

BITTER LAKE

Urban Design Framework



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CONTRIBUTORS

DPD staff managed the project process and structure. MAKERS architecture and urban design provided the lead for urban design services, while supporting the City's committee and workshop meetings. During the spring and summer of 2012, the Bitter Lake Neighborhood Advisory Committee continued to provide input and feedback on the development of the concepts developed after completing the Neighborhood Plan Update.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bitter Lake area along Linden Ave. N is poised to become a unique in-city neighborhood in northwest Seattle. It already possesses a strong residential and commercial community that has seen significant recent development. The recently completed award-winning Linden Ave. N street improvements created infrastructure needed to support existing development and new development. RapidRide transit service is providing frequent, high-quality service linking this area to other neighborhood and downtown Seattle. The City recently approved funding to move forward the design of improvements to Aurora Ave. N.

While there are many different perspectives on growth, nearly everyone participating in the two-year neighborhood plan update shared the desire to create a neighborhood-serving “village center.” The vision for the Bitter Lake Village Center is to create a vibrant and healthy neighborhood where it’s easy to connect – at places or events – and because of this there is a strong community filled with familiar faces and unique sense of identity. This Urban Design Framework (UDF or Framework) collects the Bitter Lake Village recommendations from the Update, as well as subsequent refinements, into one document that can be a blueprint for future development, and guide City actions.

Guiding Principles

The following principles guided the development of the UDF and support creating a “Village Center” on Linden Ave. N, with a dense, vibrant mix of residences and businesses, and park resources.

- Create a highly walkable neighborhood shopping district with a mix of street-level stores and housing above, a network of walkways, and gathering areas.
- Designate a high-quality, dense, multifamily neighborhood, building on existing housing development.
- Create gateway feature, improve streetscape, and orient commercial activity to Rapid Ride station area to mark entry into Linden Ave. N.

Linden Ave Town Center Key Directions

Where the community comes together

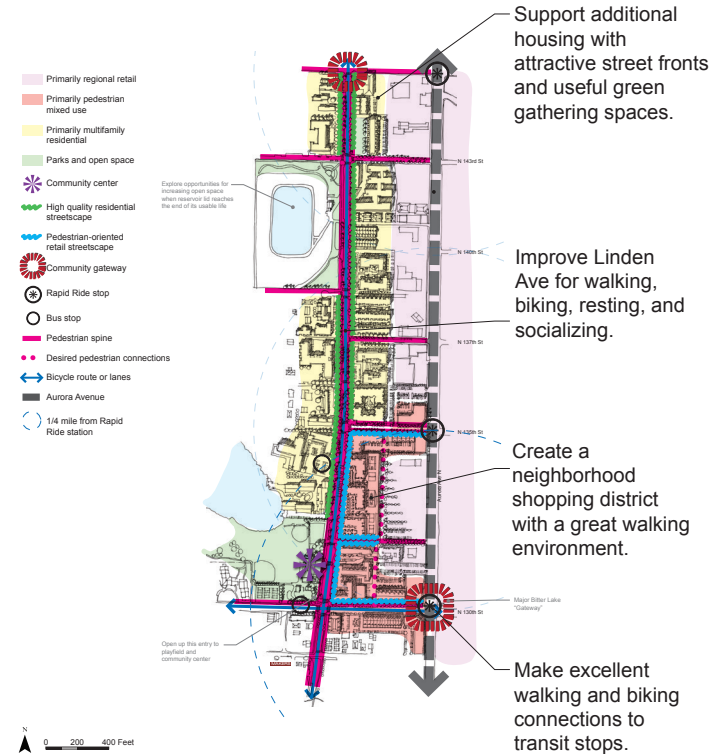


Figure 1 - Key Direction for creating the Bitter Lake Village Center.



Figure 2 - The Vision for Bitter Lake Village Center (MAKERS)

1.2 Background

1999 Broadview - Bitter Lake - Haller Lake Neighborhood Plan

In the early 1990s, Seattle began a neighborhood planning process that involved over 20,000 residents and created plans for 38 Seattle neighborhoods. The Broadview – Bitter Lake – Haller Lake (BBH) communities came together to complete their neighborhood plan in 1999. The plan's Land Use and Housing Vision stated:

Through the efforts of the City, community organizations, property and business owners, residents, developers, and other interested parties, Linden Ave. N from 130th to 145th will be developed to include wide, promenade style sidewalks, the Interurban Greenway Trail, new housing and small retail establishments, and a recreational and garden area surrounding the Bitter Lake Reservoir.

