

Minnetonka: Mills Church Corridor Development Initiative

Questions from workshop 1 – Feb. 8, 2020



The following questions were raised at the first workshop meeting on Feb, 8, 2020. Answers to those questions and in some cases, links to additional resources with greater details are provided below.

In addition to the questions that are answered below, some questions do not yet have answers. Unanswered questions generally rely on workshops or events that haven't yet occurred.

1. More information about Minnetonka Town Hall

- In 1970, the City of Minnetonka sold the property to Minnetonka Community Church for \$66,000.
- The agreement also stated that in the event the building “old town hall building” was not needed by the church, the building would be given to the city and the city could remove it for retaining historic purposes.
- When reviewing this issue in detail, it seems that the warranty deed was not properly recorded at the county and this technically needs to be completed.
- In 1983 the Minnetonka Town Hall was determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places but was not listed as property owner, the Mills Church, objected to the listing.

2. Property zoning information

The property is currently zoned R-1 and is guided for low density in the city's comprehensive plan.

Allowable Uses:

- Single family detached dwelling units (up to 4/units acre)
- Residential care facilities
- Educational institutions, religious institutions

Future Considerations:

- Continued use for religious purposes has considerations under the religious land use and institutionalized persons act (RLUIPA).
- Public process required for redevelopment of the site

3. Provide demographic and housing statistics

Some demographic statistic highlights were shared at the first workshop. Additional details can be found here – [Thrive MSP 2040](#).

By 2040, the 7-County Metropolitan region will prepare to accommodate -

- 824,000 more people (3.7M total population; 30% increase from 2010)
- 391,000 new households (housing units) of those, 1 in 5 will have children (13,000 households annually)
- 550,000 new jobs (2M+ total jobs; 36% increase from 2010)

By 2040, the 7-County Metropolitan region population will continue to change -

- 1 in 5 persons will be age 65+ (1 in 9 in 2010)
- 40% of population will be people of color
- Population growth trend remains stable with 2/3rds of new residents “homegrown” and 1/3rd from migration.

In Minnetonka by 2040, the city will prepare to accommodate -

- Approximately a 10,000 person population increase
- Approximately a 5,000 housing unit increase (200+ units/year; 20% of those affordable)
- Approximately 16,000 more employees

The city prepared a housing study in 2018 to better understand changing community demographics. These are some of the key observations:

1. Minnetonka has a jobs / housing mismatch
 - 45,000 based employees. <4,000 also reside in Minnetonka.
 - Possible impact on business expansion, hiring, recruitment?
 - A challenge, but also an opportunity for future housing growth
2. Met Council growth forecasts & others are conservative
 - Met Council forecast: Minnetonka <2.0% of 20-year regional household growth, but 3.6%+ of regional employment growth.
 - Potential for more growth (see point #1 above). But requires infill, redevelopment, higher density, more diverse “lifecyle” housing construction, and public-private partnerships.
3. Large number of older adults “aging in place”
 - Challenge: hard for younger buyers to break into the Minnetonka market
 - Solutions: consider new housing products for older adults and active seniors. Thereby freeing-up more home buying opportunities for young families, including Minnetonka-based employees.
4. Affordable housing is an increasingly scarce resource in Minnetonka
 - Supply of homes affordable at <80% of AMI decreased by more than 2,200 units from 2010-2015.
 - Relates to low vacancy and rising rents. Rent growth surpassing income growth.
5. Anticipate rising demand & developer pursuit of multifamily housing developments in Minnetonka
 - Why? – job base, demographics, Minnetonka attractiveness factors, rising rents/prices (more deals “penciling out”, anticipated SW-LRT .

- Challenges: limited site availability, complicated redevelopment, rising land & construction costs -- will require public/private partnerships

Additional demographic statistics can be found in the housing study in the housing chapter of the city's 2040 comprehensive plan.

<https://www.minnetonkamn.gov/government/departments/community-development/planning-zoning/comprehensive-guide-plan/2040-comprehensive-guide-plan>

or by simply typing "2040 comprehensive plan" in the search bar of the city's website - www.minnetonkamn.gov

4. Are there any other development options available for this site? Is the city willing to invest in exploring any other options for this site?

Participants will have the opportunity to study those options through this process.

5. Since this is single family zoned, we would very much like to have single family housing remain or does city prefer this go to affordable.

There is a demonstrated need for affordable housing. However, since the city does not control the site, the city's role would be to evaluate any proposal that comes through the development review process.

6. I would like to learn more about the different models of affordable housing (i.e. 20% affordable units. Do these mixed models work?

