

REPORT / RECOMMENDATION



To: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Agenda Item #: VII.E.

From: Cary Teague, Community Development Director

Action

Discussion

Date: June 16, 2015

Information

Subject: Approval of Development Principles for the France Avenue Southdale Area

Action Requested:

Approve the Working Development Principles for the France Avenue Southdale Area as official policy

Information / Background

The City Council is asked to consider and adopt as policy the working principles developed by the France Avenue Southdale Area Work Group. These principles would be used as a tool for consideration of all development applications that require a rezoning or comprehensive plan amendment in the Greater Southdale Area.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Working Principles
- Planning Framework of the Work Group

PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Stage One Summary to Edina Planning Commission

5 June 2015

As charged by the Edina City Council, a Work Group was formed to address issues related to future land use and urban design for parcels along the west side of France Avenue and the greater Southdale Area (extending to TH 62 on the north and the city limits on the east and south—with the entire area referred to as the “district” in the efforts of the Work Group). The process approved by the City Council includes work in four stages, with each stage being completed and the results accepted by the Planning Commission and City Council prior to moving to subsequent stages. The Work Group is concluding its Stage One work and is presenting working principles to the Planning Commission as its core deliverable for Stage One.

The Work Group is composed of residents and commercial interests, some appointed by the City Council and some self-selected during a Kick-off Meeting, and has met nine times since the Kick-off Meeting. The Work Group is assisted by staff but is, at this point, a volunteer effort. Of note, there have been fewer than six absences during the nine meetings of the 12-member Work Group. Each Work Group meeting has been open to the public with time allowed during each agenda for public comment.

The process to date has included a Kick-off Meeting when more than 40 residents and commercial interests participated in a series of workshop exercises and then convened in separate groups to self-select half of the required composition of the Work Group. Information gathered during the Kick-off Meeting was used to inform the efforts of the Work Group as it formulated initial ideas and eventually defined a set of working principles.

A key part of Stage One (and every stage of work proposed for this effort) was a Check-in Meeting when members of the public would have the opportunity to review the efforts of the Work Group while in progress. While attendance was limited, the information gained during this meeting remains prominent in the dialog of the Work Group.

The deliverable of Stage One is a series of working principles intended as a guide for the public and private realms of the study area. The Work Group acknowledges that work remains in the process of offering definitive guidance, but is focused on more aspirational thoughts about the evolution of the greater Southdale area. As such, the principles may evolve as the Work Group continues through subsequent stages of its work, gaining more insights and a richer understanding of the conditions of the district. As presented to the Planning Commission, they stand as more than a draft and staff has acknowledge their utility even in their current form to assist in guiding proposals for change in the district.

To enhance understanding of the working principles and offer a more robust tool for staff and proponents for change in the district, the Work Group augmented the working principles with a

series of supporting questions—provocations encouraging more comprehensive and thoughtful proposals. The Work Group believes these tools are a key complement to other tools used in guiding development in the district, with these working principles being a higher order filter for acceptability than other more typical planning tools.

The Work Group is seeking input on the working principles and the supporting questions. As it looks forward to a second stage of the work, the Work Group intends to use the working principles to craft a graphic vision for the district and more fully demonstrate the ways in which the working principles can be applied to create more vibrant, forward-looking, and human-focused patterns across the district. Members of the Work Group have agreed to continue their service, but have agreed that more aggressive outreach is needed to ensure interests across the district are recognized. In essence, the Work Group intends to maintain the current dialog with stakeholders through kick-off and check-in meetings and through its regular Work Group meetings, but will orchestrate a process of interactions where it reaches directly to stakeholder groups throughout the district. Assistance in identifying those key groups would be appreciated, but in particular, the Work Group recognizes the need to make contact with residential interests north of 66th Street and along the more southerly sections of York Avenue, as well as commercial interests throughout the district. In addition, the Work Group intends to initiate a series of roundtable discussions as a part of its work in Stage Two as a way of more fully understanding the complexity of the district and its physical and economic evolution.

Questions supporting the working principles and an outline of Stage Two activities will be provided to the Planning Commission at its regular meeting.

Element	Proposed working principle
Give-to-Get; Plan & Process	Allow latitude to gain tangible and intangible outcomes aligned with the district vision.
Edina Cultural Preferences; Identity	Advance quality through thoughtful and artful design of buildings and publicly accessible spaces, highlighted human activity, and enhanced economic vibrancy.
District Function	Look beyond baseline utilitarian functions of a single site to create mutually supportive and forward-looking infrastructure sustaining the district.
Comprehensive Connections; Movement	Foster a logical, safe, inviting and expansive public realm facilitating movement of people within and to the district.
Site Design; Transitions	Encourage parcel-appropriate intensities promoting harmonious and interactive relationships without “leftover” spaces on sites.
Health	Advance human and environmental health as the public and private realms evolves.
Innovation	Embrace purposeful innovation aimed at identified and anticipated problems.
Land Use; Live-able Precincts	Promote well-balanced aggregations of “come to” and “stay at” places focused on human activity and linked to an engaging public realm.
Economic Vitality	Ensure every component contributes to the sustained economic vitality of the district and the community.