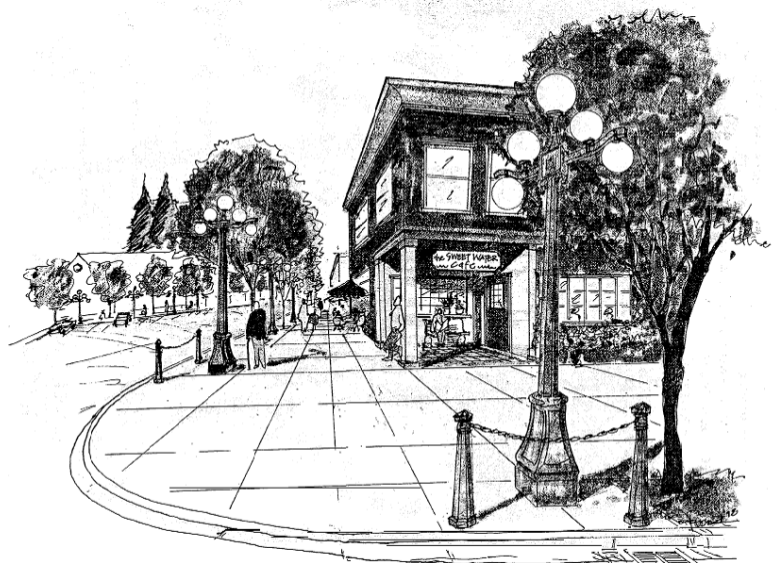
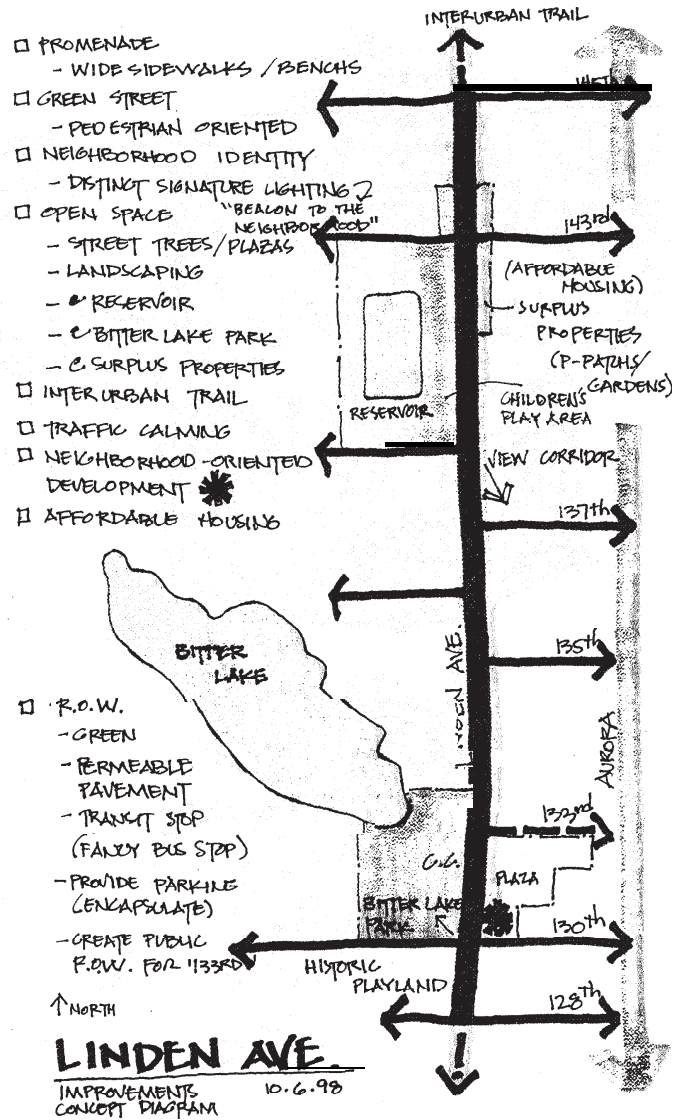
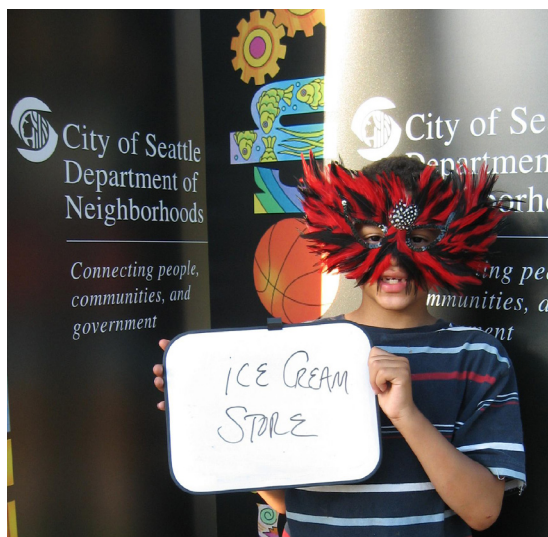


Figure 4 - Images from the 1999 neighborhood plan illustrating the desired character of the "town center."



1.3 BBH Neighborhood Plan Update

Community Engagement

From late 2010 through mid-2012, over 900 attendees representing a cross section of the BBH residents, business owners and community stakeholders engaged with planners at 32 public workshops and meetings to identify priorities for the future of the BBH planning area and the Bitter Lake Village Hub Urban Village. Reaching a broad range of those who live BBH, including those who have been historically underrepresented in the planning process was a primary objective of the plan update process. From hands-on workshops and smaller scale interactive meetings with community-based organizations, to online updates and questionnaires, the community took advantage of many opportunities to engage and stay involved. The March, 2012 BBH Neighborhood Plan Update summarizes the results of this work.

Following this, DPD continued to work with the BBH Neighborhood Advisory Committee to develop the recommendations in this UDF. As they were being developed DPD staff also presented these recommendations to the Bitter Lake Community Club, Broadview Community Council, the Aurora Merchants Association and a number of affected property owners.

Update Vision for a Village Center

The community confirmed the 1999 Neighborhood Plan vision for a Bitter Lake Village Center during the initial meetings, where they expressed a strong desire for a familiar neighborhood place where you run into neighbors and know the shop owners. Rather than try to create this on Aurora, where businesses are oriented to the state route and regional market, this should be on Linden – along the historic Interurban Line and steps away from the old Playland site (now Bitter Lake Community Center and Playfield). The vision and recommendations listed in the following sections and the more detailed design guidance provided in this document respond to the community's continued desire to create a center for the Bitter Lake Village Hub Urban Village that is great place for people to live and serves the BBH neighborhoods. There are gathering places throughout the Bitter Lake Village Hub Urban Village – the community center, library, churches and parks, but the Village Center will be where it all comes together – a walkable neighborhood with small scale, independent retail and gathering spaces.

2. CONTEXT

2.1 Physical Setting

The Village Center has already begun to grow along the Linden Ave. N extending from the recent development at the northeast corner of the intersection of N 130th St. and Linden Ave. N. There is the opportunity for this to evolve into a natural gathering place where local residents and people from around north Seattle meet informally or gather for events. The following elements establish the defining characteristics of the setting.

