Expansion of a legal non-conforming use requires a special application and public hearing before the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission evaluates such applications to ensure that the expansion of the use would not have negative impacts on the surrounding area. The City will create non-conforming uses in cases where the current use is distinctly inconsistent with the vision established in the plan, and/or where there is clear development opportunity.

In some cases, immediately changing a site may be impractical. This could be because of the size or configuration of the site or the type of building on it. Rezoning the site could discourage reinvestment and reuse of the site. In these cases, continued investment in property or adaptive reuse of a site may be more important than consistency with the land use envisioned in the plan. The City may choose to maintain current zoning in this case. Another possibility is that the City may change the zoning to a district that still allows the current use but restricts the uses to be more consistent with the plan.

2. Preservation of the Residential Neighborhood Core

- 2.1.** The plan should reinforce stable residential neighborhoods that are physically buffered from non-residential land uses.
- This should be accomplished by improving existing property and through redevelopment that results in land use changes and/or improved site configuration. Current property owners committed to the area should make changes to their sites to meet zoning code standards related to access, circulation, landscaping, screening (e.g. fences or walls), fenestration (windows) and signage. Current site plan problems include paved areas immediately adjacent to public sidewalks, a lack of landscaping, and blank walls.
- 2.2.** Redevelopment of single-family areas adjacent to or near 38th Street shall be limited to areas where the plan envisions redevelopment facing 38th Street.
- A principal goal of the 38th Street Station Area Plan is to create more of a mixed-use continuous pedestrian corridor along 38th Street between 23rd and Minnehaha Avenues. Because parcels adjacent to 38th Street are often shallow and/or are not oriented to 38th Street, some additional parcel acquisition is likely necessary.
- 2.3.** Residential streets intersecting with 38th Street in the Standish neighborhood should generally have at least 75 percent residential frontage and not more than 25 percent non-residential.
- Orientation and scale of development along 38th Street should be consistent with the goal of a pedestrian-friendly corridor oriented to 38th Street. These blocks provide a potential width/depth ratio of 2:1 along 38th Street. The frontage would be 300 feet wide along 38th Street and 150 feet deep. This is consistent with other community corridors such as Minnehaha Avenue.
- 2.4.** Acquisition of parcels for development adjoining 38th Street must facilitate new development that faces 38th Street.
- As part of the goal of creating a pedestrian-oriented 38th Street, buildings and uses should contribute to vitality and activity along 38th Street. As such, entrances should be oriented to 38th Street. Ground-level activity, such as offices and gathering places, should front 38th Street.

2.5. Adequate parcel depth should be acquired to avoid the need for variances from zoning standards that arise from small sites (e.g., related to yard, landscaping and parking), not simply to increase the size of the project scale.

Additional parcel size will make redevelopment projects more feasible along 38th Street. It should also make the projects more compatible with adjoining land uses, particularly those areas designated in the plan as single- and two-family residential. In addition to fulfilling the land use, design and height specifications envisioned in the plan, these projects should strive to provide the yards, landscaping and parking that is ordinarily required in the zoning code.

2.6. If possible, creating L- or T-shaped alleys to replace existing alleys, which currently outlet on 38th Street, is preferred.

Reducing the number of curb cuts along 38th Street, including alleyways, will reduce the number of points of conflict between pedestrians and automobiles. Furthermore, re-orientation of alleys will allow more continuous building frontage and a more efficient use of space. This will help create a sense of enclosure and rhythm along the street.

3. Neighborhood-scale and Mixed-use Nodes

3.1. The plan should reinforce neighborhood-scale, mixed-use nodes or districts along 38th Street and Minnehaha Avenue.

Focal points for neighborhood retail and service uses, whether stand-alone or in mixed-use buildings, shall be concentrated in the following general locations:

- 38th Street and 23rd Avenue
- 38th Street and the LRT station
- Minnehaha Avenue and 35th Street
- Minnehaha Avenue and 38th Street
- Minnehaha Avenue and 40th Street

4. Renovation and Adaptive Reuse

- 4.1. Renovation of existing commercial or mixed-use buildings and the preservation of façades is strongly encouraged.

The plan supports maintaining and renovating commercial and mixed-use buildings for a number of reasons: Small, local businesses often cannot afford the rents associated with new construction. Renovation and rehabilitation of buildings can improve the aesthetics and character of the area and is an appropriate strategy when current economics make new construction unlikely or infeasible. Original buildings also contribute to the sense of history of the area and a connection with the past. The plan maps show existing building footprints where continued use of buildings may be preferable to new construction.

5. Station Block Development as Focal Point

- 5.1. Development at or near the station site should be designed and used so that the station becomes a new focal point for the neighborhood.

The LRT station at 38th Street is a new neighborhood landmark. Creating a greater sense of place and purpose around the station can make it an integral part of the community, rather than just a transportation amenity.

