



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Melvin Carter, Mayor

25 West Fourth Street, Ste. 1400
Saint Paul, MN 55102

HILLCREST REDEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)

Co-chairs Anne DeJoy and Linda Martinez-Higgins

Meeting #12 Summary February 16, 2021, 5:30-7:00pm via Skype

CAC members in attendance: Linda Martinez-Higgins, Osman Egal, Rachel Finazzo Doll, Ethan Osten, Tiffany Scott Knox, Tong Thao, Que Vang, James Westin.

Others: Bill Dermody, Luis Pereira, Mike Richardson (City of Saint Paul staff); Andrew Dresdner, Mo Convery (City's consultants); Kathryn Sarnecki, George Hoene, Monte Hilleman, Andrea Novak (Port Authority staff) James Soltis, Tom Goodrum (Port Authority's consultants)

Welcome/Roll Call/Meeting Protocol

Co-Chair Linda Martinez-Higgins called the meeting to order and laid out protocol for speaking during the meeting, and muting phones when not speaking. Bill Dermody took attendance.

March Community Engagement Plans

Andrew Dresdner reviewed the overall community engagement schedule – where we are in the process. Then he laid out the plans for upcoming engagement in March/April, to include an online open house on March 16, a recorded video online, Social Pinpoint online survey, pop up meetings, conversation circles, and a district council meeting. He noted that there will also be formal public hearings later in the process. He asked if the CAC had any thoughts on the plans. A CAC member recalled that there was a lot of participation last August in the online meeting and wondered if there was a way to answer questions in other ways in order to get to them all – perhaps via chat during the meeting or other ways. Bill Dermody suggested that they could also do a follow-up questions/answers document and post it online, then notify our lists that it's been posted. They will also think about other ways to handle any extra questions from the event. Bill offered that the CAC could send any additional feedback on the engagement plans by email by Friday.

3-Dimensional Massing Illustrations

Andrew Dresdner and Mo Convery reviewed a series of 3-dimensional massing illustrations of each scenario from various angles (see [presentation slides](#)). Bill Dermody emphasized that these illustrations

show a range of forms, heights, setbacks, etc. – these are just plausible outcomes, and not necessarily exactly how these buildings will look. For example, in the Hilltop Scenario view from Larpenteur, the 6-story building on the left could plausibly be 4 to 6 stories, and it might have a step-back form in its upper stories or it might not.

A CAC member asked how height and form are decided – is it part of our process? Bill Dermody said the zoning code and the design standards provide some guidance to that, and we could provide more through the master plan if there's a particular issue of concern.

A CAC member asked what the Hilltop's open space will look like? Andrew Dresdner said we haven't designed the open space, but when it is, it probably should be more than a grassy hilltop – it could accomplish more as a recreation space. Mo Convery added that there might be a habitat function to the hilltop, and perhaps it could be a sledding location. A CAC member added that it's a historic high point. Bill Dermody added that the active park, at a minimum, will be owned by St. Paul Parks & Recreation, who will have a public planning process for the park space later – after the master plan. He said you should use your imagination for how these spaces will be filled in – there will probably be more trees and some form of active recreation in these areas, we just don't know what yet. A CAC member asked about any potential funding hiccups from being located close to Hayden Heights Recreation Center and park. Bill Dermody said that Parks & Recreation staff have been very involved in this master plan. They have decided that the existing recreation center will remain over at Hayden Heights. They have also done a preliminary survey of recreation in the area (in both cities) to generate a list of ideas that might work here and wouldn't duplicate what the neighborhood already has. The Parks & Recreation Department will have a public planning process for their park space that will follow the master plan process.

It was pointed out that none of the east-west streets go directly through the site. A CAC member wondered if it might be helpful for people to the west to have a more direct access through the site to McKnight Road.

A CAC member asked about moving the wetlands. Bill Dermody responded that both scenarios impact most of the wetlands. He said the landowner has had informal conversations with both the watershed district and the City, who will have to approve the impacts later. The informal feedback is that these levels of impact are on the right track, but that will have to be formalized later. Also, that wetlands are most likely to succeed where they are today or close to where they are today – so we should maintain them in place or grow existing ones.

A CAC member asked where senior housing will be. Bill Dermody said that in St. Paul we usually don't specify where senior housing will go. Most senior housing getting built is the medium-density or higher-density building type that we're showing. We could specify where it goes in the master plan, but we typically would not.

A CAC member asked if residents along Winthrop expressed a preference on what they'd like to see across the street. Bill Dermody said we have a community priority to avoid excessive traffic to the west and south. For that reason, we have avoided medium- and higher-density residential in those areas because they are higher traffic generators. Jobs Focus shows lower-density residential along the west edge. Hilltop, because of industrial pushed farther west in order to maintain wetlands along McKnight

Road, has only a 20'- to 50'-wide green edge along most of the Winthrop side. He said we would like to hear from people which approach they prefer along that west edge.

A CAC asked whether the new trail north of the reservoir will be lighted. Mo Convery noted that this sort of detail has not been designed yet. Bill Dermody said the norm would be to not light a trail in this setting. It was noted that even without dedicated lights, the adjacent buildings' lights will make it brighter than the current trail along McKnight Road.

Design Standards Presentation

Mike Richardson [presented information](#) regarding how design standards can impact what the site will look like. He noted that his presentation has links to more detailed information from City Code. Monte Hilleman explained that the Port Authority intends to have restrictive covenants for this site that get into more aesthetic and maintenance details than the City's design standards. After the master plan engagement, the Port Authority will want to engage with people about those covenants – anyone interested should let them know in order to get on a contact list.

CAC Questions from January

Bill Dermody and Monte Hilleman responded to five questions submitted by CAC members in the wake of their January meeting.

Q: Will there be low-income housing?

Bill said “probably.” He noted that the draft housing policy the CAC discussed in September laid out priorities for affordable housing, but did not specify targets for numbers of units. This policy will be part of the final draft master plan document text.

Q: Why is Winthrop shown as a through street?

Bill said it is due to City policy that encourages connectedness and discourages dead-end streets. Public Works staff are adamant that Winthrop needs to go through, connecting current dead-end streets, to fulfill these policies. A caveat to that is the Winthrop connection to the north might be a future phase not built with this development, but that's not the case for Winthrop in the southern portion of the site which will have to be constructed alongside development. He suggested you might ask, what about the community priority of avoiding excessive traffic and speeding to the west and south? He said that transportation analysis shows only a few hundred vehicles per day going westward from the project, divided between five streets – a very low amount for local streets. He said we may need to add sidewalks or other measures to ensure safety on these streets.

Q: What is the pandemic's impact on job projections?

Monte said light industrial has actually done very well during the pandemic. It's not like the office situation in downtown. Most of the light industrial workers will actually have to come to the site – it's not remote work. We have seen very strong performance in this sector in 2020.

Q: Is broadband internet access sufficient, or will it need to be improved for this project?

Monte said there are four broadband companies in McKnight Road, at least one of which is fiber optic. Their businesses and residents will absolutely want high speed internet, and they will make sure it is part of this development.

Q: Have any local companies been contacted about expanding or relocating to the site?

Monte said that they will definitely work with the City to recruit St. Paul companies, as always. However, they will not poach companies from other cities because of their commitment to regional cooperation via Greater MSP. Later in the process when we get down to one scenario, they will market the site and people in the market will definitely know about this project. Also, they've been thinking about how to recruit eco-industrial companies – a circular economy concept where one company uses another company's waste products.

Bill noted that there will be a community online event on March 16 in place of the usual CAC meeting. He hopes many CAC members will be able to attend.

ADJOURNED at 7:01pm