- As of 2014 there are 2,198 existing residences along Linden Ave. N, between N 130th and N 145th Streets. Of these, 1,044 have been constructed since the community completed its plan in 1999. An additional 148 are permitted but not constructed. The multifamily residences attract a range of people who enjoy vibrant and convenient urban living. This development and expected future development creates a demand for neighborhood-oriented shops and services.
- The newly reconstructed Linden Ave. N provides a multimodal street with sidewalks, travel lanes, protected bike lanes and on-street parking that supports a pedestrian-friendly shopping district.
- Aurora Ave. N is a major state route with 37,000 daily trips. The accompanying regionally-oriented, Aurora-facing commercial can expand the potential market area for an array of neighborhood-oriented goods and services along Linden Ave. N.
- RapidRide E Line on Aurora links people to other neighborhoods, shopping and job centers.
- The Bitter Lake Community Center and Playfield, new p-patch and private open spaces are attractive and well-used. They provide opportunities for relaxation, play and exercise to people of all ages.

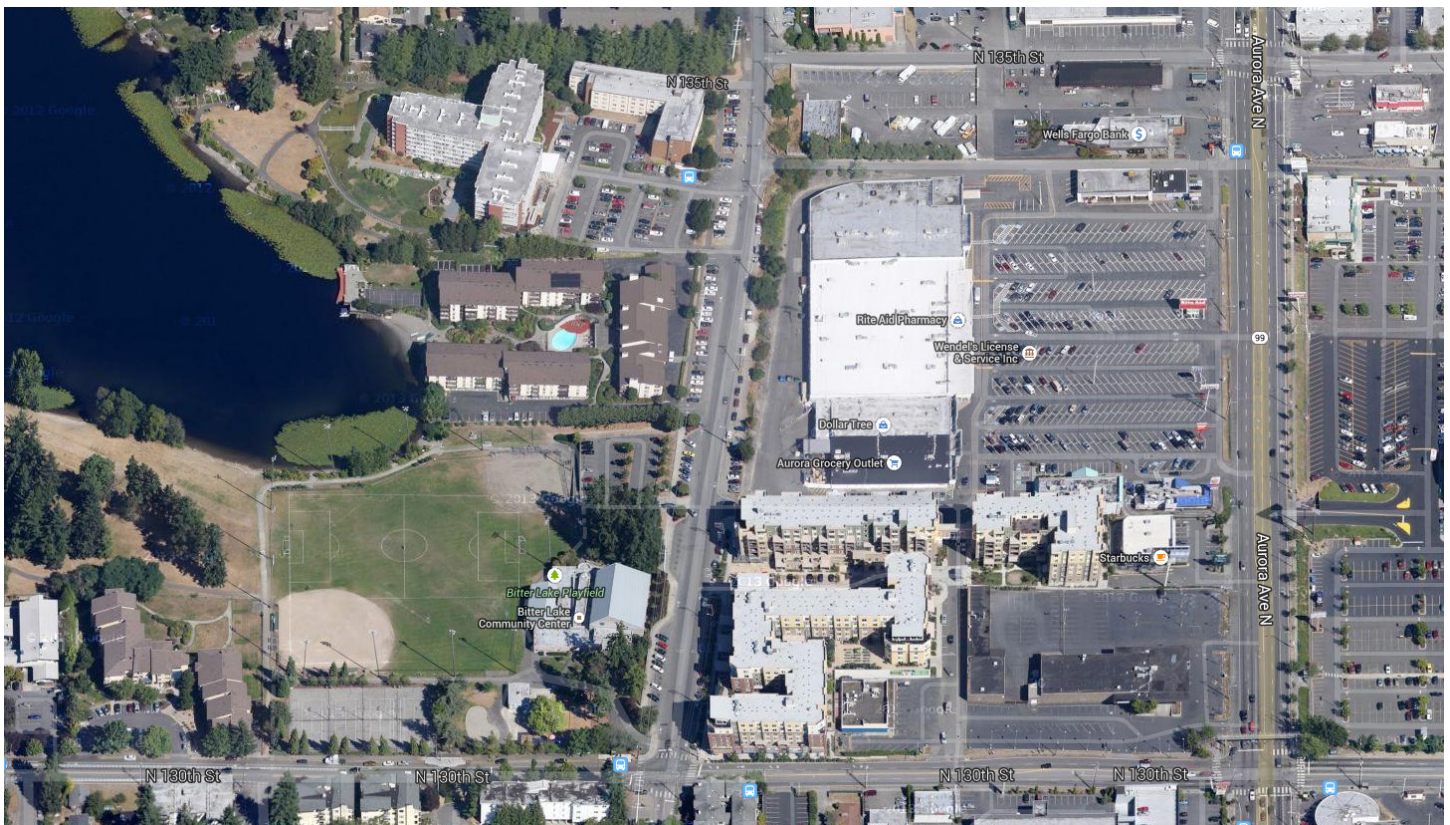


Figure 5 - The area north of N 130th St. between Linden Ave. N and Aurora Ave. N is envisioned to become a mixed-use village center.



Figure 5 - This Development along Linden Place includes 391 low-income senior and family apartments in two buildings.



Figure 6 - The community worked with the City to improve the Bitter Lake Reservoir Open Space and to install a new P-Patch and fitness zone. (Seattle Parks)



Figure 7 - Linden Ave. N complete streets project realized the community's vision for "promenade" style street (Seattle DOT). Photo by Tom Fucoloro.

2.2 Recent Development

Since 1999, when the community completed their neighborhood plan, significant growth occurred along Linden Ave. N that reflected the community's neighborhood plan Vision. As of December 2014, there were 1,044 new apartments on Linden Ave. N. The development at N 130th St. and Linden Ave. N also includes a small amount of neighborhood oriented businesses. There are another 148 permitted.¹ All of this growth has occurred in Commercial (C1 and C2) zoned areas.