- 5.2. New uses at the station should include convenient services for neighborhood residents and transit riders

Locating important neighborhood goods and services (e.g., coffee shop, newsstand, cleaners) together near the station can improve the value and convenience of taking transit. It can also help reduce the number of automobile trips related to these needs.

- 5.3. The design of any new development on the station block should help “frame” or “front” the station, creating a sense of enclosure and visually drawing people to 38th Street.

The LRT station should become a destination in and of itself. Riders should have the sense that they are arriving in the Standish neighborhood. Like public streets and parks, the LRT station is a framework for the surrounding area, acting in a sense like a small public square where people congregate. As much as possible, new development should create the sense that one is arriving in a large “room.”

The station’s location adjacent to Hiawatha limits the potential to accomplish this principle. Nevertheless, redevelopment of adjacent sites has the potential to improve this situation. Redevelopment possibilities include the south side of 38th Street, to the west along 29th Avenue and at the location of the Cardinal Bar. Special attention to building mass, architectural detail and the orientation of entrances can contribute to this effect.

6. Building Heights and Neighborhood Context

- 6.1. Heights of new buildings shall be related to their neighborhood context.

Determining feasible and appropriate building heights depends on factors that include: size and depth of parcel, existing building heights, the height of adjacent buildings and the planned land uses and intensities of the surrounding area.

- 6.2. Building heights identified in the plan are not regulatory but suggest what heights are appropriate.

Redevelopment of the industrial area along Hiawatha affords opportunities to provide higher density housing near the LRT station without shadowing houses and duplexes. The suggested building heights illustrate an attempt to transition areas or districts with shorter buildings into areas or districts with taller ones. As one moves west from Minnehaha Avenue toward Hiawatha Avenue, building heights may increase.

7. Large-Scale Redevelopment Along Hiawatha

7.1. The height, bulk and mass of new structures may be similar to or taller than the milling facilities that they replace provided that the design of the development encourages interaction and connection with the surrounding neighborhood as well as adequately addressing issues related to vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian access and circulation.

In some cases, the plan suggests adaptive reuse of milling facilities versus demolition and new construction. However, in other cases the existing structures may have limited market, aesthetic or historical value. As the area evolves these industries may no longer be economically viable, but it may be appropriate to pay homage to their history. Building height or bulk will be evaluated against attributes related to innovative designs and site plans that minimize shadowing, provide public amenities and adequately manage congestion.

7.2. As opportunities present themselves, the railroad corridor shall be vacated to improve site planning and plan implementation.

The Canadian Pacific (CP Rail) freight rail corridor on the east side of Hiawatha remains in use, though its activity declines south of 38th Street. Minnesota Commercial Railways operates rail services for industrial clients along this rail spur. Archer Daniels Midland Company (ADM) and General Mills are the sole freight rail clients in the 38th Street station area. Freight rail activity is intermittent, and activity south of 38th Street is generally limited to car storage.

The presence of the freight rail corridor discourages new non-industrial development and its vacation should be a priority for plan implementation. The assumption of this plan is that vacation could occur in the southern portion of the station area soon. It is also the assumption of the plan that if and when ADM ceases operation, the freight rail corridor could shortly give up its right-of-way. Site plans for the new development should consider future use of an abandoned railroad right-of-way.

7.3. The City of Minneapolis will expect large-scale redevelopment to dedicate rights-of-way and/or easements to improve access consistent with the plan.

Large-scale redevelopment can only effectively occur if vehicle access and circulation improve in the vicinity of Hiawatha and 38th Street. Plan maps illustrate the increased importance that Snelling Avenue will have. Snelling Avenue will provide access to the interior of large development sites to the west, as well as circulate traffic bound for either 35th or 42nd streets. The plan also illustrates how a consistent block pattern will be established by extending 39th and 36th streets west from Dight, intersecting with Hiawatha.

7.4. Most parking, except for small-scale commercial, should be located below ground or in structures. Parking structures should be integrated with buildings rather than stand alone.

7.5. Retail and commercial services shall be limited to 38th Street frontage or be part of continuous frontage that includes 38th Street.

Retail should not be scattered along Hiawatha Avenue. The exception to this policy is for larger-scale development where the underlying zoning district allows limited small-scale retail and services in mixed-use buildings.

7.6. Development of the Hiawatha/Dight corridor will be subject to the creation of a Travel Demand Management (TDM) Plan.

In addition to assessing and documenting the transportation impact of any new large-scale development, measures shall be identified to minimize the transportation impacts of the development, including but not limited to incentives for public transport, preferential location of car pool and van pool parking, on-site bicycle facilities including secure storage areas and amenities, shared cars, staggered work-starting times and telecommuting opportunities.

