

Executive Summary

In early March 2008, the Velmeir Companies, the development firm of CVS/pharmacy, informed the Linden Hills Neighborhood Council (LHiNC) about their ongoing discussions with the landowner of the former Almsted's Sunnyside SuperValu grocery location and adjacent Gas Plus station. The firm expressed a willingness to receive neighborhood feedback on this commercial development plan design. At this time, LHiNC board members developed and publicized the community engagement process for this proposed community development.

The role for LHiNC regarding this community issue is to serve as:

- **first**, a **liaison** between all interested parties, to ensure the distribution of accurate information, and as a **convener** of an engagement process (outlined below) to ensure that the perspectives of residents are part of the decision-making and design process.
- **second**, following the community engagement process, the LHiNC board will **take a position** on the proposed project and design and forward its recommendation with detail to the City of Minneapolis.

At this point in the process, LHiNC does not have an official position on the proposal.

As a first step, the community engagement process included distribution of information about the proposal and many ways to provide input to LHiNC. A structured community dialogue session was held on April 8, 2008 at Southwest High School. This public session was an opportunity to hear the initial plans of the Velmeir Companies and provide Velmeir/CVS with input and feedback from interested parties, including residents, neighbors, and business/property owners. Community residents were notified about this dialogue session in the newsletter, through postcards hand-delivered to residents & businesses, and via LHiNC's website. The dialogue session was attended by approximately 140 community members, in addition to a majority of the LHiNC Board and Commercial Corridor Task Force, and representatives from the Velmeir Companies.

In reflecting interests of the many residents and stakeholders participating in this community engagement process, LHiNC requests the following considerations of the Velmeir Companies and CVS/pharmacy, in no particular order, regarding the development as originally proposed:

1. **Community Involvement:** It is important to this neighborhood that all businesses make a commitment to **be an engaged member of our community**, provide support for neighbors and the surrounding neighborhoods, and participate in the local business association. Lacking familiarity with CVS policy on these matters, we would like to understand better how CVS participates in **corporate giving** and involvement in local communities.
2. **Labor Concerns:** It is important to us that jobs at CVS/pharmacy pay a **living wage**, **provide benefits**, and allow unionization of its workers. We request CVS/pharmacy's commitment to **fair treatment** of workers. We also recommend that construction be done entirely with **unionized local labor**.

3. **Building Design:** We request design plans be revised to be consistent with the **scale and architecture reflected in the historical buildings** in the neighborhood, including but not limited to:
 - **Smaller scale** building than currently proposed
 - **Large transparent windows**, that allow views in and out of the building, without tint and advertisements, along all sides of building (exempt from pharmacy counter for privacy issues)
 - **Real brick façade**, in style and stacking consistent with existing buildings & architecture in neighborhood
 - Small and unobtrusive **signage**
4. **Building Orientation:** We would like plans be revised so that the **main entrance to the CVS/pharmacy building faces Sunnyside Avenue.**
5. **Traffic Concerns:** We would like assurance in shared results of traffic studies to ensure that **traffic volume and flow** through the neighborhood will not increase with the proposed design, including projections for potential impact of the Edina traffic control plan.
6. **Community Access:** We request plans be revised so that access for **pedestrian and bicycles is convenient, inviting and safe**, including but not limited to building reorientation, a courtyard/seating area by entrance, sufficient bike racks, and separate pedestrian/bike only access.
7. **Environmental Concerns:** The community places high value on commercial properties. We request that design plans incorporate **environmental concerns** including, but not limited to:
 - Increasing, improving and maintaining **green space, landscaping**, and streetscape
 - **Sustainable building practices** that meet or exceed Gold Level LEED certification
 - Incorporation of green roof, rain gardens, semi-permeable parking surfaces, etc...
8. **Environmental Cleanup:** We request a statement outlining steps that ensure the **safety and environmental quality** of the building process, particularly the removal of gas tanks and testing/cleanup of hazardous substances.
9. **Business Viability:** There is community interest in better understanding the **market opportunity** for a pharmacy at this location, as well as evidence and plans for the **long-term viability** of the proposed business.
10. **Major Neighborhood Amenity:** Many requested plan revisions such that the existing **gas station is preserved**. Please explain the rationale for removal of the gas station and your need for its removal.
11. **Operational Concern:** We request plans be revised such that there is **no drive-thru**.
12. **Operational Concern:** We would like to better understand the City's zoning restrictions on operating hours for your type of facility in this space, and a binding commitment that the proposed business will **not be open 24-hours**.

Project Overview

Linden Hills Neighborhood Council (LHiNC)

The Linden Hills Neighborhood Council (LHiNC) is the formally recognized association of neighborhood residents. Their role in development proposals is to help shape the future of a vibrant business node through aggregate community influence. They serve in this elected role to:

- Solicit and represent residents' perspectives in the governance of the neighborhood
- Increase community involvement
- Be the voice of the neighborhood in civic affairs affecting our community.

LHiNC's Role regarding CVS/Pharmacy Proposal

The role for LHiNC regarding this community issue is to serve as:

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LHiNC will remain engaged as the process proceeds at the Minneapolis Planning Commission level and continue to make sure that the concerns of the community are part of the final design and approval process. After this community engagement process, LHiNC will submit a letter to the city with thoughts and recommendations regarding the development plans, including a formal position on the proposal. The substance of this letter will be informed by the input and feedback of our community through the engagement process, as well as the responsiveness of CVS/pharmacy and its associated entities.