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) responded to the community's vision and recent growth by constructing the Linden Ave. N Complete Street Project to improve the road between N 128th and N 145th Streets in keeping with the community's vision for a "promenade." The project improved pedestrian and bicycle safety; completed the missing Interurban Trail link; improved drainage and area lighting; and redeveloped the corridor into a "Complete Street." King County Metro and SDOT constructed improvements to bring Metro's new bus rapid transit service to Aurora Ave. N. The E Line operates between Shoreline's Aurora Village Transit Center and downtown Seattle, giving riders streamlined service to destinations along the route, including major employers, stores, medical and other services, and residential areas.

Bitter Lake Community Center and Playground and the Bitter Lake Reservoir Open Space provide open space and recreation opportunities. The play area renovations took place in 2013 and offer exciting new play equipment while meeting current accessibility and safety standards. In 2013, the community and a series of funding partnerships (including Seattle Parks Foundation, Momentum, The Trust for Public Land and Parks Opportunity Fund) improved the park and added a P-Patch and "Fitness Zone".

¹New apartments on Linden Ave since 1999 = 13002 Linden Ave. N Cambridge (140 units) and New Haven (251 units); 14200 Linden Ave. N Tressa Apartments (475 units); and 14002 Linden Ave. N (178 units). Permitted = 13524 Linden Ave. N (148 units)

2.3 Redevelopment Potential

The Bitter Lake Village Center is largely developed, but much of it at a much lower intensity than allowed under zoning, and at a lower intensity than many of Seattle's urban villages. As described in the previous section, redevelopment is occurring along Linden Ave. N. When considering how future redevelopment could shape the Bitter Lake Village Center, it's helpful to look at properties most likely to redevelop. The map to the right highlights parcels where improvements have a significantly lower value than the property they sit on, and where owners have assembled groups of parcels for potential redevelopment. This information suggests several points.

- There is significant potential for dramatic change to the character of the area along the east side of Linden Ave. N between N 130th and N 135th Streets.
- Recent multifamily development in the area to the north along Linden Ave. N is establishing a residential character north of N 135th St. that is likely to continue with future redevelopment in that area.
- The large group of parcels south of N 135th St. presents an opportunity for a mix of residential and commercial development that could become a neighborhood center.

Consequently, the growth the area has seen since the completion of the neighborhood plan is likely to continue. With guidance the redevelopment could support the desired future character of a more vibrant and diverse mix of shops, restaurants and housing.

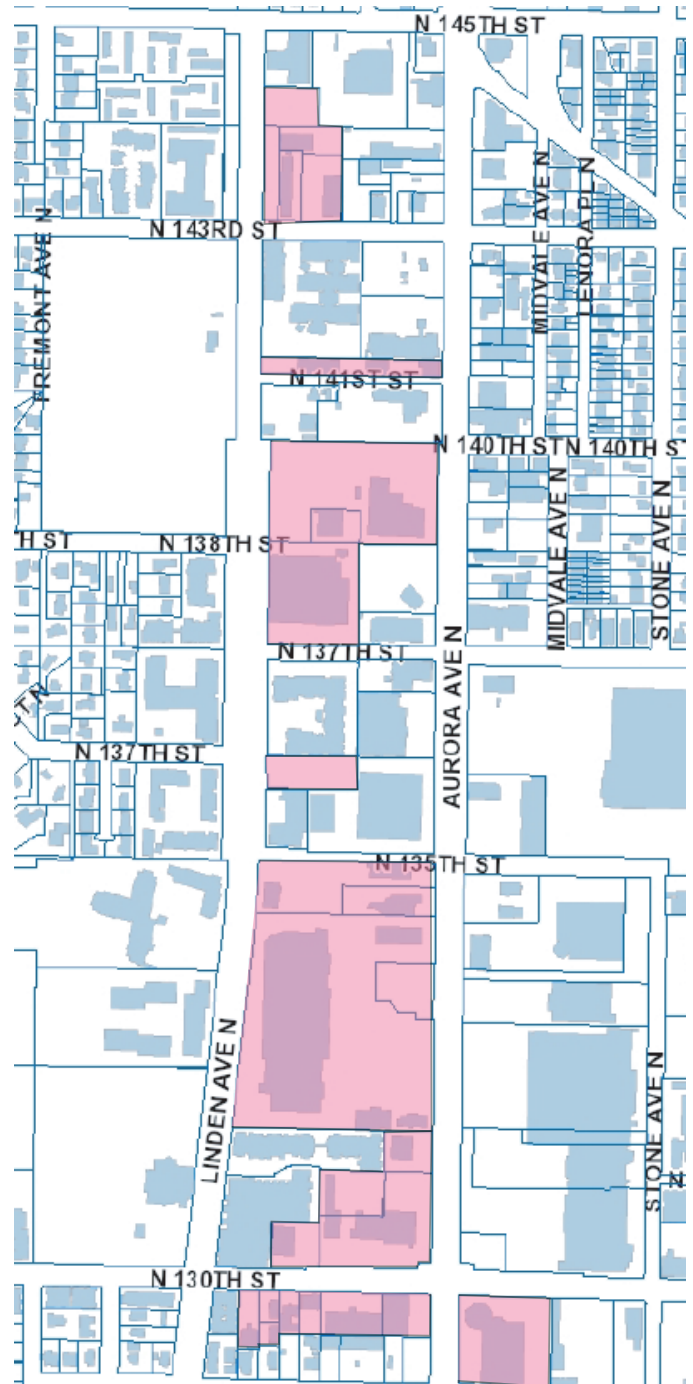


Figure 8 - The sites shade in pink are within the focus area of the UDF and have a higher potential to redevelop in the near-term.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

This section articulates the vision for the development of private and public property, as well as circulation. The affected parcels include those fronting the east side of Linden Ave. N between N 130th St. and N 145th St., and at N 130th St. and Aurora Ave. N, near the new RapidRide station.



