



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 #9 Summary

July 21, 2020, 5:30-7:00pm
via Skype

CAC members in attendance: Anne DeJoy, Linda Martinez-Higgins, Rachel Finazzo Doll, Tiffany Scott Knox, Tong Thao, Que Vang, James Westin.

Others: Bill Dermody, Luis Pereira, Mike Richardson, Tim Scanlon-Johnson (City of Saint Paul staff); Andrew Dresdner, Mo Convery, Coal Dorius (City's consultants); Monte Hilleman George Hoene (Port Authority staff) James Soltis, Tom Goodrum (Port Authority's consultants)

Welcome & Introductions

Co-Chair Linda Martinez-Higgins called the meeting to order.

Community engagement plans

Andrew Dresdner and Coal Dorius reviewed the community engagement plans, which will include a Social Pinpoint site where people can give comments online via a survey and maps, a recorded video and informational materials online, and a live online event via Zoom or a similar platform. Andrew reviewed the "Initial Development Framework" document that will be placed online. Coal illustrated how to use the Social Pinpoint site to leave comments. There will also be pop-up meetings in the community.

More background on site approaches and master plan: Questions you might be asking

Bill Dermody presented likely questions about the master plan, with answers. The CAC members and Port Authority staff also jumped in with their own questions. The questions asked and answers provided are below:

1. **How quickly will development happen after the master plan is approved?**

A few things need to happen after the master plan is approved, including environmental review and platting. It's possible that dirt could be moved in the later part of 2021, or in 2022. Above-ground construction could start in 2022. The development will be phased and is anticipated to be built out in 8 to 10 years.

2. **Where is the senior housing?**

The higher-density housing on the site approach maps will include some combination of senior housing and multi-family residential.

3. **How much will be "affordable" housing? What will it be like?**

Affordable housing could exist in either the lower-density or higher-density residential areas. It is likely that there will be some amount of affordable housing, even if not mandated by the City. City staff is considering an affordable housing policy to be put out for feedback in the coming months. [Bill showed several photos – see presentation.]

a. Extra question from CAC: **What does an affordable 1-bedroom unit rent for?**

\$900-1000, according to the housing experts

b. Extra question from CAC: **What kind of input will the CAC have on affordable units?**

It's anticipated that there will be a staff recommendation of an affordability policy for the written master plan, which the CAC will be able to provide comments on.

4. **How tall will these buildings be?**

Lower-density would typically be 2 stories, or could be 2.5 or 3 stories on certain sites with more flexibility. It equates to the City's T1 zoning district. Higher-density would typically be 3 or 4 stories, equivalent to T2 zoning. There might be a small amount of extra high-density within that that gets recommended by staff, probably internal to the site, that would be typically in the range of 4 to 6 stories and equate to T3 zoning.

5. **What does "lower-density residential" include?**

Single-family, row house/townhomes, small garden apartments. Most lot dimensions in the approaches are conducive moreso to single-family or row house only.

6. **Will there be any office buildings? How large will any office buildings be?**

There is only a small amount of demand for office according to the market study. Any office would most likely be located within the employment areas (although allowed elsewhere), especially on the more awkwardly shaped parcels that don't work as well for light industrial areas. They would most likely be 2 to 4 stories, based on recent history and based on zoning.

7. **What does zoning control? Will new zoning districts be created?**

Zoning is the City's rules for what land uses are allowed, how big the buildings can be, what kind of form they can take, what kind of design they can have, minimum setbacks, and parking requirements. No new districts will be created. The menu of options for zoning districts on this site are ITM (Transitional Industrial), T1M, T2M, and maybe T3M (all Traditional Neighborhood). The "M" means master plan, which allows some modification of the zoning rules. For instance, we could prohibit retail in certain areas, although T1 usually allows it.

a. Extra question from CAC: **What was the rationale for not creating new zoning districts, and is there a possibility to revisit that decision?**

Creating new zoning districts for Ford was an immense effort that created a lot of confusion for both developer and neighbors. It's complicated to do it right. We also recognized that the "M" allows for customization. Staff thought we could get to a similar place with a master plan instead of creating new zoning districts. Also, Ford had some "in the weeds" regulations that were not in existing districts, such as regarding parking reductions and lot coverage.

8. **How will we know the new buildings will be designed well?**

The City has design standards. The T districts in particular have up to 23 special design standards that go beyond our basic design standards. The IT district has the most design standards of any industrial zoning district. The design standards could be customized more by the master plan if there's a desire to do so. The Port Authority's Monte Hilleman notes that he was involved in the creation of the IT design standards, which among other things restrict outdoor storage. The Port also has restrictive covenants about design.

