

MEETING MINUTES
Public Works Site Small Area Guide Process
Developer Roundtable
Monday, April 12, 2010, 7:00 pm
Edina City Hall Council Chambers

City Staff Present:

Cary Teague, City Planner

Community Advisory Team (CAT) Members Present:

Kevin Staunton-Chair

Josh Sprague

Ellen Jones

Kim Montgomery

Sue Davison

Larry Chestler

Andy Brown

Lisa Diehl

Greg Domke

Gene Persha

Nancy Grazzini-Olson

Linda Odell

Bob Shaddock

Design Team Present:

Mike Fischer-Chair

Michael Schroeder

Developer Roundtable:

Bill Katter

Bill Beard

Mark Nanne

Dean Williamson

Others Present:

Tom Bonneville

Introduction

Chair Staunton introduced staff and CAT members.

Developers introduced themselves, and noted that they are Edina residents who work in the development field.

Chair Staunton posed this question to the developers "How do you incorporate public spaces into redevelopment"?

Ms. Montgomery asked the developers how they were informed of the process.

Mr. Katter said he responded to the general invite and volunteered to serve.

Mr. Beard said Chair Fischer asked him to serve and he agreed.

Mr. Nanne said Gordon Hughes asked him to serve for his market background and he agreed.

Mr. Williamson said he volunteered to serve.

Mr. Nanne stated that the use of the public works site could work as a park & ride for public benefit; however, connections should be made to other sites in the area.

Mr. Katter stated that housing could be introduced, but concessions would have to be made. Now the area is "broken" – the sites don't connect.

Mr. Beard stated that the railroad track divides area. It is hard to make connections. Light rail will likely change everything. You should plan for it. It will create greater traffic at the beginning and end of the day. Parking should be incorporated into development. Topography is a real challenge. If the City is going to make the site a commercial entity, it is going to take a high level of public support; this site is going to take a significant amount of dollars to give incentive to developers.

Ms. Montgomery asked about studying traffic in the area and the potential impact of light rail on traffic.

Mr. Beard stated that rail doesn't generate traffic but allows more in. Traffic must be dealt with; maybe infrastructure must be upgraded to accommodate uses. He said that parking is always a limiter; citizens are still married to cars. You can't squeeze parking. The main considerations are: A. parking B. density; if you go 4 stories, why not go 10? If you put in medical office space you need to make sure that you have 5 stalls per 1000 square feet of building space.

Ms. Jones asked what the scope of redevelopment would be. In response: Mr. Beard stated that first one would look at the limitations of the site. Parking is a real limiter for any redevelopment. Need to look at how to park the site and the uses. Second factor is building costs. Four-stories vs. ten-stories has impact on construction types.

Mr. Katter stated there is no market for high-rise/density office. Medium density office (maybe), low density medical may work.

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Mr. Nanne stated that housing and medical may work. The bigger picture is to re-work the traffic pattern.

Mr. Chestler asked about the area as a whole, not just the public works site.

A discussion ensued about the end product. Chair Staunton explained that this is only the first step of a small area plan. The goal here is to establish ten or so principles on what we all agree on for future development of the area; it is not a complete small area plan.

Mr. Beard stated that this site should be used as a catalyst for future development. He cited the Hopkins Bike Trail next to the railroad line as being a highly successful example of a similar situation. He said we should leverage this property to build to our strengths. He also said that developers looking at the property think 1 to 3 years out only reacting to the market today. They do not look out at the long term for property like this.

Mr. Katter stated that without shared parking, the uses will remain the same or just turn over. Sites will have to develop individually if they have to park independent of one another.

Mr. Domke asked what's the best use for this site that would enhance Edina?

Ms. Odell cautioned that in any decision making should be mindful of the existing businesses. She further stated that Edina Family Physicians has enjoyed a competitive advantage because they are not linked to any hospital or specialty group and can refer to anyone.

Mr. Brown suggested that the City take advantage of the assets already there. He said that whatever we can do to leverage the rail lines will help area businesses.

Ms. Montgomery stated that businesses and the public must work together.

Mr. Sprague stated that his goal is to bring the citizens, Council and businesses together.

Mr. Bonneville shared his vision of development of the site, noting four levels of parking could be developed at the back with green space in front.

Mr. Katter stated that housing on the public works site would benefit from light rail, but not retail, office, etc. Need to park for light rail with a place to also get on; not get off; therefore you need to park it.

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A discussion ensued with the general agreement from developers that housing and a medical use may be the best solution. Retail will not work. Need more housing to improve existing retail.

Mr. Nanne stated that the public works site is the “back door” of the area due to its topography, Vernon Avenue, etc.

Ms. Jones questioned if a park would be a good option. Mr. Beard stated that he doesn't feel a park would be a good option and questioned if anyone would send their kids to play at this site; so close to rail road tracks, busy street, highway etc.

Mr. Brown stated that he would like to see examples of, or hear what the City's financial involvement was with Centennial Lakes, Grandview, or any other areas. Was TIF or other methods used?

Ms. Davison stated that we need to think about the time frame for developing the site. The site will be vacant soon. Is the City (or this group) looking short term or can the City wait to redevelop? Is this process a long term vision?

Ms. Diehl asked if the building would be removed, and is so, could the site be turned into green space and held as green space for future redevelopment.

Mr. Nanne stated that a parking lot would probably work best in the short term; not a park.

Mr. Williamson asked what market value the City sees for development of the public works site and what is the time frame?

Ms. Diehl questioned if the area is missing anything? Mr. Katter responded the area is missing a daycare and maybe more medical.

Chair Fischer pointed out what needs to be remembered is that this “node” is a neighborhood node, not a regional node.

Ms. Montgomery said that she believes a study was done by the League of Women's Voters that found that the city lacked indoor recreational space. Mr. Sprague noted that it was conducted by the Park and Recreation Department, not the League of Women's Voters.

Chair Fischer asked the developers if they felt a community center would work in this location. Mr. Nanne stated that there are a number of recreational facilities in the City, including at Lifetime, LA Fitness, the YMCA, and other City facilities. Nanne did not believe it would work here.

Ms. Montgomery stated if the site was used as a “community center” it would be free to Edina residents and in her opinion there is a need for this type of facility in

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the City. Mr. Sprague stated that the facility could be a pay facility, but on a sliding scale based on your ability to pay.

Mr. Nanne asked the group if a hotel would be viable here, since the Biltmore Motel was in this area for many years. The general consensus of the group was that a motel/hotel wouldn't be a viable option.

Chair Fischer asked developers if there was a need in this area for more medical. The general consensus was yes; there is a need; people like have their physicians close to home.

Mr. Nanne noted that presently it is now extremely difficult to obtain a construction loan on leased property.

Mr. Staunton thanked the developers for their participation.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

April 27, 2010, Public Works Site Small Area Guide/Developer Round Table Meeting Minutes Approved

Ms. Montgomery moved approval of the Public Works Site Small Area Guide Process/Developers Round Table held on April 12, 2010. Ms. Grazzini-Olson seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion for approval carried.