

Elliot Park Neighborhood  
Urban Design Guidelines

*The Centennial Commons*





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*The Centennial Commons*

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## P r e f a c e

Through interventions of good work and good fortune since the mid-1980s Elliot Park Neighborhood has been able to retain its identity as a unique downtown urban neighborhood. This might not have been the case had the trends of urban renewal been allowed to continue their destruction of the neighborhood fabric by clear-cutting of entire blocks to provide surface parking for automobiles or by selective elimination – after years of purposeful neglect - of older buildings that often had both historic merit and rehabilitative potential. By the time this book is being produced, however, in 2008, that trend has been halted and even reversed. New development has come to Elliot Park as part of the residential, commercial and cultural rebirth of Downtown Minneapolis.

Neighborhood residents, as well as particular institutions and organizations, have been responsible for the preservation of valuable assets that make Elliot Park a special community. Volunteers who founded and continue to contribute to the citizen participation neighborhood organization, Elliot Park Neighborhood, Inc., have for nearly three decades sponsored initiatives to improve the quality of life in Elliot Park. An institution such as North Central University made conscious decisions to remain in the neighborhood rather than abandon its spaces and move to the suburbs. Aeon (formerly Central Community Housing Trust), a premier developer of affordable housing, remains headquartered in Elliot Park, and has been instrumental in rescuing several historically-designated buildings from blight, reclaiming them as quality rental properties.

The experience and efforts of those who live and work in Elliot Park Neighborhood inform this book on neighborhood design guidelines. It is the result of hundreds of hours citizen volunteers devoted to working on the *Elliot Park Neighborhood Master Plan*, reviewing and evaluating development proposals, and participating in workshops focusing on how best to express the neighborhood identity and culture in built form. These design guidelines are meant to honor both the history and the aspirations of our community. Whether read as principles or specifications, the topics addressed in these guidelines should be regarded as constituting a workbook to inspire creative response in design and development.

The advantages Elliot Park Neighborhood offers are visible both in the enduring legacies of its past as well as in the need for new infill development presented by the noticeable gaps in its structural density. Unique street patterns, intriguing spaces and distinctive landmarks offer the urban designer and the developer opportunities to help reweave the fabric of this burgeoning urban core neighborhood. This is most especially true in the sector identified as the “Centennial Commons,” an eight block area occupying the geographic center of Elliot Park Neighborhood. Because the Centennial Commons sector features so many of the defining elements and qualities of the neighborhood the immediate hope is that these guidelines will help direct specific development initiatives that will begin to reclaim and revitalize this “heart” of the Elliot Park Neighborhood. But beyond this particular sector, the design guidelines are meant to highlight the primary characteristics that define the essential sense of place and the best examples of built form throughout all of Elliot Park Neighborhood.

The principles and practices suggested in this book are an invitation to the urban planning, design, and development communities to collaborate with Elliot Park in applying them as guidelines to explore new, successful ways to create the places that make our neighborhood a sustainable and livable community.



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# I n t r o d u c t i o n

## The Language of Design in Elliot Park Neighborhood

Elliot Park Neighborhood has featured several patterns of land use and a variety of architectural styles since it was first settled in the mid-nineteenth century. Until about the middle of the twentieth century densities of settlement and development defined an urban neighborhood that experienced continued investment. What happened from the 1960s through the 1980s is readily apparent during an attentive stroll through the neighborhood today. What one notices at first glance is a disjunctive environment: asphalt parking lots occasionally flanked by one-hundred-year-old brownstone row homes or a Georgian Revival mansion; wide one-way streets pushing brusquely past solidly constructed but modestly sized brick apartment buildings; megalithic institutional structures creating barriers between themselves and the green spaces and activity centers of the neighborhood; freeway trenches etching perimeters around islands of single family homes and duplexes.

However, important examples still remain of nearly all architectural styles that have appeared on the landscape of Elliot Park Neighborhood. And in the past few years a new generation of high-rise condominiums, renovated historic row homes, and new-build courtyard apartment residences has reflected the beginning of a period of re-investment in the neighborhood. One would think that what might at first appear to be a hodge-podge eclecticism of built form punctuated by tears and gaps in the neighborhood fabric would discourage the creation of

guidelines for future development. A closer scrutiny reveals a remarkable compatibility in scale, materials and texture among a variety of buildings in Elliot Park. This especially is evidenced in the contributing buildings to the neighborhood's South Ninth Street Historic District, which actually consists of scattered sites throughout several blocks. And when one studies the lay of the land, despite the presence of wide swaths of surface parking lots, promising assemblages of spaces present themselves as potential sites for infill development.



The very orphans of urban renewal and the trespass of freeways serve as anchors holding down the fabric of an Elliot Park Neighborhood emergent in the twenty-first century. Instead

## I n t r o d u c t i o n

of advocating a nostalgic recall of stylized imagery, the guidelines in this book encourage a sensitivity to the existing elements of place that offer the potential for the re-creation of a living neighborhood—the building of the complete and sustainable community described in the *Elliot Park Neighborhood Master Plan*. Suggestive rather than prescriptive, these guidelines recognize that there are certain fundamental principles of effective urban design, and that application of these principles to the unique characteristics of Elliot Park Neighborhood is the key to creating the physical spaces and places that will serve the community best.