8. Urban Design and Irregular Street Angles

8.1. Redevelopment and site planning should make creative use of areas formed by irregular street angles.

Hiawatha, Dight, Snelling, and Minnehaha avenues intersect other streets at a 60-degree angle. This unique situation is an opportunity to create a special sense of place or character in the area. Buildings that front corners with oblique angles should ideally reflect these angles in the building. Where this is not possible, landscaping features or plazas should create focal points on these parcels.

8.2. Triangular parcels of land adjoining Minnehaha should improve as focal points.

The triangular parcels along Minnehaha at 35th and 40th streets are unique locations that have a special impact on the urban environment. Long-term use of these parcels should be guided towards those which become better focal points and/or neighborhood gateways. Adam's Triangle at 41st and Minnehaha is an example of a distinctive visual gateway into the neighborhood, beautifully framing Minnehaha Communion Lutheran Church.

Ideally, these sites should not be used for uses that require large outdoor storage areas for vehicles and/or materials, and their site plans should take into consideration their public prominence. The current automobile repair use at 35th Street is particularly problematic as it compounds the blighting at this intersection. The current use at 40th Street is part of a more vital commercial node, but improvements to the site are needed (e.g., paved and curbed parking lot, landscaping, etc.).

The City and its partners should support options for triangular parcels that include:

1. **Immediate enforcement of site plan standards**, including paving and curbing of parking areas, landscaping and screening. This scenario should happen in the near term, and it would not preclude other scenarios listed below.
2. **Acquisition by City of Minneapolis for incorporation into a landscaped area** that is maintained through a special services district.

Under this scenario, the City of Minneapolis could acquire the triangle for use in streetscape improvements that enhance a larger area. This scenario could occur as part of a larger redevelopment and/or streetscape project along Minnehaha.

3. **Encourage a change in use of sites to small-scale office or residential use.**

9. Quality and Character of Pedestrian and Bicycle Routes

9.1. The character of important pedestrian and bicycle routes shall be improved by:

- Encouraging or requiring property and business owners to improve existing landscaping and façades
- Widening sidewalks, adding bicycle lanes, creating boulevards, and/or relocating utility poles, with priority on the portion of 38th Street between Minnehaha and Hiawatha
- Creating L- or T-shaped alleys to replace existing alleys that currently outlet on 38th Street
- Installing pedestrian-scale lighting and planting boulevard trees
- Installing directional signs to the LRT station and neighborhood institutions
- Installing public art
- Acquiring additional right-of-way for the purposes above
- Corridor-wide initiatives to improve crossing Hiawatha, such as special pavement at the crossings, durable crosswalk striping, restricting traffic speed or movement through yield signs, rebuilding intersections to slow traffic and adding pedestrian and bicycle overpasses
- As redevelopment occurs, requiring building setbacks and amenities in front of buildings such as benches, landscaping, planters and bicycle racks

10. Environment and Open Space

10.1. Landscaping, planters, and usable open space should be created or acquired over time, especially in the following locations:

- The triangular-shaped parcel at 35th and Minnehaha, currently an auto-related use
- In front of, or adjacent to, properties along 38th Street particularly between Minnehaha Avenue and 28th Avenue
- The corners of parcels where streets intersect at odd angles (e.g., with Hiawatha, Minnehaha)
- Along both sides of Hiawatha, especially at corners

10.2. Stormwater ponding requirements shall be designed as central features of site plans, not ancillary components of them.

Managing surface water runoff in large redevelopment areas is an opportunity to create open space resources such as rain gardens, bioswales and ponds. These areas should be appropriately landscaped and accessible to the users of the property and/ or public.

10.3 Large scale redevelopment should reflect environmental sustainability principles.

Developments that use green building technology and standards and/or which meet LEED standards, are encouraged.

11. Parking and Traffic

11.1. The City will support neighborhood petitions for on-street permit parking to discourage all-day parking by commuters.

The quality of life for residents nearest the LRT station may be diminished if residential streets are affected by significant commuter or event parking. Early experience indicates the problem may be limited to within a few blocks of the station.

11.2. The City will implement time-restricted or metered parking to protect the ability of customers to find on-street parking for local businesses.

Although LRT will generate additional pedestrian traffic, local businesses cannot depend upon pedestrian traffic alone. Restricting use of on-street parking in front of businesses will ensure turnover of parking spaces.

11.3. The City will support the development of creative parking solutions that include shared use.

The zoning code includes provisions that reduce the total number of required off-street parking spaces if such spaces are shared between sites with different periods of peak usage. Shared parking areas across property lines can also result in more efficient layouts, including reducing the number of drive-aisles and curb cuts.

11.4. New parking needs and additional traffic shall be managed appropriately.

In addition to Travel Demand Management (TDM) Plans required for large-scale development, the City will plan for context-sensitive, long-term infrastructure improvements to accommodate the traffic circulation and flow created by the planned development.