

## Clues in the Context

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"History can teach us about why things are the way they are."

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*Photo Courtesy of City of Anoka, MN*

### Space and Time

Urban Design should consider two types of context: spatial (the site) and temporal (history). Understanding the natural and political context can help guide the design in successful directions.

### Study Historical Patterns

History can teach us about why things are the way they are. Helpful hints for the future can come from answers to questions about the past:

- Who has lived there?
- How did they live?
- What did they build?
- What were their values?
- What were their visions?
- What forces shaped the boundaries, shape and condition of the site?

### Study Present Patterns

Understanding the immediate natural and built patterns can short term acceptance and long term success of the project.

- What is the shape of the site?
- What is important to protect?
- What should be removed?
- How big is the site?
- What is the condition of the earth?
- Where is the best place ...to put buildings? ...to treat water? ...to plant trees?
- What types of development will succeed?
- What would new citizens prefer?
- What would existing citizens prefer?
- What are the values of the decision makers?
- What can be afforded?

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Comments or Questions: [support@charrettecenter.com](mailto:support@charrettecenter.com) or 612.823.1966

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