The language of Elliot Park Neighborhood’s design guidelines is not derived first from a lexicon of available terms, but from observations of the actual physical environment and the influence that environment has on human activity. What elements are working to create what influences on the behavior and customs of people? For instance, if the sidewalks along a street are almost totally vacant of pedestrian traffic, why is this so, and what must change to bring the human figure back into the landscape? Thus the specific topics within the contexts of Building, Block, and District – while many of course are familiar in the language of design—reflect those most important elements defining the particular characteristics of Elliot Park Neighborhood.

For example, Elliot Park is uniformly flat, and this geographic determinant is complemented by a historical legacy of three-to-four story building heights in row homes and most stand-alone structures. A defining characteristic of the ground plane in Elliot Park Neighborhood, therefore, is this built-to-the-sidewalk three-to-four story datum line of building heights that helps form an intimate pedestrian environment. In designing new developments the preservation and promotion of this principle of a pedestrian scale street experience becomes a governing factor that determines the arrangement of building mass and height on a parcel or block. Another unique characteristic of Elliot Park



# I n t r o d u c t i o n



Neighborhood is the “street grid clash” that has resulted in oddly configured crossroads and triangular shapes to some land parcels and buildings. Historically this pattern has invited inhabitants to explore pathways through the neighborhood that sometimes defy the grid of sidewalks outlining the traditional city block. Rather than be erased, these nonconforming spaces and pathways should be exploited to cultivate alternative ways for people to move between blocks and to occupy new spaces.

This book also elaborates on the section “Sustaining a Livable Neighborhood” from the *Elliot Park Neighborhood Master Plan*. The symbiotic interactions between built forms and natural forms or systems are discussed within the context of good urban planning and design. It is suggested that precepts informing many of the recommendations for green design and construction produce better building efficiencies and therefore result in lower environmental impact. Principles and practices of green design and construction should be incorporated into future development in Elliot Park, especially those most applicable to Elliot Park as an urban core neighborhood.

The goal, though, of any set of design guidelines or systems applications is to help create an environment that is as safe, attractive, convenient, resourceful, and reasonably affordable as possible. Without a familiarity with and understanding of the local culture, no amount of planning or number of design schemes can succeed in fashioning a neighborhood in which people wish to live, work, and stay.



# Planning and Development

## Elliot Park Neighborhood Master Plan

The *Elliot Park Neighborhood Master Plan*\* emphasizes the advantages Elliot Park enjoys as an urban core neighborhood with a rich historical heritage and close proximity to the Minneapolis central business district, major institutions, light rail transit, and the Mississippi riverfront.

The primary objectives of the Master Plan are:

- to preserve the heritage of Elliot Park Neighborhood
- to build a truly livable and sustainable community

The Master Plan suggests that the City and its neighborhoods are organized around inseparable systems that interact with one another: housing, parks, transit, commercial uses and infrastructure are all essential parts of the whole. These systems form the neighborhood's patterns of development, patterns of movement, qualities of the public realm, and the social / cultural mosaic—a rich composite of layers.

*\*The Elliot Park Neighborhood Master Plan may be accessed via the Elliot Park Neighborhood website: <http://www.elliottpark.org>*



Master Plan - a rich composite of layers



# Planning and Development

## Elliot Park Neighborhood Master Plan

### The Neighborhood Commons

The Master Plan’s vision of Elliot Park Neighborhood as a unity of diverse constituents is presented in the concept of a “neighborhood commons.” Distinctive sectors of the neighborhood are linked together along an east-west axis in a series of public gathering spaces and marketplaces. The Centennial Commons hub at the center of this axis presents promising opportunities in its street configurations, land parcels and existing built forms to become a “commons” in the fullest sense: a mixture of commercial, residential and public spaces on a scale that reflects the intimacy and uniqueness of the neighborhood.

### Design Guidelines

Chapter Five of the *Elliot Park Neighborhood Master Plan* presents specific recommendations for design practices at the neighborhood, corridor, and district levels. The guidelines in this book distill those practices into basic principles for actual design and build initiatives at the building, block, and district levels. These principles incorporate better understandings of the particular influences during the past few years that have formed the prospects for future development in Elliot Park. The goal, despite changing market or environmental conditions, remains the same: to apply both specific design accents at the smallest levels and the most effective design practices at the broadest levels to create patterns of integration and connection that express the living experience of our community.



The Neighborhood Commons

# Planning and Development

## Recent Development and Experience



Grant Park Homes



The Lenox condominiums under restoration



East Village apartments

Coincidentally with the neighborhood master planning, new residential development came to Elliot Park. In the western (Downtown) sector, high rise tower condominiums with street-level town homes or commercial spaces were featured at Grant Park Homes and Skyscape; and the historic Lenox brownstone row homes were restored as condominium flats. East Village apartments, with its award-winning courtyard design, opened on the east side of the neighborhood in the institutional and park sector.