9. **How much could the master plan change after it is adopted? How does that happen?**

Staff intends to have a flexibility section within the master plan. It will say how much can change without a formal master plan amendment. For instance, it could say that the roads could move a certain amount, or a certain acreage of land uses could change from one to another. It is important to have some amount of flexibility to react to a future developer's needs, but within reason so that it meets everybody's expectations. If more flexibility were required than offered in the flexibility section, then the developer would have to go through a formal master plan amendment process, with full public hearings.

a. Extra question from CAC: **Who does the master plan amendment go back to?**

Once the master plan is complete, the CAC's work is done. So future master plan amendments would just go through Planning Commission and City Council, with full public hearings.

b. Extra question from CAC: **Do we know whether the ponds will or can be moved?**

This will be addressed later in the presentation.

10. **Can the roads, sewers, storm sewers, water, schools, police, and fire handle this new development?**

The City's consultant team will do a capacity analysis of sewers, storm sewers, roads, and water to ensure they can handle the proposed development. The school district at this point feels they can handle the scale of development we are talking about in their existing schools, but staff will continue to check in with them. It helps that the school district has extra capacity overall in its buildings and has open enrollment. Police and Fire are aware and will plan to react to the development once planned.

a. Extra question from CAC: **Will it be up to developers to pay for infrastructure, or will the City pay for it? Is that the same situation as the Ford Site?**

The site's basic infrastructure, plus any off-site infrastructure improvements needed to support it, would be paid for by the development, not by the City, based on the expectations set out by the City Council in their ordinance that allowed the Port Authority to sell bonds to purchase the property. One potential exception to that is advanced sustainability infrastructure, such as geothermal. The Ford Site was different: it had some infrastructure paid for by tax increment financing (TIF).

11. **Will any construction happen off-site?**

It could, if needed for infrastructure like widening a sewer pipe, or possibly if there are sidewalks being added on adjacent streets.

12. **Will there be any advanced environmental measures?**

Yes, but the details of a proposed policy are still being worked out between City staff and the Port Authority. The City desires the most advanced sustainability measures that are practical, with the main focus on carbon reduction.

a. Extra question from CAC: **Where would any solar go?**

The exact locations are being figured out right now via modeling. Rooftop solar is likely on some amount of the site's rooftops.

13. Where will all the stormwater go? Will it cause flooding?

The golf course had no requirement to prevent flooding. The new development will have to abide by regulations for volume and rate control. Therefore, there will be less flooding than today, to the extent there is any current flooding.

a. Extra question from CAC: **Will stormwater control count towards open space?**

Yes. The expectation is 20 acres of parks and open space, and that will include stormwater. All four approaches are above this right now. *[Editor's note: Stormwater control on public land or in land held by a property owner's association would count towards open space. Any stormwater control located on private property would not.]*

b. Extra question from Monte Hilleman: 20 acres is the maximum we can contribute for parks and open space, including wetlands and a hilltop. The hilltop takes up a lot of that. **Does the CAC have an opinion on keeping the hilltop at this scale?**

CAC members commented that using the rolling topography, rather than flattening the site, is a priority. Bill Dermody clarified that the City sees 20 acres as a number that we are driving towards, not a strict limit – there is a difference of opinion with the Port. Also, Bill explained that the Subdivision Code has requirements that don't rely on public opinion, and the staff's interpretation is that the code requires maintaining the hilltop as a high point with some amount of rolling terrain.

c. Extra question from CAC: **Is there extra real estate value for the high point? Is there a way to take advantage of the high point? Is it more valuable to a developer than as preserved green space?**

Monte responded that a residential development might appreciate the elevation – it probably does create a price premium. It is hard to put a number on it. Andrew noted that if it is a private space, the premium is enjoyed by one property, while public space creates more shared value for surrounding land – there's a balance to consider.

d. Extra question from Monte Hilleman: **How big is the hilltop in each approach?**

Mo Convery said the active park plus the hill is typically about 8 acres in the approaches.

14. Can wetlands be moved? Will they all be ponds?

Yes, but the law requires you avoid doing so, and impact the wetlands as little as possible. There is a separate process for approving changes to wetlands. Not all wetlands are ponds – many are not always wet.

15. Doesn't a project this big need an environmental review?

Yes, it will need an Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR). There is a public process for it. It is more technical than the master plan process – e.g. can the roads really handle the traffic, are you treating natural features properly, etc. The AUAR public process will come after the master plan.

16. Extra question from CAC: Can the current acreages shown accommodate the goal of 1,000 jobs?

Monte responded that all the approaches are way short of the market demand for light industrial. Andrew explained that that the jobs range from about 700 to just over 1,000 jobs in the four approaches, based on some assumptions.

A CAC member stated that jobs are a higher priority than keeping the hilltop.