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 who’s 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
    ■ ½ 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?
  - Concert 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

■ 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