Reviewing the plans for these and other development proposals, as well as conducting several small area workshops as implementation steps for the Master Plan, led to new insights and conclusions:

- Elliot Park Neighborhood's future is very much part of the future of all Downtown Minneapolis, and most especially connected to the developments in Downtown East.
- Market forces influence land use decisions and therefore must be factored into strategies for realizing planned development in the neighborhood.
- The Central Core (Centennial Commons) sector of Elliot Park Neighborhood is the crossroads of the community, where all things should come together in terms of both physical and social / cultural connections.
- EPNI should, with other community partners, actively pursue redevelopment on the neighborhood scale in the Centennial Commons sector.
- New developments represent investments in the neighborhood and should be planned, built and sustained as community assets.

## Reinforcing Attributes of Healthy Urban Neighborhoods

Throughout the master planning process, as well as at subsequent design workshops and community forums, the citizens of Elliot Park have identified attributes of the neighborhood that are most important. These attributes describe qualities of the “complete urban community.” Simply described, the complete urban community is a neighborhood with a unifying identity that offers a diversity of choices in housing, retail, entertainment and services, which provides safe and attractive public spaces, and which is vitally connected to other sectors of the city. Some specific elements essential to the creation of a healthy Elliot Park Neighborhood:

- mixed income housing, as well as multi-generational residential opportunities
- attractive community spaces in which people can gather and socialize
- retail services and businesses that meet a variety of neighborhood needs
- inviting pedestrian networks of sidewalks and pathways
- easily accessible and affordable public transportation
- a high degree of personal safety
- green amenities such as parks, landscaping, courtyards, and gardens
- clearly identified, convenient and appealing connections to other neighborhoods and sectors of the city
- sustainable and affordable energy resources and low-impact environmental design





# D e s i g n   G u i d e l i n e s




## Design Guidelines

“The intent in developing the criteria has been to identify specific design elements which, if repeated or echoed a sufficient number of times, will assure the maintenance and preservation of the character of the area.”

~Taken from the City of Savannah, Georgia Design Guidelines

## Purpose and Approach

Unity and connections are the emphasis in the *Elliot Park Neighborhood Master Plan*, expressed in every discussion from the idea of a Neighborhood Commons to the principle of the “hierarchy of streets.” Therefore, the design guidelines presented in this book are discussed contextually, recognizing that the neighborhood’s character is referenced in particular elements that link everything from the architectural detail of single buildings to the arrangement of spaces at the block level to the contributive patterns an assemblage of blocks creates as part of a broader urban district. The next three chapters consider both the unique and shared elements of the interlocking dimensions that define Elliot Park Neighborhood’s physical environment:

-  **Building Guidelines:** Characteristics of individual structures that help create pedestrian-scale environments and special feelings of place in Elliot Park Neighborhood.
-  **Block Guidelines:** Effective arrangements of buildings and open spaces on individual blocks that result in the integration of land uses, built forms and patterns of movement.
-  **District Guidelines:** The dynamics of larger urban systems and how particular communities within those systems, such as Elliot Park Neighborhood, are connected to and interact with the whole.



Designing for all three scales of the neighborhood

# Design Guidelines

## Centennial Commons Initiative

The schematic on this page illustrates how building, block and district form an integrated pattern of design and systems characteristics that can be expressed in a development initiative such as the Centennial Commons. Specific guideline criteria and recommendations can be applied in ways that best advance the objectives of a particular development proposal.



