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|  | DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT*Nicolle Goodman, Director* | EqualHousingLogo |
| CityLogo | CITY OF SAINT PAUL *25 West Fourth Street, Ste. 1400* *Melvin Carter, Mayor Saint Paul, MN 55102* |

HILLCREST REDEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)

Co-chairs Anne DeJoy and Linda Martinez-Higgins

# Meeting #15 Summary

June 15, 2021, 5:30-7:00pm

via Teams

CAC members in attendance: Anne DeJoy, Linda Martinez-Higgins, Osman Egal, Ethan Osten, Tong Thao, Que Vang.

Others: Bill Dermody, Mike Richardson (City of Saint Paul staff); Andrew Dresdner, Mo Convery (City’s consultants); Kathryn Sarnecki, George Hoene, Monte Hilleman (Port Authority staff) Rick Carter (Port Authority’s consultant)

## Welcome/Roll Call/Meeting Protocol

Co-Chair Linda Martinez-Higgins called the meeting to order and laid out protocol for speaking during the meeting.

## Draft Sustainability Chapter and Context

Mo Convery and Mike Richardson [presented](https://www.stpaul.gov/sites/default/files/2021-06/Sustainability%20Presentation%206_15%20CAC.pdf) an overview of the draft Sustainability Chapter for the Master Plan, with context on where it comes from, how it will be implemented, and how it relates to the Port Authority’s LEED certification efforts and planned covenants with site users. Mike also referred to the [full draft chapter](https://www.stpaul.gov/sites/default/files/2021-06/Sustainabilty%20Chapter%20Draft%206_15_21%20CAC.pdf) and a draft [implementation matrix](https://www.stpaul.gov/sites/default/files/2021-06/Sustainabilty%20Implementation%20Matrix%20Rev4%20-%20June%20CAC.pdf), although did not go through them point-by-point. He noted that the stormwater section of this chapter might get pulled out into a separate chapter.

Monte Hilleman emphasized that this sustainability commitment is a big deal, and there is substantial work remaining to vet the financial and market feasibility. They are in active discussions with multiple entities to address the remaining issues. Also, they will continue looking at the details on what is required and what is encouraged in the Sustainability Chapter. He offered an explanation of how the Port Authority uses covenants to ensure their sustainable design priorities are implemented and maintained in developments that are sold off to others. He said he sees nothing in the draft Sustainability Chapter that is in conflict with their upcoming development plans that they will be working on in the coming months.

Mike explained that some strategies in the draft chapter are conditioned on obtaining financing. He also explained that the City’s Sustainable Building Ordinance, which is above and beyond the basic State of Minnesota Building Code, only applies where City financing is provided.

A CAC member asked if the site’s terrain and pollution present additional challenges.

Monte said there are a number of challenges they are sorting through that will make attaining their goals more difficult, but the Port Authority has a history with brownfields sites like this. He sees nothing at this time that they cannot work through.

A CAC member appreciated the intentional focus on sustainability, but feels the transportation element needs some refinement and more aggressive strategies. For example, “support” alternative transportation options is not strong enough. Also, the built environment needs to be comfortable in order to support biking and walking. The artwork concepts described in a previous meeting are helpful, but the sidewalks and trails are still surrounded by lots of parking. Also, the goal for 2% of parking spaces being set aside for electric vehicle charging is too low – we need to aim higher. Also, we should ask for more than 50% of landscaping being native plantings. Are there situations when native plantings wouldn’t be possible to use instead of turf grass? If so, those should be identified and defined carefully.

Mo said that the 50% level for native plantings allows some flexibility to allow the property owner to choose species that will thrive, which will often be native plantings.

Monte said they will need to aim for more like 4% of public parking spaces for electric vehicles in order to be carbon neutral. They are also looking at integrating electric vehicle charging on private property, encouraging transit, and encouraging electric vehicle use. He agrees that they have more work to do on this issue. He said that they may need to provide parking because of their aggressive job goals, although it would be great if they can improve transit access for those workers. Also, they hope that workforce housing on the site will allow some people to walk to jobs on the site. Some of this is hard to commit to on the front end, but they are actively exploring these issues.

Mike said he anticipates addressing some of these transportation concerns in either the master plan’s transportation chapter or the sustainability chapter. He said the 2% number comes from the LEED framework, and he is open to other resources to inform that number. He also said he intends to add a strategy to ensure that the site’s buildings are electric vehicle-ready.

Monte agreed that being electric vehicle-ready is important – to lay the conduit and having breaker boxes right-sized, even if the chargers are not installed now. It is much more cost-efficient to do this now rather than later when the market catches up.

## How Community Priority #19 will be met

Bill Dermody and Monte Hilleman provided an overview of how they believe the community priority about any retail on the site not competing with White Bear Avenue ([Priority #19](https://www.stpaul.gov/sites/default/files/Media%20Root/Planning%20%26%20Economic%20Development/Community%20Priorities-%20adopted%20by%20Hillcrest%20CAC.pdf)) will be met. Monte said that any retail located here is likely to serve the immediate area and not compete with White Bear Avenue. He suggested looking at the existing retail at Larpenteur/McKnight as an example of this. Really, the existing retail centers at Maplewood Mall and Sun Ray are more likely to compete with White Bear Avenue. The market study did find demand for about 20,000 square feet of retail and about 20,000 square feet of office on this site. However, at Hillcrest the buildings do not exist yet – they will have to be constructed. The cost of construction will mean they are attracting higher paying tenants, while businesses that seek lower rent will want to use existing spaces on White Bear Avenue. Also, when retail brokers see development activity at Hillcrest, it actually reassures them that this area is viable – that White Bear Avenue is a viable place to do business. It’s more of a synergy than a competition. Also, White Bear Avenue has a lot of B Business District zoning, which is less restricted, while this site will have more restrictive T Traditional Neighborhood District zoning.

Bill said that City staff agree with these arguments. He added that the site layouts in the finalist scenarios are not conducive to large-scale retail with their street layouts and lot sizes. He asked if the CAC members felt that Priority #19 is being adequately addressed.

A CAC member agreed that Hillcrest is being planned more for office and light industrial, and is unlikely to draw away from White Bear Avenue. Sun Ray and Maplewood Mall are more the competition for White Bear Avenue. Also, through Neighborhood STAR discussions, there may be more retail coming to White Bear Avenue soon. If anything, Hillcrest is likely to be a boon to White Bear Avenue businesses once it starts construction. Hillcrest retail is likely to support only the immediate area.

A CAC member agreed. There is a lot of retail missing on White Bear Avenue. The additional residents at Hillcrest will probably boost White Bear Avenue.

Bill noted that there has been some delay with the master plan process decisions with the City, but for now the July CAC meeting is still on. If that changes, he will let everybody know.

ADJOURNED at 6:30pm