Figure 9 - Our Village Center is located along the Linden Ave. N promenade. Residents enjoy extensive recreational opportunities and open space, and convenient access to transit and shopping. There is a strong local feel where people from Broadview, Bitter Lake and Haller Lake can run a quick errand or chance upon a friend while having coffee. The Community Center and parks are strong focus of gatherings and source of pride. – Neighborhood Plan Update Vision (Image - MAKERS)

3.1 Guiding Principles

The Update established as a priority creating a “Village Center” around an improved Linden Ave. N, with a dense, vibrant mix of residences and businesses, and park resources. The following principles guide the UDF.

- Create a highly walkable neighborhood shopping district with a mix of street-level stores and housing above, a network of walkways, and gathering areas.
- Designate a high-quality, dense, multifamily neighborhood, building on existing housing development.
- Create gateway feature, improve streetscape, and orient commercial activity to Rapid Ride station area to mark the Bitter Lake Village Center.

Linden Ave Town Center Key Directions

Where the community comes together

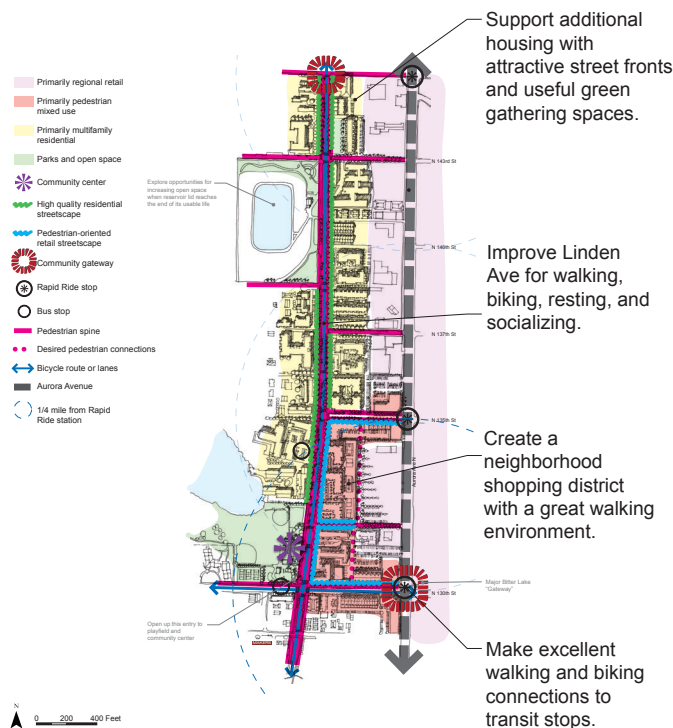


Figure 10 - The mix of housing, businesses, walkability and great regional connections come together to support the Bitter Lake Village Center. (MAKERS)

3.2 Land Use

The Update recommends reinforcing and building on existing development to create several distinct areas along Linden Ave. N.

- Bitter Lake Village Center – a mixed-use area between N 130th St. and N 135th St.
- Walkable Residential District – a moderate-density residential area north of N 135th St.
- East / West Connections between Linden and Aurora – one-block long connections that have a great variety of uses.

Linden Ave N Urban Design Elements

Where the community comes together

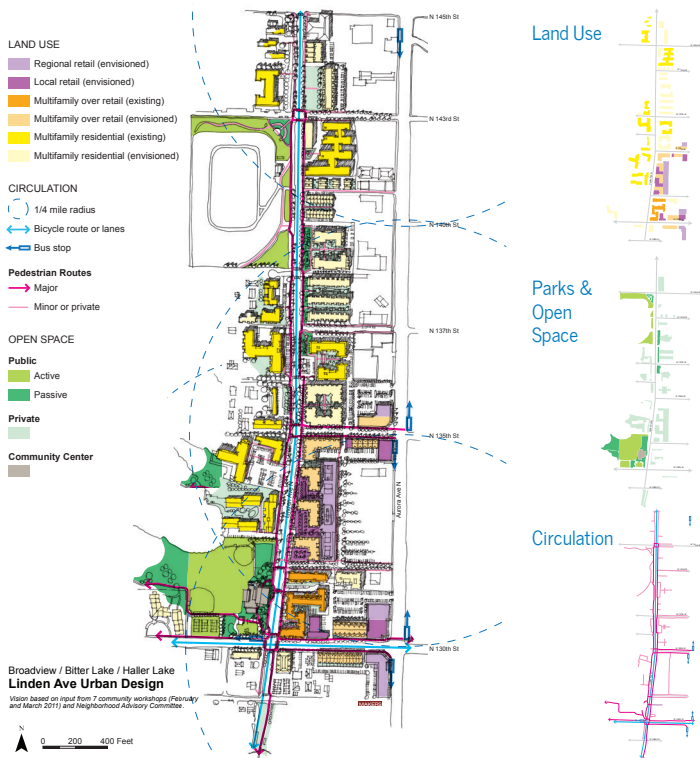


Figure 11 - Overall urban design direction developed during the Neighborhood Plan update. The Community Center and parks are strong focus of gatherings and source of pride. — Neighborhood Plan Update Vision (Image - MAKERS).

