

## Minnetonka: 5937 County Road 101 Development Guideline Recommendations

Convened by LISC Twin Cities/Corridor Housing Initiative (CDI)

***What is this document?*** These recommendations serve as a summary of the input and reflections shared by community members through a four-part workshop series convened by LISC Twin Cities to inform future development of the city-owned site located at 5937 County Road 101. The findings will be submitted to the Minnetonka City Council for their consideration.

### Introduction

In 2015 it was purchased by the City of Minnetonka in conjunction Hennepin County's road reconstruction project of CR 101, with the intent of selling it at a future date. For the past four years, the site at 5937 County Road 101 sat vacant. Prior to that the land had been a farmstead since the 1950's.

Today the City of Minnetonka is ready to sell the property for redevelopment, and set out to gather insights from the community about what the site should become. It's no surprise that residents' first choice would be to preserve it as a wooded natural open space or park. But because the area is one of the higher served for parks and open space in the city, the site is not designated for park or open space use. Therefore, the community was asked: What would be their second choice? A series of community workshops were held to gather information and ideas about what options would be supported for the site.

#### Site Description

Over 198 acres of park land and open space are within reach, and the site is in close proximity to the Clear Springs Elementary School. A mix of housing options in the area range from single family homes, townhomes, and multifamily apartments. Retail and commercial areas are conveniently located within a

couple miles along County Road 101. The topography of the area creates a network of curving roads and elevated areas.

The 2.3 acre site at 5937 County Road 101 is surrounded by a bank of wooded natural spaces, which feeds down to a low area. The opportunity is to preserve the natural setting, and successfully manage the challenge of the water table and storm water systems.

The site is also challenged by traffic and concerns over pedestrian safety (especially for children). Morning auto commuters find CR101 difficult to access from Covington Terrace, and a safety hazard for pedestrians attempting to cross. For a crosswalk to be considered, consistent pedestrian traffic (30 pedestrians per hour) is required as well as a roadway that is safe to cross (lower traffic speeds and good sight distances). During road reconstruction in 2015 the addition of crosswalks was considered but ultimately Hennepin County decided against implementation.

Community members agree that the site is not appropriate for commercial uses. Therefore, the workshops focused solely on options for residential uses. The residents felt that the lack of transit options for the area would raise mobility concerns for individuals without access to cars. It was also noted that the prospect of future light rail transit may change or improve mobility options.

## City of Minnetonka Housing Goals

In the recent 2040 Comprehensive Plan update, the City of Minnetonka identified four Housing Goals:

- I. **Housing Preservation:** Preserve the city's existing housing stock
- II. **Affordable Housing Production:** Include affordable housing in developments where appropriate and possible
- III. **Provide a Range of Housing Choices:** Housing types that meet the needs of current and future residents near job centers, village centers, and TOD locations
- IV. **Increase Housing Options for Seniors:** Diversify housing choices available to seniors in order to fulfill the unmet senior housing needs in the community (homeownership, rental, active, and supportive aging in place)

The property is currently zoned R-1 and is guided for medium density (up to 12 units per acre) in the city's comprehensive plan.

## Allowable Uses Include:

- Single family detached dwelling units
- Twin homes / Townhomes and low rise multifamily
- Nearby area is similarly guided and historically has been guided as medium density since 1970's

## Future Considerations:

- Expectation under state law is that a use other than R-1 will occur at the site (to comply with the comprehensive plan)
- Public process required for redevelopment of the site

## Recommendations for Redevelopment of the Site

*Based on input from the community workshops, the following redevelopment guidelines were recommended:*

**Goal 1. Preserve the wooded/natural setting of the site** (Note: *The trees surrounding the property are owned by Minnetonka Heights [Heartland Heights, LLC]*)

- A. Limit surface parking with new development (e.g. tuck under garages, underground parking).
- B. Use setbacks and height restrictions to blend elevation of development into existing topography (3 – 4 stories maximum).
- C. Include elements that enhance the area as a unique and special place.
- D. Maximize setbacks to the building(s) to ensure adequate site lines for traffic and a sense of openness for pedestrians.
- E. Ensure that appropriate measures are taken for storm water management to avoid flooding of the property and surrounding roads.
- F. Provide a neighborhood amenity (e.g. access to existing trails and connections).

**Goal 2. Create better traffic flow and pedestrian safety**

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- A. Gather information on traffic impacts at the intersection of CR101 and Covington Terrace/Red Cherry Lane to strengthen safety and walk-ability
- B. Consider adding sidewalks to Covington Terrace.
- C. Utilize landscaping and streetscape amenities to improve pedestrian and bike safety
- D. Improve street lighting
- E. Limit driveway access into the site

### **Goal 3. Increase housing options to meet the needs of current and future residents**

- A. Long-term residents are preferred (single family, townhome, bungalow, land trust, senior cooperative, or rental)
- B. New development should maintain the existing neighborhood character and building height (limit 3 – 4 stories)
- C. Quality materials and design, including green technologies, sustainable building techniques and products geared toward energy efficiency
- D. Senior housing options (affordable)
- E. Consider a land trust option to provide long-term affordable home ownership