Yes, there are a number of housing developments in Minnetonka that provide 20 percent of the units as affordable units.

7. I'd also like to hear more about the metro transit connections, this site is not necessarily on any high frequency links.

The Mills Church site has good opportunities for bus connections on Route 671 with a shelter located at Minnetonka Blvd. and Baker Rd. In the near future, the city will be reviewing routes to better integrate with light rail transit.

8. I'd also like to hear more about what role the church will take with this development in the future.

This process will result in information for the Mills Church to consider as they look at next steps for potential development. There are many roles the church could take in a future development process as evidenced by the examples shared at the first workshop.

9. Is there Historic Dakota use that is important to this process?

Likely and a good question that will require additional research.

10. History of this property. Ownership changes.

Property	Address	Year Built	Ownership Changes
Mills Church site	13215 Minnetonka Dr.	1924; 1955; 1963	none
Mills Church Annex	13231 Minnetonka Dr.	1906	1971
Residential home	13207 Minnetonka Dr.	1919	1979; 1986
Residential vacant lot	13201 Minnetonka Dr.	-	1986
Residential home	3510 Elm Ln.	1951	-
Residential home	3522 Elm Ln.	1947	-
Parking lot	unassigned	-	-
Parking lot	unassigned	-	-
Parking lot	unassigned	-	-
Residential vacant lot	3521 Baker Rd.	-	-

11. Impact on school enrollment

School enrollment would not be known until a future development plan could be evaluated.

12. Impact on land value for surrounding homes

Unknown at this time.

13. Traffic increase issue

Unknown at this time.

14. Clarify that the city does not own the "Annex"

The Mills Church owns the Annex which was the former Minnetonka Town Hall.

15. A guided listening session to hear and record (white board, post it posters) all concerns for new development. Actually, tally the concerns – traffic, noise, tax impacts etc.

Unclear comment.

16. A guided presentation of possible develop scenarios – multi-family, single family, section 8, tiny houses etc. and actually get everyone's input as to best fit for land, neighborhood, church, historic preservation.

Looking at various options for development is part of the series of workshop meetings.

17. More ideas/proposed plan or church's vision for property

The Mills Church stated at the first workshop they have no specific plans but want to explore housing options for the property.

18. What is Mills Church hoping for?

The Mills Church is seeking neighborhood input that will help them frame development options to consider.

19. Community needs to understand about RLUIPA.

The Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) is a federal law that generally applies to religious, educational and other assemblies and institutions. The American Planning Association provides this general description of the federal law:

Congress enacted the Religious Land Use & Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) in 2000, providing protections and relief related to religious freedom of persons, places of worship, religious schools, other religious assemblies and institutions. The law was not intended to expand existing constitutional protections, but the practical effect has been to profoundly alter the balance of interests between those seeking approval of religious land use, local governments committed to sound planning, and citizens seeking to avoid adverse impacts.

The law mandates that land-use regulations grant "equal treatment" to a religious assembly or institution as compared with secular assemblies or institutions; not discriminate against any assembly or institution based on religion or religious denomination,; and not impose or implement a land-use regulation that totally excludes religious assemblies from a jurisdiction or unreasonably limits religious institutions within a jurisdiction.

RLUIPA does not exempt religious uses from land-use regulations; rather, it provides a "general rule" that courts apply whenever a land-use regulation is claimed to impose a "substantial burden" on a religious use.

20. How are we determining what the future residents might want for the property? How do we know what they want and would want?

This process is structured to answer that very question.

21. Need good traffic plan for area. Intersection is a nightmare currently. High density housing will make it impossible.

If a future development proposal is submitted to the city for review the plan would be evaluated by the city's professional staff. Part of that review would likely include a review of traffic conditions present and future. Typically the city will author a traffic report on larger redevelopment projects that have the potential to have a more significant impact existing conditions.

22. I am concerned about density. I live across the street and am concerned about traffic and the look of this historic area. Has any thought been given to the historic significance of the area? The original town hall – what happens to it? The Native American trade area and trail? How do we keep traffic down? Can we partition off the site with its own roads and discourage any increase in traffic in existing neighborhood?

Any future development proposal for the property will take these items into consideration as part of the review process.

23. With being so close to Minnehaha Creek, will development at this level impact the watershed? Disturb wildlife? Is it possible to connect the Burwell area in some way transition to?

Any future development proposal for the property will take these items into consideration as part of the review process.

24. Please consider neighborhood traffic – only sign on Inverness and Plymouth. How do we discourage Inverness from becoming a cut-through to avoid stop lights?

Any future development proposal for the property will take traffic into consideration as part of the review process.