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CITY OF SAINT PAUL

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**Pedro Park 2019
Community Design Advisory Committee Meeting #5
Meeting Minutes***

February 26th, 2019 6:30-8:00 pm
Conference Room B - 180 5th St. E. , St Paul, MN 55101

*Meeting minutes are intended to capture overall participation and summarize comments from City Staff and Advisory Member participants.

Committee Members:

Sue Ohlrogge – Renodis
Pat Wolf – Commercial Real Estate
Marc Basara & Mike Munson – The Ackerberg Group
Jonathan Flory – The Pointe
Bill Collins – Rossmor Business Association
Jeanne Hall – CapitolRiver Council
Gary Larges – Lunds & Byerlys
John Kavanaugh – Minnesota Public Radio (MPR)

(Staff Intro)

Ellen Stewart, Landscape Architect and Project Manager for Pedro Park; Mary Norton, Landscape Architect City of Saint Paul, CJ Fernandez & Jason Aune, Aune Fernandez Landscape Architects; Mike Hahm, Director of Parks and Recreation; Planning & Economic Development: Andy Hestness.

Project Background:

(Ellen)

- Aerial view for orientation, Pedro Park parcel owned by the City of Saint Paul. Bordered by Robert & 10th Streets and the Alley to the south.
- Schedule overview of process over the past 13 years. In 2017 the City looked at a re-use of the PSA and tested the market to see if that would make sense. Ackerberg group was identified as a possibility in that process.
- Then in 2018 the City opened up another advisory group for the park design at that time to look at conceptual design. We are expecting now to have a park in this location in the very near future, funding has been secured.
- This is a continuation of this group, different ideas for programming and started with what we heard from the 2011 process and establish the programming going forward for this soace.
- Same types of programming looked at in a conceptual level. Now what we're doing today is really to dive into the technical aspects of the park and how those relationships come together to what is feasible. What we heard (community feedback slide).
- As we all know the size of the park is not huge, but we need to explore ways this can be flexible use and can serve multiple purposes to maximize the opportunity.

(Mary)

- Meeting 4 as a re-cap, fortunately we could get people updated on a call last week after the snow impact to attendance. Here are some of the key points we heard that we will dive deeper into later in the presentation.
- Visibility, sightlines, park circulation, accessibility design adaptability for events, opportunities for winter use – transformation to that
- Follow up – feedback
 - Hosted table over lunchtime hour in skyway to get people’s thoughts on the current design direction
 - Reached out to event production staff
 - Looked at neighborhood demographics – what would the population support in terms of programming
- Skyway outreach – downtown workforce. Enthusiastic feedback.
 - Shade, greenspace
 - Open feel, sightlines
 - Food trucks location
 - Hurry up!
- Event and production staff.
 - City of Saint Paul Event Coordinators
 - Steve Heckler from TC Jazz and Lowertown Blues Festivals
 - Small to mid size events
 - Great location in the heart of downtown
 - Passive winter events
 - Beer dabbler
 - Small weddings
 - Music – duos and trios
 - Structures would be great to use instead of having to bringing in all staging
 - Access for vehicles to load and unload
- Neighborhood Demographics – Captures ¼ mile radius of the park or its service area
 - Family households and age distribution
 - 15% are “family households”
 - 7% of the population is less than 18 years old
 - Consider average family size, median age, and needs for visitors and guests of residents downtown.

Park Design: (CJ)

- When AFLA came on board, we did a large download of what has been discussed to-date so we could carry forward the concept design that has been developed so far to date. One of the directives we were given was that if the park were able to expand to the south, how would we design it to adapt to expansion. It was imperative to have that soft edge on the south the accommodate that.

Expansion Diagram:

- How do we look at this N/S axis to organize space to embrace that opportunity. Since it is a hillside and there is great potential there. The alley would go away and we would

need to find alternate access to the PSA building. With that additional square footage, that opens up more programming if possible. We did some quick grade studies to understand how those changes would work. It would be a great opportunity if it happened, we are planning for it today.

Design Concept:

- There were a few things that have been evident from the beginning. There is certainly a strong connection to the streetscape. The park needs to look forward, it is a legacy and is a testament to the Pedro Family. Also this is a capitol city, what does a downtown park look and feel like in the Capitol?
- Some of the key things we were looking at from an engineering perspective – how do we maximize the square footage for programming? Activating the corners (internally and externally) was really important to the design.
- Bringing the shelter to the street edge was intentional to give a strong presence at that edge. We also wanted to have continuous circulation throughout the park, we want it to feel like a public space not a private one. The center open space was dropped down a bit.
- The community table idea addresses the idea to come together around food, it layers itself and has an equity competent to it as well designed in a way that thinks about how people can interact in these “table” spaces.
- The water features are important as well – these allow for different types of interaction and playful space. The play spaces are different as well, one for more gross motor the other for more passive quiet space to meet a variety of needs for play.
- The Edge with BRT – meandering seatwalls to function for people, bicycles, and circulation.

Animations:

- The idea of the community table anchors that streetscape. One of the comments we had last time was a little more open visibility for the play corner to rotate the enclosure and using translucent panels to keep that more open.
- The splash pad feature would be water on surface, allowing for that playful interaction.

Jeanne: If I live in the Rossmor, how do I get to the dog park since there are steps there? It's silly to have a dog park that you have to walk through the park first.

CJ: We have a diagram that we'll dive into further on accessible routes. It may help to better illustrate how that functions in the Design. We've looked a lot further on lighting and how that can transform the space. Conceptually we're looking at more of a soft approach to surfaces, but making sure there are not dark spots. Once we illuminate that water and coverage we think it will be very bright.

Jeanne: So the path is fully accessible around the park?