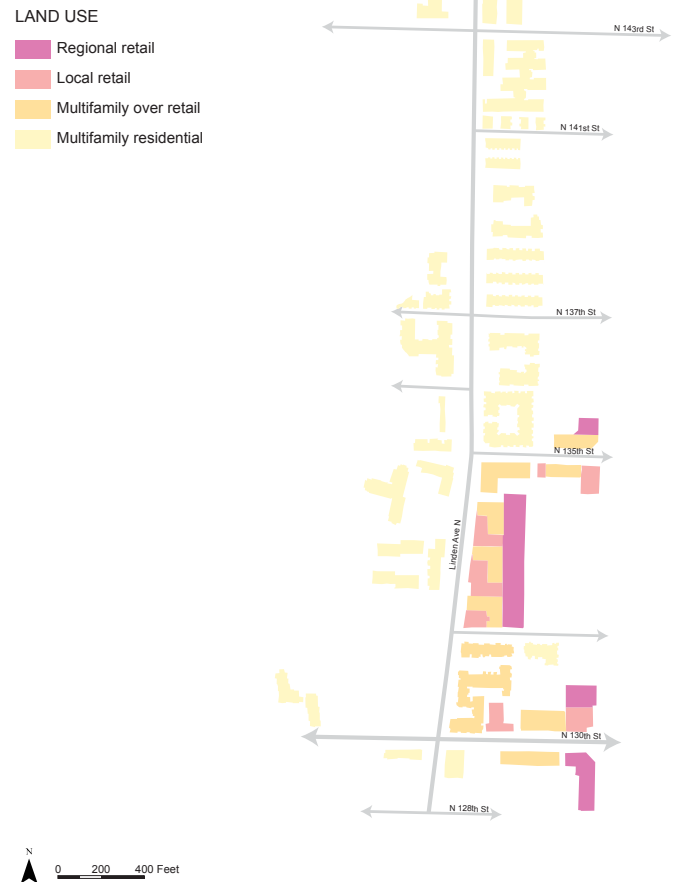


Figure 12 - The northern section of Linden Ave. N is expected to continue growing as a dense residential neighborhood, while the southern portion would become a mixed-use area. (MAKERS)



Figure 13 - New development along Linden Ave. N can include retail clustered around a courtyard that is linked by a corridor to the destination retail on the east side that faces Aurora Ave. N. (MAKERS)

3.3 Bitter Lake Village Center

Along the east side of Linden Ave. N, between N 130th St. and N 135th St., encourage a high-quality, dense, mixed-use neighborhood that builds on existing and recent development.

Land Uses

- At the street-level along the east side of Linden Ave. N between N 130th and N 135th Streets, encourage small shops and services typical to a neighborhood business district such as: restaurants, specialty retail, cafes and a bakery.
- On upper floors, residential uses are preferred and commercial uses are allowed.

Relationship to Street

- Use development regulations to ensure active street-level uses along this portion of Linden Ave. N.
- Limit setbacks at the street level.
- Locate parking under buildings or away from street-fronts.

Zoning and Heights

- Designate Linden Ave. as a Principal Pedestrian Street, and add a Pedestrian Designation to portions of parcels fronting Linden Ave. N.
- The Update recommended considering Neighborhood Commercial or Seattle Mixed Use, however further analysis of the code and discussions with property owners suggested that the Commercial 1 designation be retained and area-specific development regulations be developed to address circulation and design objectives.
- Allow 85' (20' more than currently allowed) with 5' minimum setback sfor portions of buildings over 45 feet.



Figure 14 - This graphic, from the BBH Update, identified preliminary zoning concept, with the expectation that more detailed evaluations was needed to develop the final proposal. (MAKERS)

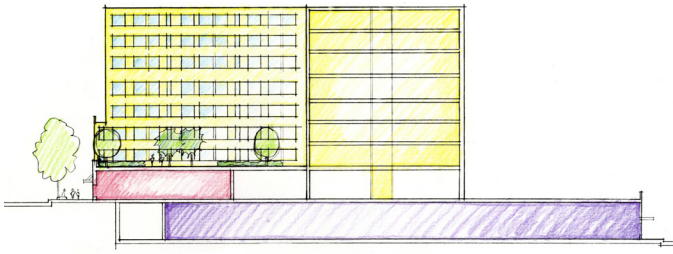


Figure 15 - This cross section (looking north) of a potential development fronting Linden Ave. N illustrates how a mixed-use project can use grade change to create orientations to both Aurora Ave. N and Linden Ave. N. The red indicates neighborhood serving businesses and the purple suggests larger-scaled regionally-oriented businesses. (MAKERS)

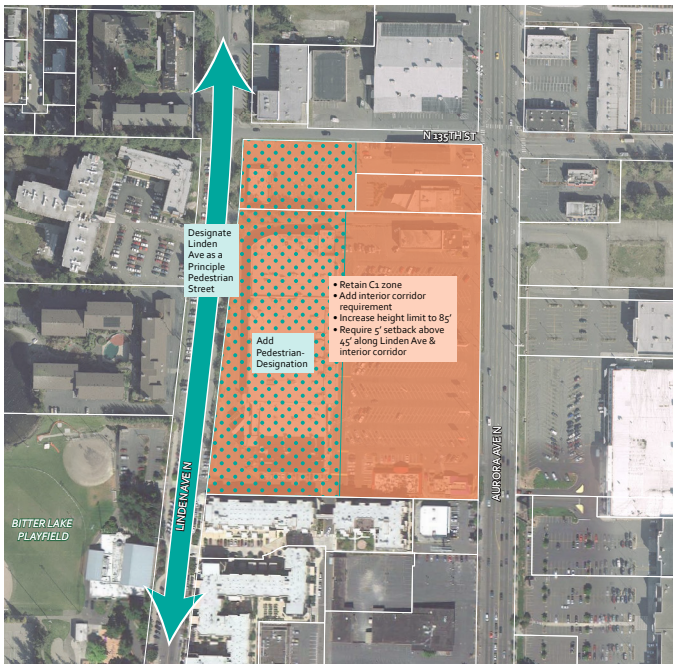


Figure 16 - Illustration showing the application of the Pedestrian designation and Principal Pedestrian Street. (MAKERS)



Figure 17 - Street-level residences at the Cambridge on Linden Ave. N. provide privacy, while adding to the visual interest for those walking along the sidewalk.



Figure 18 - The Interurban Senior Apartments provides 178 affordable senior residences.

3.4 Walkable Residential District

Over the past decades, much of the western and northern portions of Linden Ave. N has developed or redeveloped into a multifamily neighborhood. The neighborhood plan update supported completing a transition in this area to a higher density residential neighborhood that incorporated significant landscaping characteristic of existing development, while increasing the orientation toward the sidewalk. This would grow as an “in-town” neighborhood that is close to transit, shops, services and open spaces.