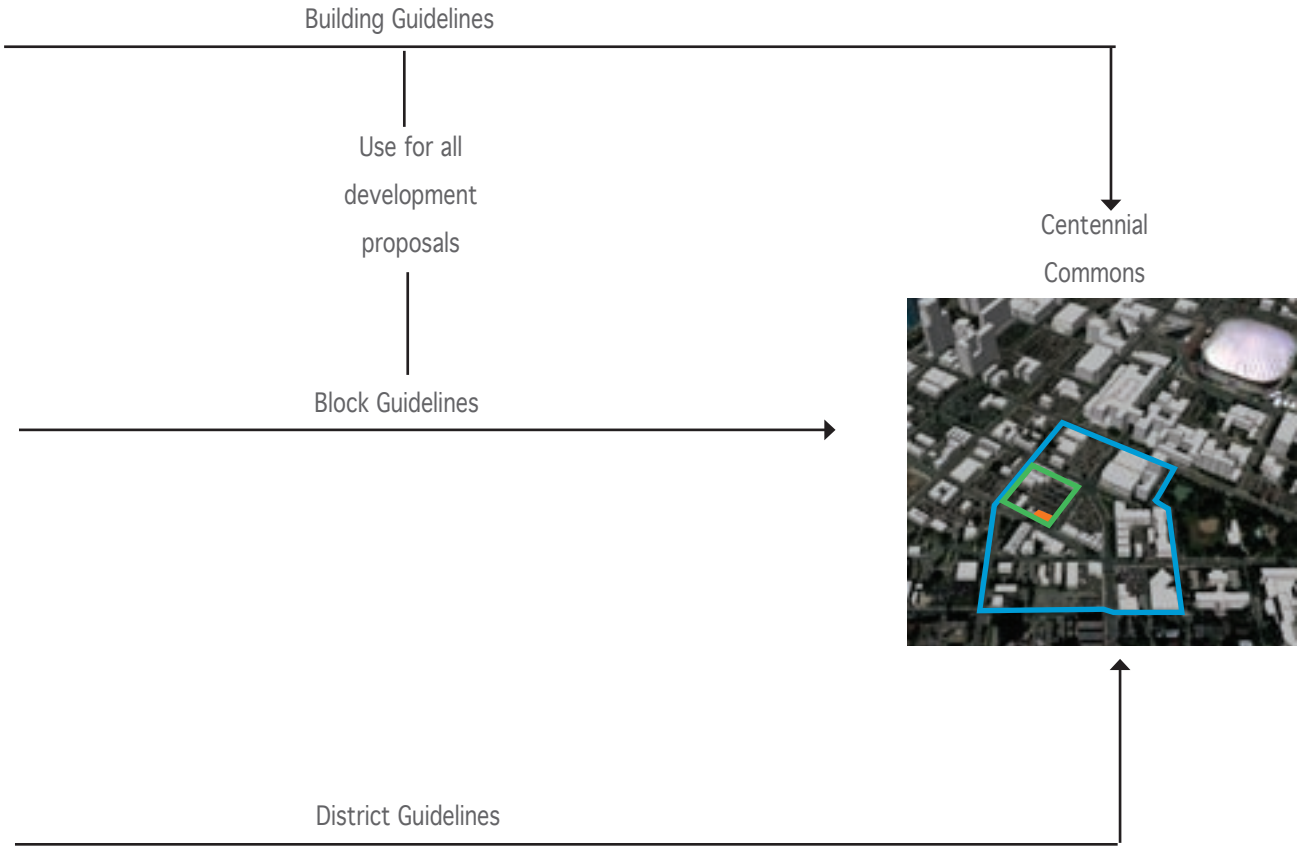
Building



Block



District





# B u i l d i n g   G u i d e l i n e s

## Building Guidelines

The distinctive elements of individual buildings along neighborhood streets can help create a pedestrian-scale environment and a sense of place. The most important of these elements for building design in Elliot Park Neighborhood are:



Height

Scale

Rhythm

Patterns

Detail

Transparency





## B u i l d i n g   G u i d e l i n e s

### Height

A building's height takes on importance in relationship to its surroundings: location on the block, the heights of neighboring buildings, the width of streets, and vistas that allow observers to see and experience important relationships in their environment.

When a building's height overwhelms the sidewalk and the street, obscures neighboring structures, or obstructs views to other landmarks, people feel displaced and disoriented. Principles that should guide building heights in Elliot Park Neighborhood:

- step down building heights toward the center of the neighborhood
- maintain the continuity of three-to-four story streetwalls
- locate heights exceeding four stories toward interior of blocks
- maximize solar access to neighboring sites and streets



# B u i l d i n g   G u i d e l i n e s

## Scale



Scale is the perceived relationship between the human figure and the dimensions of a building and its elements. Discrete units of construction - such as the size of a brick and its relationship to the human hand - are the most basic elements in creating a building's scale. Architectural elements such as windows, entry ways, bays and balconies should relate to the size and proportions of the human body.

When building scales feel right, there is a comfortable fit between people and place. The appropriate scale for Elliot Park Neighborhood buildings should be determined by:

- the best examples of existing built forms in the neighborhood
- respect for the pedestrian environment



## B u i l d i n g   G u i d e l i n e s

### Rhythm

A regular rhythm of recurrent building elements—such as windows and porches—merge individual buildings into a more harmonious whole.

When an overall rhythm of elements is established, unique building features become more interesting and command attention. As pedestrians and traffic move through the neighborhood, these rhythmic regularities create a familiar and appealing environment.

Characteristic building elements used to establish the rhythms in Elliot Park Neighborhood:

- entry ways and porches, often with distinctive features such as first story walk-ups and porticoes
- fenestration patterns
- bays and bow windows
- trees and plantings along sidewalks





# B u i l d i n g   G u i d e l i n e s

## Patterns



The use of complementary colors, textures and materials can add uniqueness to each building while echoing the characteristics of surrounding buildings, whether old or new. Variations in the patterns of materials also can help break up larger building facades.

Some of the patterns and materials that characterize classic Elliot Park Neighborhood buildings are:

- three-dimensional pressed brownstone brick and red brick patterns
- ashlar and rusticated stone, including foundations of limestone or sandstone
- repeating patterns of bays and fenestration
- contrasting materials and colors
- quoining that gives vertical articulation to the corners of buildings



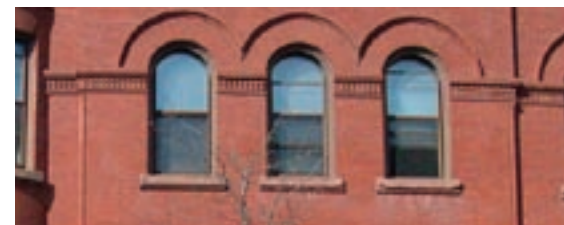
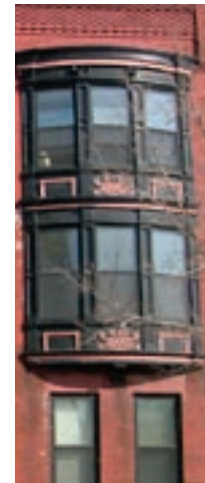
## B u i l d i n g   G u i d e l i n e s

### Detail

Architectural details reflect the quality of craftsmanship in design and construction while enhancing the composition of a building's façade.

