

**STAFF SUMMARY  
CITY OF MINNETONKA  
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION  
MONDAY, JUNE 16, 2008  
PAGE 1**

---

**Council Present:** Dick Allendorf, Bob Ellingson, James Hiller, Terry Schneider, Tony Wagner, and Mayor Jan Callison.

**Comprehensive Guide Plan Steering Committee:** Mayor Jan Callison, Sue Sjeklocha, Jim Couling, John Cheleen, Janet Dupre, Gauri Subramani, Blaine Waters, Terri Yearwood, David Nichols, and Lee-Hoon Benson

**Planning Commission:** John Cheleen, Steve Adams, Sue Sjeklocha, Sarah Schmitz, Paul Lehman, and Aimee Blatz

**EDA:** Peter St. Peter, Dan Duffy, Tony Wagner, Bill Yaeger, and Ellen Cousins

**Park Board:** Amber Greves

**Staff:** GERALYN BARONE, JULIE WISCHNACK, LOREN GORDON, ELISE DURBIN, SUSAN THOMAS, STEPHANIE SCOTT-SIMS, JOSH METZER, JEFF THOMSON, and DAVID MAEDA

**1. Comprehensive guide plan review and discussion**

Mayor Callison welcomed the group and introductions were done.

Project Manager Ann Perry from Resource Strategies Corporation reviewed the study session goals and the chapters of the comprehensive plan. She also reviewed the Minnetonka 2030 Vision. Perry said the vision points out the regional areas as well as the village areas and also the natural resources. She then went through the draft 2030 Land Use Plan map, which shows the properties where there are proposed changes.

Wischnack reviewed how public input has been obtained. Comments have been taken throughout the process and there have also been many open houses for public feedback.

Wischnack went through the Highway 7/Highwood Drive proposed land use changes. She said the properties were originally proposed to change from low density residential to medium density residential; however, the current proposal is to change the properties to commercial. Wischnack said the reasons behind the current proposal are to make a better buffer between the commercial and residential land uses and also provide more space for the commercial. The draft land plan includes criteria to be met as part of any redevelopment project for all of the commercial properties. She said the criteria includes a two-story height

**STAFF SUMMARY  
CITY OF MINNETONKA  
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION  
MONDAY, JUNE 16, 2008  
PAGE 2**

---

limitation, access to the commercial properties is from the south only, buffering, appropriate development, and improvements.

Allendorf asked if there are other areas of the city that have a lack of separation similar to this. Wischnack replied the Northridge/Southridge area is like this, but more intense. She said this commercial area is expected to be more service commercial/destination businesses.

Wagner said he looked at the site and there are three properties behind the office building with a grade change separating them and he was wondering why they are included. He also commented the buffering definition and wording in the text is vague. Wischnack responded there are some standards for buffering already in the city code, but more work can be done in the implementation section of the comprehensive plan. Wagner said it should say what a reasonable buffer is. Perry mentioned that the policies section includes the definition of a buffer.

Yearwood said the intent in re-guiding this area is to address a difficult situation. She said deeper lots will separate the uses better. Cheleen added that what is there now is not good and making this land use plan change will help make a more permanent buffer.

Adams asked if the commercial businesses are to be accessed from the south, then will an easement for this access be required. Wischnack replied that it will depend on how the property is developed.

Wagner said the city has required in some areas that a minimum number of properties be assembled before redevelopment can occur. Wischnack said this may be more appropriate in a north-south configuration rather than east-west.

Lehman said he is sensing that this guide plan change is really less about the commercial area moving north, but rather about making a better separation.

Greves asked how this change will improve the businesses that are already there. Callison said it's really about improving a neighborhood rather than the businesses. She said it swaps residences for a buffer. Waters added it helps to create a more viable redevelopment area as well.

Ellingson asked if this change was at the request of the neighborhood. Callison said no, but the goal is to look into the future. Wischnack said any property owner can request a land use plan change at any time.

Hiller asked how much could be done at once. Wischnack said the frontage road plans are in the process of being put together and a redevelopment proposal is on the table.

**STAFF SUMMARY  
CITY OF MINNETONKA  
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION  
MONDAY, JUNE 16, 2008  
PAGE 3**

---

Wischnack reviewed the public comments. She said a neighborhood petition was received with stated issues including traffic/safety, no evidence that it would improve the businesses success, lack of a clear plan for the buffer, and the commercial designation contradicts the 2030 vision of neighborhoods.

Lehman said he is sensing the issue is changing from residential to commercial. He asked if there is another land use category it would be put into, such as a park. Wischnack said medium density was discussed, and a park designation will not work because the city must own the property in order for it to be a park designation.

Schneider suggested not changing the designation now, but mention in the text the city is willing consider a land use plan change in the future if certain criteria are met. He said this will allow flexibility.

Duffy asked about the impact of the proposed frontage road on the redevelopment. Wischnack said it will be built at the same time.