Land Uses

- Build on recent residential development by encouraging future development to be primarily multifamily residential.
- Continue to allow existing commercial uses.
- In the future, encourage development to focus limited, small scale shops and office uses at intersections.

Relationship to Street

- Create attractive street front by encouraging ground-related residences, minimal setbacks, or well-designed and landscaped courtyard entries and plazas.
- Locate parking under buildings or away from street-front.
- Minimize driveways by encouraging them to be located off of Linden Ave.

Potential Zoning and Heights

- The Update recommended considering Mid-Rise Residential, however detailed analysis of the code, and further discussions with property owners and committee members led to recommending that the area be zoned Commercial 1 and residential uses be allowed outright at street-level. This removes obstacles to multifamily development without making continued commercial uses non-conforming.
- Allow 85' (20' more than currently allowed) with 5' minimum setback for portions of buildings over 45 feet.

3.5 East/West Streets between Linden and Aurora

There are numerous, small commercial businesses located along the east/west streets between Linden Ave. N and Aurora Ave. N, ranging from insurance offices to brake and transmission shops. These benefit from the regional access provided by Aurora, and provide jobs and services to surrounding communities. However, N 130th St. between Linden Ave. N and Aurora Ave. N should transition toward a more pedestrian and transit oriented development pattern. This would establish N 130th St. As the gateway to the Bitter Lake Village Center.

Uses

- Continue to encourage an array of (employment-generating) shops and services.
- Encourage more intensive general commercial on east/west streets to locate closer to Aurora
- Encourage a transition toward pedestrian oriented frontages along N 130th St.
- Support the Seattle North Precinct, proposed for construction at the southeast corner of Aurora Ave. N and N 130th St. to create an institutional anchor as well as potential community space oriented toward this gateway intersection.

Relationship to Street

- Along N 130th St., use Neighborhood Commercial zoning to require attractive street fronts through street-level development standards.
- Locate parking to the side, rear or under buildings along N 130th St.

Potential Zoning and Heights

- The Update recommended considering a variety of potential zoning. Detailed analysis of the code and discussions with property owners led to recommending that Commercial 1 be used on most east/west streets except on N 130th St., where Neighborhood Commercial 3 should be used.
- Allow 85' (20' more than currently allowed) at Linden Ave. N except at the southeast corner of N 130th St. and Linden Ave. N where the height should be 65 feet.



Figure 19 - Existing development at the northwest corner of Aurora and N 130th St.



Figure 20 - Concept of future development at the NW corner of Aurora and N 130th St. (MAKERS)

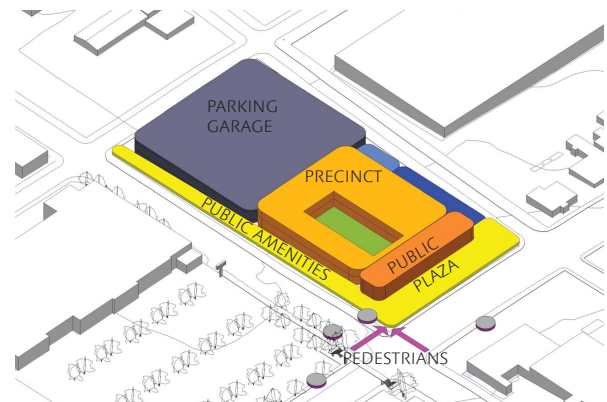


Figure 21 - The conceptual design of the North Precinct includes public spaces along Aurora. (SRG Partnership)

3.6 Circulation

Streetscape Character

A combination of the anticipated development and street improvements are defined by the desired streetscape types in each area. The Linden Ave. Complete Streets project added the necessary infrastructure to support walking along the main spine of the Bitter Lake Village Center. In all instances, Linden Ave. N, and development along its length, should support walking by installing sidewalks, landscaping and lighting, as well as high-quality development to present an attractive and engaging setting.

Linden Ave. Streetscape

Where the community comes together



Figure 22 - This diagram, developed during the planning process, summarized the desired streetscape the character. The anticipated zoning continued to be refined. (MAKERS)

3.6 Circulation (Continued)

Pedestrian Circulation

The Linden Ave. N Complete Street project and the community initiated N 143rd St. Neighborhood Street Fund project greatly improved pedestrian circulation in the Bitter Lake Village Center. But more is needed to create a walkable neighborhood. Improvements need to occur not only along streets, but within the larger parcels in order to ensure sufficient pedestrian connectivity between on-site development, adjacent development and transit.

- Encourage the construction of sidewalks along all streets in between Linden Ave. N and Aurora Ave. N.
- Due to the large parcel and block size between N 125th and N135th Streets, the development regulations should ensure that the interior of the site connects to surrounding streets, in roughly the same frequency as a city block.
- Create standards that allow for flexible connections that respond to the different potential development scenarios.

Corridor Requirements

The block between N 130th and N 135th Streets is approximately 1300' long. Existing development includes a number of interior corridors designed to facilitate access between the site interior and adjacent rights-of-way. As shown on the following page, redevelopment of the large parcel between 130th and 135th should provide a continuous corridor. This will ensure adequate internal site circulation and connections to adjacent transportation facilities, assure walkability, and promote connections between the Aurora-facing shops and retail fronting Linden Ave. N.

Figure 24 - Existing circulation - some easements - create connections through this superblock. Development standard can require that new development provide at least one interior corridor connecting the site to Linden and Aurora.