Attention to detail in design and construction of a building conveys a pride of place that encourages a sense of stewardship in the preservation of a community's physical environment. In the design and construction of Elliot Park Neighborhood buildings, consider:

- the uses of metal-faced oriel windows and lintel and cornice projections
- the use of belt coursing and other surface treatments on facades
- Classic Revival embellishments in such detailing as lentils, corbelling, and cornice work
- how materials and surface planes intersect
- how the facades of buildings contribute to the pedestrian-scale streetwall



# B u i l d i n g   G u i d e l i n e s

## Transparency



Transparency in windows and doors, especially in commercial buildings, allows for views both in and out of building facades. This transparency creates a transition between the public space of the street and more private interior spaces, thus contributing to a sense of connectedness.

When people have unobstructed views between interior and exterior spaces a street feels safer and shops and businesses appear more inviting.

Ground floor facades of retail spaces in buildings should:

- meet and aspire to exceed the minimum amount of window space required by zoning code
- minimize reflective glare in doors and windows
- create easily apparent and welcoming entry ways from the sidewalk into the building





# Block Guidelines

## Block Guidelines

An assembly of buildings, open spaces and pathways define a city block, as well as do the streets that outline the block's perimeter. An urban block is a distillation of a neighborhood's identity and an expression of a community's sense of place. In Elliot Park, block elements to consider are:



Neighborhood Character

Streetwall

Pedestrian Realm

Courtyards and Gardens

Through-block Connections

Parking

Views

Vistas



## Neighborhood Character

## B l o c k   G u i d e l i n e s

Elliot Park Neighborhood has the recognizable character of a mature residential district that historically has featured an array of community services and amenities. Its history, cultural identity, and buildings—even with the current gaps in the streetwall and variety of architectural styles—convey a sense of place and meaning. New development and restorative redevelopment should contribute to the preservation and promotion of the unique urban character of Elliot Park Neighborhood:

- as the neighborhood changes it should retain continuity with its social / cultural traditions and its spatial / architectural precedents by redeveloping with a mix of uses, economic and cultural diversity, and built forms responsive to existing contexts
- new development and public realm improvements should express a sense of stewardship, building with a commitment to long-term investment in the neighborhood



## B l o c k   G u i d e l i n e s

### Streetwall



In its period of maximum structural density the streets of Elliot Park Neighborhood were lined with a continuous streetwall of three-to-four story brick buildings. This consistent datum line along the streetwall created the experience of a well-defined pedestrian environment.

Recreating this streetwall of building heights and setbacks in new development will retain the look and feel of proportionate harmony in the neighborhood's built form. The design and placement of buildings along a block should:

- observe continuities and/or contrasts with the heights and setbacks of existing buildings
- call attention to “breaks” in the streetwall with variable setbacks or courtyards and through-block connections
- create scales and transparencies along the streetwall that reinforce pedestrians' experience of familiarity and belonging

## Pedestrian Realm

The spaces between the façades of buildings and the edges of streets comprise a continuum of public and private realms. In these spaces the pedestrian is of primary importance. The physical elements used in these spaces—porches, planters, lawns, trees, street furnishings—and the relationship between them can convey a variety of messages about how people are intended to interact.

In Elliot Park Neighborhood these elements are arranged in a variety of ways to create unique streets. New additions to the neighborhood should recognize and respond to the particular circumstances of each street by incorporating such elements as:

- porches, porticos and stairways
- front and side yard lawns and gardens
- window and balcony planter boxes
- grass, trees and plantings along sidewalk boulevards
- pedestrian scale lighting
- sidewalk furnishings, such as benches, kiosks, bike racks and attractive trash receptacles
- aesthetic improvement to sidewalks, such as multi-patterned surfaces and public art
- pedestrian enhancements to street crossings, such as intersection bump-outs and crosswalk pavers





# B l o c k   G u i d e l i n e s

## Courtyards and Gardens



A number of older and newer buildings in Elliot Park Neighborhood have open courtyards or gardens that define relationships between the public realm and private spaces. Such courtyards and gardens contribute to the unique character of the neighborhood.

To be attractive and lively, courtyards should be surrounded by a mix of activities, have at least two self-evident entry points, and be inviting to public access. Both open courtyards and gardens should:

- allow people to “preview” the space before entering
- provide alternative means for accessing and leaving the space
- feature a variety of opportunities for leisure, socializing, play and solitude
- incorporate elements that enhance a shared sense of public space



## Through-Block Connections

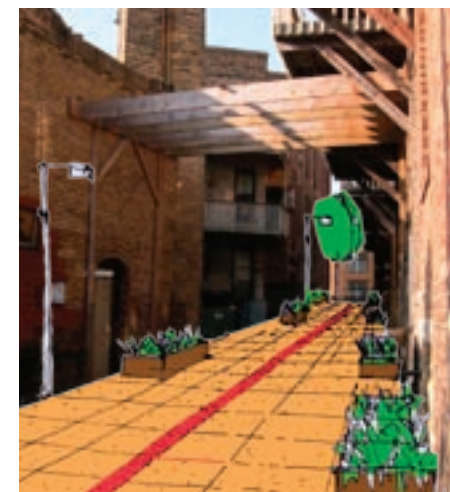
Elliot Park Neighborhood has many alleys and through-block pathways that are used by residents. These routes provide convenient and intimate ways of moving through the neighborhood.