CJ: Yes – the model itself is formed with elevations – but the actual street is a 5-6% grade. This is a good segway to the accessibility of the park. The park becomes fully accessible and to all corners. We're at accessible grades at the corner and can get that in and through the park.

Jeanne: So you cannot access the park from the alley?

CJ: No, not from the alley. There is a dramatic grade change and will need to have a wall at that edge to introduce accessible spaces throughout the park.

Jon: It was explained to us at a previous meeting that they don't want to encourage accessing the park from the alley anyway because you would have to cross private property.

Andy: Yes, you would be crossing private property to get to the alley so it wouldn't be a route that is needed to be accommodated.

CJ: The diagram for visibility shows how we have clear sight lines from Robert and 10th. The idea of safety and visibility are key design parameters here. We've had follow up with park security. There would be a south and north corner strategy to ensure full coverage to the park. There is a multi-layered approach to safety and visibility.

Event Spaces: The feedback we heard from performance and events would be flexible for small-medium sized events. Sized approaches for vehicular access and maintenance component. The shelter up top could be secured for specific park events if needed.

Mary: One of the items we heard was how does this space transform in the winter? In talking with our event contacts, it was clear that this park could be utilized by small-medium events. What actually occurs would be up to an entrepreneur to propose and City to permit. We see most of the activation through holiday lights, potential sculptures, but primarily through passive snow-play in the center space. The idea is to have it feel like a back-yard space to interact with.

Schedule & Funding: (Ellen)

- Schedule detail: We are nearing the end of the community engagement phase that creates the vision for the park. We will then refine the design, dive deeper into cost feasibility and technical design. Summer will advertise project for project. Goal is to be substantially complete by the end of 2019, potential planting or other items could carry over to Spring 2020.
- Funding: The budget for Pedro Park is \$3,746,811. That is made up of CIB, Parkland Dedication, and Proceeds from the sale of the PSA building. The budget costs includes cost for design and construction but also for administrative cost, testing, permitting, community engagement.

Jean: How much have you spent to date?

Ellen: We do not have that exact number for you, but I will get that information as soon as we can. We anticipate design, permitting, administration typically costs 20% of a project budget.

Jean: You can't give me an idea of where you are at right now, even a percent?

Ellen: We will get that information as soon as possible, to everyone on the team. This is the budget for the development of this parcel, this park space. This is not something that includes future park space and the expansion. We understand the desire and need to expand without bisecting the park but want to make that clear this budget is to develop the park

Jean: So who owns the alley now?

Ellen: The City owns the alley.

Jean: Isn't there already an alley at the childcare facility? Couldn't that provide access?

Ellen: Yes, a parking lot exists on the other side of Union Gospel, but we would need to provide access to the PSA building specifically.

Jon: In reading space for events, where would the port-a-potties go? Have you allocated those spaces?

CJ: Yes, we think it would be on the west side of the shelter edge. Likely could accommodate 3-4 units during an event.

Jon: You mentioned bike parking – is there room for nice ride, both private and those functions along this edge?

Andy: One thing to note, NiceRide is phasing out those platforms. Something to consider as technology changes.

CJ: That was the idea with the bike parking, it could adapt to those uses and provide space along Robert St.

Pat: I can add some comments. From people I've talked with and tenants, they're excited. They think it will be a great addition to the area.

Sue: I get a lot of "when will it be ready!?"

Jean: What are the materials?

CJ: We have concrete surfacing, texture and patterning. There would be play surfacing in the lower left corner. From a paving perspective – we have the directive of concrete but there is potential for select areas of pavers. Inside the walls, tops would be an Ipe hardwood and cladding. The lower shelter we're looking at a mass timber wall. It all comes as a preassembled unit, similar to a GlueLam beam if that is familiar.

Jean: What is the accessible route to the arcade? Is there a Ramp in the park to it?

Marc: Having a ramp would be our preference as well.

Ellen: You can fully access the arcade from 10th street through the building during business hours. We cannot take up too much park space specific to the private use. It's a function of the grades there. Early on when we were trying to make that work, we didn't have technical

information on the floor plate. Now that we have more information, it makes it more difficult for that movement in the park space and duplicates a route that exists from 10th.

Jean: Just for fun, if the court case were favorable towards the residents, would we still have the other funds for a park?

Ellen: We can't talk about the court case, all of those questions would need to go to the City Attorney's Office.

Jean: Wouldn't you still have \$2M if the sale didn't come through?

Ellen: The funds are together, it would mean we would have to go back through the HRA and Council process. Am I getting that right Mike?

Mike: Yes, if this project does not go forward, we would have to re-propose on funding and go back.

Jon: If I look at the pictures today of the building, it looks like a flat face – is there a patio now? Are you breaking that wall?

Marc: Yes, under this design arrangement we're pulling that retail back to an open arcade. There will be an entrance from 10th that is accessible during business hours.

Jean: So I hope you figure out the access to the dog space.

Ellen: We looked at different options for the dog location, this was the best location we came up with to date to balance other park uses and still maintain access.

Jean: What is the Ackerberg maintenance agreement?

Ellen: Yes, thank you for the reminder. They are providing \$40,000 per year for 20 years with 3% annual increase towards the City's Park Maintenance budget. It would go to help maintain surfaces, features, landscaping, playful areas, snow removal etc.

John K. One of the things we've talked about is the possibility for hosting events from MPR. We're excited about the design.

Gary: We're certainly excited about a space ability to have people eat lunch here. National Night Out had an event recently in the area that brought more than 400 people. It could be a great complimentary space to something like that.

Ellen: So it's hard to believe but already Next week – March 6th is the open house. We'll send you the flyer tomorrow and if you could help us spread the word to get attendees, that would be great! We are very thankful for those that have been a part of this process and conversation. We're really excited about the opportunity ahead to create this downtown park and community asset. Thank you again, hope to see you next week!