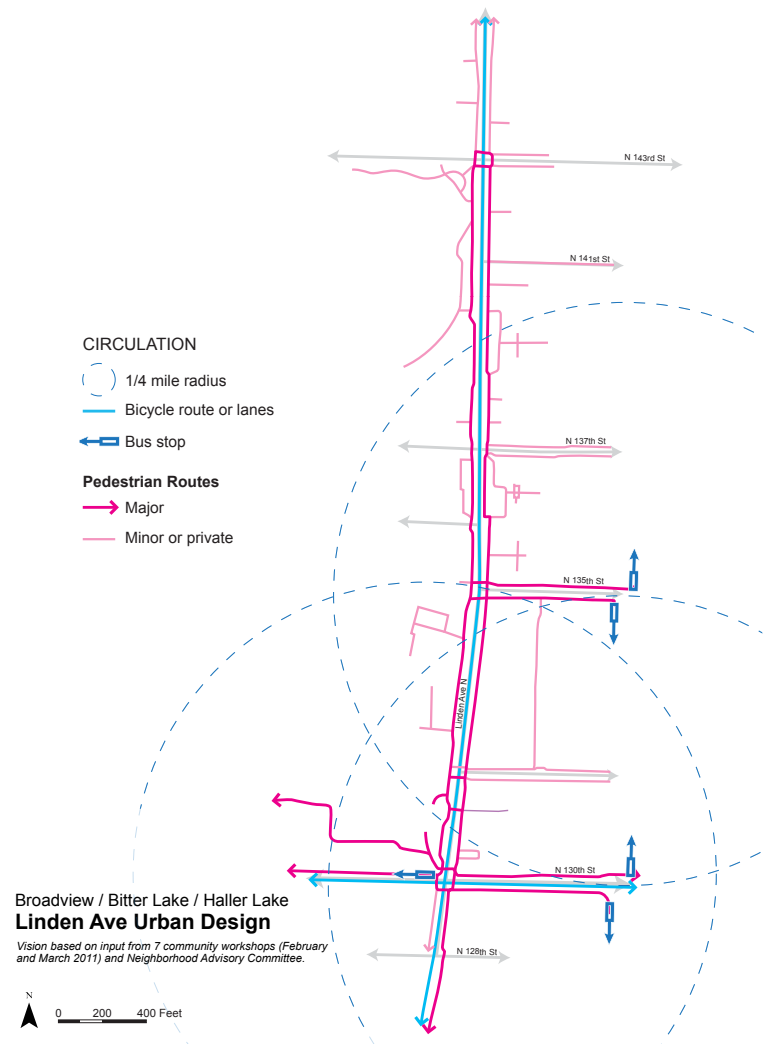



Figure 23 - Existing, private routes provide access through large parcels in the area. (MAKERS)



East side of Linden Ave between N 130th & N 135th Streets

BULK AND SCALE

 Minimum distance to required corridor


-  Required corridor
- 6' minimum sidewalk
 - If driveway included, 6' minimum sidewalk on each side
 - No more than one driveway lane in each direction
 - Parking allowed



Figure 25 - This illustration was developed during the planning process to show the intent of the continuous interior corridor. This concept supports modification of development standards applicable to the Bitter Lake Village Center to improve circulation within large parcels and to reduce bulk of new development. (MAKERS)



Figure 26 - The interior corridor should provide at least a sidewalk, landscaping and lighting.



Figure 27 - Pedestrian connection between Linden Place Apartments and Aurora.

LINDEN URBAN VILLAGE
 REQUIRED CORRIDOR **PARALLEL PARKING ON BOTH SIDES**



LINDEN URBAN VILLAGE
 REQUIRED CORRIDOR **ANGLED PARKING AND PARALLEL PARKING**



Figure 28 - Alternative designs contemplated under new development regulations requiring a continuous interior corridor.



Figure 29 - Streetscape concept from the 1999 Neighborhood Plan.



Figure 30 - Linden Ave. N "Complete Street" improvements completed in 2013.



Figure 31 - North of N 135th Street, new development should improve additional right-of-way to complement the residential character and to provide public use and enjoyment. This illustration shows how right-of-way can be used for urban agriculture. (MAKERS)

Linden Ave. N Streetscape Concepts

The Right of Way Improvement Manual allows development of streetscape concept plans that describes the recommended frontage improvements.

The Linden Ave Complete Streets project completed improvements encompassing most of the right-of-way (ROW). There are linear portions between the new sidewalk and property lines that remain unimproved or minimally improved.

The following diagrams illustrate how new development can complement the existing sidewalk configurations by improving the unused ROW in ways that enhance adjacent development and provide continued public use of the city ROW related functional and aesthetic improvements. After further development and review by Seattle Department of Transportation, these may be integrated as part of the Right of Way Improvement Manual to guide frontage improvements for the parts of the ROW that have not been improved under the Linden Ave. N project, or that should be changed when properties redevelop.



Figure 32 - This illustration shows how development can improve the unused right-of-way on Linden Ave. N to provide continued public use or city ROW and support adjacent commercial uses. (MAKERS)



Figure 33 - South of N 135th St. there is sufficient right-of-way on the east side of Linden Ave. N to permit more substantial outdoor seating and plaza areas that support neighborhood-oriented business district. (MAKERS)

This page shows examples of the different ways new development can integrate open space.

New multifamily development, particularly those located near 135th along Linden Ave. N, should consider providing on-site open space and recreation areas.

Alternatively, there may be useable undeveloped ROW in this area (on the east side of Linden Ave. N) for open space uses as illustrated in the previous section.



Figure 37 - Rooftop garden in Bitter Lake.



Figure 38 - The Cambridge Apartments provides a pedestrian connection between Linden Ave. N and Aurora, and open space.



Figure 39 - New development can also provide semi-public open space to foster a lively business district.

3.8 Implementation

Zoning and Land Use Code Amendments

The UDF is an implementing element of the Broadview - Bitter Lake – Haller Lake Neighborhood Plan Update. DPD has developed legislation to implement zoning changes and amendments to development standards in the Land Use Code alongside developing this Urban Design Framework.

Urban Design Guidelines

The existing citywide design guidelines apply to the Bitter Lake Village Center. As funding allows, DPD will work with the community to develop neighborhood design guidelines.