

Linden Hills Neighborhood Council

Affordable Housing Policy

Introduction:

Linden Hills seeks to be a welcoming and inclusive community, encouraging racial, ethnic, and economic diversity among its residents; pursuing environmental sustainability; integrating public and private modes of transportation; and encouraging civic participation.

Background:

Housing, either owner-occupied or rental, is a basic and essential human right. The City of Minneapolis faces a severe shortage of affordable housing. The Linden Hills Neighborhood Council (“LHiNC”) Board recognizes its role and responsibility to foster a community dialogue about housing and commercial development in the neighborhood, and the need to increase the supply of affordable housing in the neighborhood, city, and region. In July, 2002, the LHiNC Board established an Affordable Housing Committee to determine how Linden Hills can help address these important issues. Recent development proposals in neighborhoods adjacent to Linden Hills have also highlighted the need to establish a process that would allow developers to provide information and the LHiNC Board to determine its position for any such developments.

Affordable Housing Issues in Linden Hills:

Linden Hills, as an older section of Minneapolis, is highly developed, with few immediate opportunities to develop new units of affordable housing. The majority of open space in Linden Hills is in the form of single lots, with relatively high property values, making new developments of housing uneconomical for lower income families, first time home-buyers, and seniors with limited incomes. As a result, efforts to improve affordable housing options should focus on:

- Preserving the affordability of current housing stock, e.g., smaller starter houses, or “capturing” older houses before they come on the market through various financing mechanisms;
- Helping people get into affordable housing in Linden Hills, including promoting home-buyer education programs, rotating loan programs, and identifying landlords that accept Section 8 vouchers;
- Promoting density through “mixed use” and “mixed income” development, especially along transit corridors and near commercial nodes;
- Improving the availability of housing options for neighborhood residents, recognizing the need to offer a range of dwelling-unit sizes and levels of affordability;
- Supporting housing designs that ensure utility and access, especially for larger families or those persons with disabilities.

Partnerships:

This Affordable Housing policy provides a framework for a more focused effort to determine how and in what ways Linden Hills, as a neighborhood, can make a substantive contribution *in Linden Hills* to the City's goals of establishing 2000 affordable units.

The LHiNC Board will work with neighborhood residents, other neighborhood groups, the City of Minneapolis, Minneapolis Public Schools, the Minneapolis Community Development Agency, the Neighborhood Revitalization Program, the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority, the Metropolitan Council, private and nonprofit developers, faith communities, land trusts, and others to improve the supply, diversity, and choice of housing options available in Linden Hills.

Process:

This Housing policy should apply to all development, residential and/or commercial, and all proposed developments within Linden Hills should follow the process set forth below:

- A standing Housing Committee, established by the LHiNC Board, shall be the first point of contact for all possible developments.
- Upon receipt of a new proposal, the Housing Committee shall develop and communicate a process and schedule for hearings and other ways of obtaining neighborhood input.
- The Housing Committee shall make a recommendation to the LHiNC Board, but the Board reserves the right to make a final decision, regardless of the Committee's recommendation.
- The LHiNC Board's decision will represent the neighborhood's position on a proposal.

Future steps may include, but are not limited to:

- Supporting zoning reforms or requests that increase density and promote mixed income, mixed use developments, especially in locations that are accessible to mass transit;
- Utilizing a land trust to capture affordability of existing or new housing;
- Applying and leveraging NRP dollars;
- Working cooperatively with other neighborhoods, NRP organizations, and nonprofits to identify existing or compatible efforts for Linden Hills;
- Encouraging landlords to take advantage of Section 8 housing programs;
- Supporting city efforts to buy duplexes and utilize NRP dollars to offset differences between market values and affordability levels; and
- Establishing a revolving loan fund for damage deposits for low-income renters.

Adopted Unanimously, February 4, 2003.