New development should respect this pattern of public connections that is not governed strictly by the grid of public sidewalks. Incorporating through-block pathways into development will help extend this fine-grained movement system that offers welcoming transitions between private and public spaces. These connections can be accomplished by:

- creating a focal point that draws pedestrians onto and along the pathway
- defining distinct interfaces between vehicles and pedestrians
- taking into consideration the service and delivery requirements of buildings
- increasing the sense of personal safety and security
- using pavers, plantings and lighting to enhance the appeal of pathways



existing alleyway



improved through-block alley connection

# Block Guidelines

## Parking



existing surface parking condition



housing liner on Grant Park garage

When too much of the land surface is used for automobile parking a neighborhood's pedestrian environment is destroyed and a community's sense of place and internal connectedness gradually disappears.

Elliot Park Neighborhood's objective is to reclaim surface parking lots for new in-fill redevelopment and greening. Underground parking is the preferred option; and above-ground structured parking should be "masked" with liner commercial or residential development. The following standards and practices regarding parking in the neighborhood will be applied:

- where accessory off-street surface parking is allowed, parking lots will observe and preferably exceed the minimum standards for landscaping, setback from sidewalks and storm water run-off management required by zoning code
- existing surface parking lots should maximize the use of plantings, permeable surface materials, ornamental fencing and public art
- on-street parking, walking and alternative transit modes are encouraged to reduce the demand for parking lot spaces and to stimulate reclamation of surface parking lots for residential and commercial redevelopment or green space



## B L O C K   G U I D E L I N E S

### Views

Shifts in the street and block grids define much of the landscape of Elliot Park Neighborhood. These shifts provide unanticipated views that help enrich the experience of moving along streets and through blocks. Particular focal points present opportunities for visual connections when planning for new development. Because so many blocks in Elliot Park have been cleared of buildings, these same blocks offer potential for featuring urban views through well-situated infill development. The design of buildings and arrangement of spaces on a block should:

- pay attention to terminus views from, into and through the site
- consider various perspectives both distant and near that might influence the massing and scale of proposed structures
- take into account sight lines to surrounding distinctive features on the landscape





# B l o c k   G u i d e l i n e s

## Vistas



Open spaces provide orienting vistas of Downtown and other surrounding communities that help people understand the organization of their environment. These vistas complement the neighborhood's sense of identity with a feeling of connectedness to other parts of the city.

Openings in built form experienced from the ground plane can be large and panoramic or smaller and more telescopically framed. New development should take these vistas into account by:

- becoming acquainted with the view corridors that feature important Downtown landmarks, such as the City Hall clock tower, the Mills District sign edifices, the IDS tower
- designing buildings that will frame skyline views from streets, sidewalks, buildings, courtyards and through-block pathways





# D i s t r i c t   G u i d e l i n e s

## District Guidelines

Building details and block components must be carefully integrated into larger district patterns and systems. An individual neighborhood derives its capacity to function—both as a coherent structural environment as well as a viable socio-economic entity—from its membership in a larger urban district. Systems interactions of the larger urban district are discussed here in terms of four major objectives for creating more livable and sustainable environments:



- Improving the Public Realm
- Protecting Water Resources
- Increasing Energy Efficiency
- Diversifying Transit Options





# District Guidelines

## Performance of Larger Urban Systems

All neighborhoods are dependent on energy, water, transportation and communications systems. For the most part older urban neighborhoods such as Elliot Park use enormous amounts of imported energy and water that incur a high environmental cost for access and disposal. And most existing transportation environments in the neighborhood are inefficient, wasteful of land resources, and inhospitable to pedestrians. By seeking a more effective integration of built systems with natural systems an urban neighborhood ensures not only its livability but its sustainability. Streets must continue to perform their sewer, water and utility functions and meet certain traffic-moving capacities. Through more effective design and integration with the pedestrian environment of sidewalks and streetwalls, neighborhood streets also can help to create “outdoor rooms” that are attractive, safe, and appealing for social interaction. And by applying energy and water conservation practices to building construction and infrastructure improvements a neighborhood stabilizes its resources and is better able to sustain itself as part of the broader urban community.

### Green Practices

Green design and building not only have a positive environmental impact but also contribute to a more appealing public realm. Green principles are applicable to both public infrastructure improvements and to private building development. Nothing better illustrates the interdependence between individual parts (buildings, blocks) and the whole (districts and systems) than the dynamics of green principles. There are a wide variety of well known green strategies and techniques that can be applied to the planning and design of our streets, buildings and public outdoor spaces. The discussion of district objectives in the following chapter incorporates some of the basic principles of green design and building.



## Improving the Public Realm D i s t r i c t G u i d e l i n e s

Public spaces in Elliot Park Neighborhood should express a commitment to pedestrian oriented design and to stewardship of both the natural and built environments. The public realm constitutes a kind of “third place,” or an “outdoor room” that is distinguishable in purpose and use from private residential and commercial spaces. These are the spaces people share once they step out the doors of private places and venture into the city. Building exteriors, the appearances of streetscapes, and the presence of commons areas such as plazas, mews and parks are all components of a public realm that instills a sense of place in the neighborhood.

