

Whittier Housing and Land Use Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 19th, 2023, 6:30-8:00pm
Hybrid Format: WhittierAlliance (10 E 25th St) +
Zoom Digital Meeting

Attendees: Kedar, Olivia, Nathaniel, John Crippen, Ron and Joanna Johnson, Brian Golberg

Presenters: Rebecca Parrel, Kelsey Forg

Staff: Meggie Garcia, George Rishmawi

Welcome/Introductions

-The meeting is called to order at 6:30pm.

Attendees completed a round of introductions.

The meeting chair presented the agenda. Motion to approve the agenda is seconded and passes unanimously.

The meeting chair recognized Standard of Conduct; Non-discrimination and Anti-racism; and Conflicts of Interest Policies.

Motion to approve Feb minutes

Recorded meeting on our youtube channel: <https://youtu.be/DQbvcOjs0PU>

New Nicollet Redevelopment: Kelsey (street design) and Rebecca (Public Space)

- Overview: City owns the former KMart site (10 acres of land)
 - Plans to reconnect Nicollet Ave between Lake and Cecil Newman Ln
 - Designing this project with the community in mind
 - Project goals informed by Phase I engagement (aug 2022- Jan 2023)
 - Reconnect people and places
 - Build for whos here
 - Live, work, shop, and play here
 - Build safe equitable, sustainable transportation networks
 - Design safe and healthy communities
 - Currently in Phase 2 part 3 finally wrapping up
 - Next Phase 3: Developers/architects come in. Asking how lots will be broken up
- Engagement break down
 - Phase II pt 1
 - 1/3 of survey responses came from people who lived in one of the 4 surrounding neighborhoods
 - Phase II pt2
 - 18% of surveys response came from people who lived in one of the 4 surrounding neighborhoods
 - Held one open house on the kmart site which was the most successful and accessible to all. Other in-person event was the SLOW roll
 - Public space priorities (survey results show top 3 per survey)
 - Top results: Flexible green space
 - Community gathering spaces
 - Community garden
 - Shade trees

- ecological /pollinator gardens
 - Question: Were these written in option or already picked?
 - Options were already listed
- Concept designs were rated by 1 (worst) to 5 (best) that was applicable to online surveys but was different in inperson engagement where participants chose their preferred design
 - Public space A: all green space at top of lot closest to the green way horizontally
 - Public space B: all green space lined up vertically on both sides of Nicollet ave
 - Public space C: Green space spread out diagonally across both lots with most of the green space at the top right corner on first ave
 - Question: Why specifically that angle (referring to concept c)
 - Trying to make a connection to the new ramp connecting into the green way on 1st ave
 - Note that most/all in person engagement was interacting with residents from the four neighborhoods. Unlike survey responses that anyone can take even if they are from the suburbs
- Chosen recommended public street design : Concept C
 - Splits lots into 3 instead of 2
 - Most fun and “challenging” for developers to come up with something different
 - Want to limit curb cuts on Nicollet
 - Q: What is a curb cut? Where a car can turn on - ex: alley ways
 - Details not being decided but have some guidelines that developers can use to design the lots.
 - Question: Will the land be sold off or kept by the city?
 - Phase 3 will tackle breaking up the 3 big lots to then divide up to be sold/leased etc to smaller developers/architects
 - Not going to sell all lots at once and will put out RFPs in the future
 - Not proceeding with a Master Developers nor recommended for this project
- Street design priorities top 3
 - Trees, Bloulevards, green space
 - Walking/rolling
 - Biking
 - Midtown greenway ramp on nicollet
 - Not ada accessible and narrows down at the bottom
 - Community wanted this addressed
 - 1st ave is also getting reconstructed already - great opportunity to squeeze in this improvement
 - Street concept 1:
 - 2 way with large sidewalk space for seating and walking
 - Tied with concept 4 of most chosen designs
 - Street concept 2
 - Concrete median and smaller sidewalks one way
 - Didn't support many of the priority community had stated
 - Street concept 3
 - Concrete median smaller sidewalks
 - Street concept 4
 - Transit only with wide sidewalks and seating
 - Tied with concept 1 of most chosen designs
 - Evaluation leading to chosen recommended design
 - Existing and upcoming developments

- Whittier- lyndale bikeway
- New I-35 exit ramp
- Karmel expansion
- B-line transit lane
- 3030 Nicollet/wells fargo
- 1st ave reconstruction
- Simpson housing
- How would traffic operate around the site?
 - Concept 1 open to all traffic but concept 4 only transit
 - This would cause traffic to still go around the site impacting traffic flow
 - New greenway ramp would bring lots of more foot traffic
 - Traffic analysis recommendations have some cuts for bus to pull through for stops and then merge with traffic - similar to what is on hennepin. These would be one lane 2 way streets
 - Question: Would there be a possibility to add/connect a light rail in the future to the greenway?
 - There is talk about what this would look like and there are some limitations that are stopping it. Would be a conversation to be had with the park and other entities
 - Question: Street parking still being planned or will there be additional parking on the site?
 - City is not leaning towards putting money into managing/owning a parking ramp
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- What's next? What does Phase 3 entail?
 - Wrapped up phase 2 part 3 now waiting to present recommended designs to council and mayor in April
 - Phase 3 included
 - Deciding development objectives
 - Detailed street designs and engineering