Yaeger asked how many residences that are proposed to be changed are owner-occupied. Wischnack said two.

Callison recapped Councilmember Wiersum's comments saying that he does not support regarding this area.

Wischnack reviewed the proposed changes for Minnetonka Boulevard/County Road 101. She said five existing single-family properties, south of the commercial businesses on the southeast corner are proposed to change from low density residential to medium density residential. Wischnack said the criteria to redevelop in the future includes a planned housing type of townhouses or row houses, a cohesive design, consolidation of properties, and a height limitation. She said this type of use provides a defined edge between commercial and single-family.

Allendorf asked if the idea is to provide a buffer to the commercial area that is not single-family homes. Wischnack said yes because it is an active commercial area.

Schneider asked about the city-owned properties directly north of these properties. Wischnack said this is not an alley, but rather property that the city owns fee title to.

Schneider suggested a type of new urbanism townhomes where the garages would front onto the city-owned property. Duffy said though that if the city-owned property is opened up as a "road" then the homes would look directly at the commercial and there would be less screening.

**STAFF SUMMARY  
CITY OF MINNETONKA  
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION  
MONDAY, JUNE 16, 2008  
PAGE 4**

---

Schneider said he is supportive of the reguiding, and there are controls to help with the concerns.

Ellingson said he understands the rationale, but the buffer is not solved by adding more residents. He also added that any new development that may be done there is not likely to be affordable, like what happened at The Sanctuary. Wischnack recapped the planning philosophy behind higher density as a buffer and that there is more tolerance to the commercial area with higher density because it is a different living environment.

Wischnack reviewed the feedback received and said the comments included concerns about traffic, that there are no specifics about any plans, this is being done only because of the complaints, and this is a neighborhood area already.

Wischnack reviewed the Highway 7/County Road 101 area. She said the southeast corner is already guided mixed use and the steering committee has discussed the possibility of transit or a park and ride at this corner. Wischnack said the southwest corner contains many parcels and while it is not necessarily ready for redevelopment now it will be in the future. She said the southwest corner should have cohesive design and the area should be master planned.

Lehman asked about the circulation issues between the four quadrants. Perry said the only safe way for pedestrians to get across Highway 7 is to use the tunnel to the east of County Road 101. She said there has been discussion by the committee about whether more tunnels could be added. Perry added that there is no safe east-west crossing. She said for traffic purposes, there is no easy solution and more study is needed.

Wischnack reviewed the I-394/Ridgedale area. She said site E, to the west of I-494, is proposed to change from commercial to office.

Wagner asked if Carlson would build another tower and this site were to redevelop, what would that do to the interchange. Wischnack said the traffic impacts have been studied and only minor modifications would need to be made.

Allendorf asked why this area is being changed to office when there is interest in a car dealership. Wischnack said there is office directly to the east, and access is difficult for retail at this location.

Schneider said office will not do well at this site and that it makes sense as a destination commercial space. He suggested making it a dual office/commercial designation. Adams agreed with Schneider on the dual designation.

**STAFF SUMMARY  
CITY OF MINNETONKA  
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION  
MONDAY, JUNE 16, 2008  
PAGE 5**

---

Duffy asked if this site could be a park and ride site. Wischnack said transit facilities along this corridor are better suited on the south side of I-394.

Wischnack reviewed the Ridgedale/Ridgehaven proposed changes to mixed use. She said the thought is to have more density and walkability in the area.

Wagner said the housing goals also need to be looked at. Schneider responded that housing should be enabled in this area, but not necessarily counted on. He suggested finding an underutilized area for more housing.

Wischnack said there was a lot of discussion about the Knollway and Northridge/Southridge areas. She said transportation/access and coordination are the challenges.

Schneider said if any proposal comes in for the Knollway and Northridge/Southridge areas then it should be considered.

Schneider asked what the designation of the Jondahl property. Wischnack said it is guided medium density. Schneider asked if it could be guided high density. Wischnack replied it could be considered on the south side.

Wischnack reviewed the Glen Lake changes and said the proposed changes in this area are housekeeping, and everything else will remain as is.

Wagner asked about the area north of the hardware store where development was proposed in the past. Callison responded there has been no discussion.

Perry went through part of the implementation chapter, specifically the development review criteria the city will be looking at if the land use plan change is requested.

Wagner commented the language in the text regarding varied housing types is too vague. He said this is a 20-year document, but his experience is that even though low density residential is one to four units per acre, that no more than two lots per acre has been built.

Wischnack reviewed the public involvement activities that have happened throughout the process including Minnetonka Memo articles, the city's website, local newspapers, and open houses. She then went through the remaining opportunities for public involvement starting with the June 25 steering committee meeting, the July 22 public hearing at the Planning Commission, and the August 11 City Council meeting.

## **2. Adjournment**

**STAFF SUMMARY  
CITY OF MINNETONKA  
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION  
MONDAY, JUNE 16, 2008  
PAGE 6**

---

The study session adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

David E. Maeda  
City Clerk