Improvements to the public realm involve practices that enhance the pedestrian and social environment through the attention to detail, scale and use within the outdoor room of streets.



private properties can open up onto public sidewalks



pedestrian and transit environments can safely and attractively intermingle

# District Guidelines

## Improving the Public Realm



inviting sidewalk environments and friendly outdoor spaces encourage people to gather and socialize

### The Pedestrian Environment

The outdoor room should be focused on the experience of pedestrians rather than on dominance by automobiles. This requires:

- continuation of the three-to-four story streetwall
- clearly visible and convenient entry ways into buildings from sidewalks
- welcoming streetscape elements that provide scale, safety and texture, such as: awnings, plantings, wide sidewalks, street corner bump-outs, street crossing pavers, pedestrian level lighting, benches and other outdoor seating opportunities
- expansion of through-block connections as part of the network of pedestrian pathways in the neighborhood
- courtyards, plazas, linear or pocket parks for outdoor leisure and social interaction
- use of energy efficient “dark sky” compliant exterior building and street lighting fixtures that reduce light pollution and glare while creating a safer pedestrian environment





## Protecting Water Resources

The conservation, treatment, and reuse of water resources are important components of sustainable development. The waste and pollution of water has been an unfortunate by-product of much previous urban development. In high density urban environments such as Elliot Park Neighborhood it is especially important that more efficient techniques for capturing, collecting, filtering, reusing and recharging water be practiced rather than allowing water to simply run off into the storm water system.

These practices, which must be applied in the construction of individual buildings and in public infrastructure improvements, should include:

- planting boulevard trees to absorb more rainfall, contribute to better air quality, and create more appealing pedestrian environments
- planting trees and shrubbery in tree box filters and planters along sidewalk boulevards to absorb more rainfall and for better collection of curb / gutter run-off



ponds for water recycling



boulevard plantings to reduce water run-off

# District Guidelines

## Protecting Water Resources

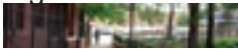


green roofs to capture rainfall



bio-swales to capture and filter rainwater

- installing vegetated bioswales along property boundaries and in surface parking lots to collect and filter water run-off
- replacing “hardscape” surfaces with permeable surface materials and plantings to capture and retain water run-off
- constructing vegetative roofs to capture rainfall, increase insulation, reduce the heat island effect and extend the roof life cycle
- recycling roof water run-off and storing rainwater in cisterns for irrigation of green areas and gardens
- converting existing alley ways into “green alleys” that feature more permeable surfaces (such as bricks or cobblestones), plantings, pocket gardens and green walls

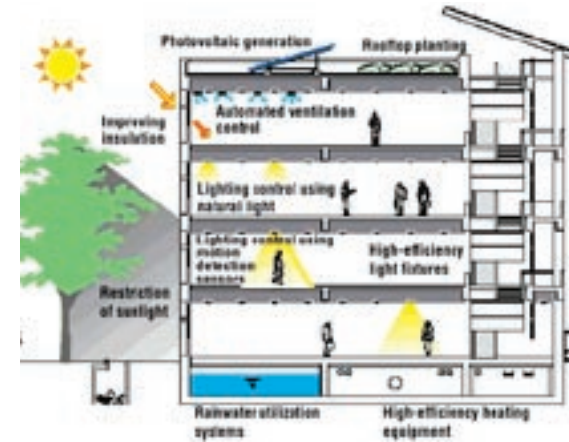


## District Guidelines

### Increasing Energy Efficiency

Conservation and efficient distribution of energy resources can be achieved at the smallest levels in building design and at the largest levels in district energy strategies. The application of LEED certification standards to building construction is a worthy goal; however, individual practices become much more effective when integrated into city-wide energy efficiency practices. Better energy strategies must be developed in concert by multiple jurisdictions, involving collaboration between the development and construction industries, architects and urban designers, government planning departments, and municipal and county public works and energy agencies. District strategies might include:

- on-site ground water recycling
- district heating and cooling
- district sewage collection and disposal
- local energy generation



building interior - energy schematic

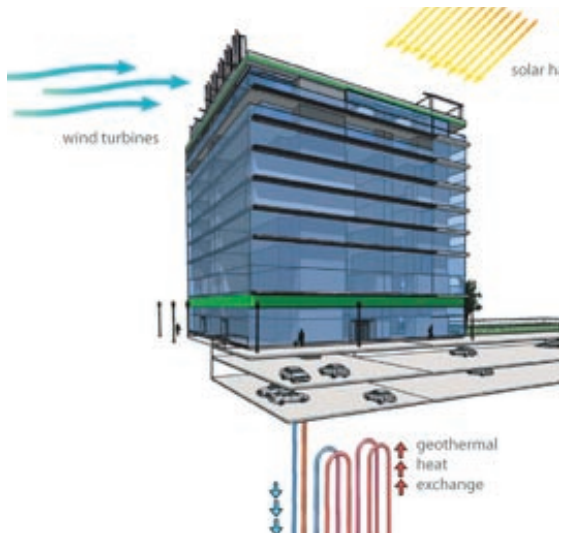


building envelope - green roof



# District Guidelines

## Increasing Energy Efficiency



building systems for circulation of heating and cooling



district energy - St. Paul District Heating Plant

Some goals for increasing energy efficiency in Elliot Park Neighborhood:

- solar access should be provided for every building on every block
- building envelopes should be designed to maximize retention of heating and cooling (for example, green roofs and green walls)
- orient buildings and design creative building facades that will exploit daily and seasonal heating / cooling effects in order to minimize dependence on mechanical systems
- utilize building designs that promote natural energy flow
- encourage energy sharing by incorporating mixed use occupancies
- develop block and district passive solar strategies that maximize daylighting to meet heating and cooling requirements
- flourish the urban tree canopy and other greening (grasses, plantings, gardens) to increase solar absorption and decrease heat island effects
- institute multiple-block and district-wide energy sharing practices to maximize and conserve energy delivery efficiencies
- utilize building construction that meets or exceeds LEED performance



## Diversifying Transit Options

Just as a network of pedestrian pathways is critical for creating connections within a neighborhood, a broader network of connections is crucial for increasing interchange between separate districts of a city. As alternatives to the current over-dependence on automobiles, Elliot Park Neighborhood promotes an enhanced pedestrian realm as well as alternative modes of transit. Providing a variety of transportation options not only is important for making a community more livable, but also contributes to more effective patterns of movement that in turn produce better efficiencies in the use of energy resources.

Diversifying transit options requires cooperation at the level of larger public infrastructure and transportation initiatives. Still, individual developments must respect the pedestrian-scale of the neighborhood and can do much to offer better transit options. A few of Elliot Park Neighborhood's more important goals for improving transit connections include:

- broadening the network of pedestrian walkways and bicycle pathways for increased access to neighboring districts of the City, such as Downtown, the Riverfront and the University of Minnesota



a variety of ways for getting about



light rail mass transit

# District Guidelines

## Diversifying Transit Options



bicycle and pedestrian pathway



multi-modal transportation: bicycle and bus

- designing more appealing pedestrian environments with wider sidewalks, streetscape amenities (lighting, plantings, benches), street corner bump-outs, crosswalk pavers, signage and public art
- converting one-way pair streets to two-way streets to create hospitable pedestrian environments and slower, freer patterns of traffic circulation that provide more convenient access to local businesses
- “right-sizing” of individual streets to accommodate the variety of neighborhood and district functions they serve
- implementing parking strategies such as: off-street structured parking for most primary and accessory uses; short-term on-street parking for visitors and retail business customers; longer-term on-street critical parking for residents
- reducing on-site parking requirements to below zoning code maximum limitations
- developing a system of light rail and streetcar lines that connect Elliot Park Neighborhood with other district and regional destinations
- developing bus circulators and streetcar short lines that provide more frequent and reliable local connections





# A p p l i c a t i o n s

## Centennial Commons




By applying some of the Centennial Commons design guidelines, a very different kind of neighborhood begins to emerge, one that interweaves a frayed neighborhood fabric of scattered sites into a whole fabric. The schematic below is an interpretation of how a combination of through-block connections, pedestrian realm improvements, streetwall continuity, exterior and interior courtyards, and infill development can reconnect elements in the neighborhood.



current Elliot Park



vision for an inter-connected Elliot Park

- KEY
- Exterior courtyards 
  - Pedestrian Walkways 
  - Interior Courtyards 



## Using the Design Guidelines to Work with Elliot Park Neighborhood

Elliot Park Neighborhood, Inc. (EPNI) enjoys working relationships with planning and development departments of Minneapolis City government, as well as with elected officials and citizen boards and commissions. It is important for prospective developers of properties in Elliot Park Neighborhood to understand these relationships in order to collaborate effectively to realize well-designed and successful building projects. Before even reaching the phase of formal City reviews it is crucial that a property owner and development team consult with EPNI concerning their plans. By working with EPNI:



- Property owners and developers improve the prospects for a successful project proposal before investing in pre-development expenses such as land acquisition, market analyses, design services, financing and pro formas.
- A customized “Design and Development Review” process can be entered into with the neighborhood that provides formal support for a development proposal, which often is required for financing and government approvals.
- A citizen Design Review Task Force can advise the development team on applying these guidelines to the design of the project.
- The neighborhood’s support for a development proposal can help guide the proposal through the many gateways of the City development review process, creating a predictability that lessens risk and improves likelihood of success.

Before any building or redevelopment project (including public works initiatives) begins, existing planning documents and zoning regulations should be reviewed. For projects in the Elliot Park Neighborhood, these include:

# I m p l e m e n t a t i o n

## Using the Design Guidelines to Work with Elliot Park Neighborhood

1. *The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth*, the City's Comprehensive Plan, and the plan's contributing documents, such as "Downtown 2030"
2. *The Minneapolis Code of Ordinances: Zoning Code and Land Subdivision Regulations*
3. *The Elliot Park Neighborhood Master Plan*
4. *The Downtown East / North Loop Master Plan*, City of Minneapolis Planning Department
5. *The Review Form Certification for Elliot Park Neighborhood's South Ninth Street Historic District* (available from the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Office or from Elliot Park Neighborhood, Inc.)

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