



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
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HILLCREST REDEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)

Co-chairs Anne DeJoy and Linda Martinez-Higgins

Meeting Summary

November 19th, 2019, 5:30-7:00pm
@ Hayden Heights Library

CAC members in attendance: Anne DeJoy, Rachel Finazzo Doll, Osman Egal, Linda Martinez-Higgins, Kathryn Murray, Ethan Osten, Tiffany Scott Knox (~5:45), Tong Thao, Que Vang, James Westin.

Others: Bill Dermody, Luis Pereira, Tim Scanlon-Johnson (City of Saint Paul staff); Andrew Dresdner (City's consultant); Ava Langston-Kenney, David Johnson, Kathryn Sarnecki, George Hoene (Port Authority staff); Tom Goodrum, James Soltis (Port's consultants); five residents.

The meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

Welcome & Introductions

Along with a welcome and introductions around the room, Co-Chair Anne DeJoy took notice of the community members in the audience and stated that community members are welcome to attend all future meetings as well. She also acknowledged the CAC's receipt of the letter from two neighbors of the site and stated that the CAC will look forward to receiving more community input. She stated that they are not taking input during the meetings, but people can attend and listen, and get involved in the formal public engagement opportunities later in the process.

Port Authority: Project and Site Update

Kathryn Sarnecki from the St Paul Port Authority gave an update on the current status of the project and of the Hillcrest Site.

She explained that the Port is seeking an EPA grant to address the site's environmental contamination. The EPA clean up grant application is due on Dec 3rd and the Port is seeking comments on their draft brownfields application through Nov 26th.

- Question from Tong Thao
 - o What contaminated materials are present on the site?

- Answer from Kathryn Sarnecki
 - o There are three types of contaminants present on the Hillcrest Site: mercury is the main contaminant, and there is low-level petroleum contamination and debris from buildings.
- Question from Kathryn Murray
 - o How is groundwater affected by the contaminated material?
- Answer from Kathryn Sarnecki
 - o The Phase 2 environmental report by consultants will be looking into perched groundwater which sits just below the site surface; deep groundwater probably not affected.
 - o Environmental consultants looking at MPCA regulations for reuse of material on site; action plan due to them w/ details of plan.
- Question from audience member
 - o How did the site get contaminated with mercury?
- Answer from Kathryn Sarnecki
 - o Some atmospheric contamination occurred throughout the site but the primary hot spots were contaminated by fungicides that contained mercury.
- Question from audience member
 - o Do we need to be worried?
- Answer from Kathryn Sarnecki
 - o The Port asks that no one disturbs the soil on the site.

Kathryn Sarnecki then moved on to speak about the site and building security. There have been some security issues recently, so a fence completely enclosing the site has been put up. The clubhouse and maintenance buildings have been broken into, and for the reason of safety and security the Port wants to demolish them in spring 2020. Neighbors were encouraged to call the Police or the Port if they see any problems happening on the site.

Kathryn Sarnecki then continued to speak about redevelopment in general. The Port's goal, she explained, is to "activate" the site. The Port is hoping for 1,000 living wage jobs, 1,000 units of housing, etc. The land sales from the development of the site will fund the public infrastructure investments.

- Comment from Bill Dermody, City of St Paul
 - o I just want to clarify that we do not know the number of jobs or housing units that the Hillcrest Site will have – that will be determined by the master plan.
- Comment from Kathryn Sarnecki
 - o And if there is no job center in the plan, we will probably sell the whole site to a different developer.
- Comment from Linda Martinez-Higgins
 - o People are concerned that the Port will use eminent domain to condemn property.
- Response from Kathryn Sarnecki
 - o The Port Authority does not have eminent domain powers any more.
- Question from Linda Martinez-Higgins
 - o How can we guarantee the number of jobs and the wages that any jobs here will pay?
- Response from Kathryn Sarnecki
 - o Covenants can be put in place to ensure wages and number of jobs for a certain number of years. The Port does this often elsewhere.
- Comment and Question from Tiffany Scott Knox
 - o Maplewood friends and community members who live near the site are putting their houses on the market because of the industrial traffic and low-income housing that they are afraid that Hillcrest redevelopment will bring.
 - o Do we know the number of jobs and housing units this development will bring?

- Answer from Kathryn Sarnecki
 - o No, the Port's numbers that I referenced are based on the initial market study that was done by consultants for the Port. The master plan will determine the actual numbers and uses.
- Comment from Tiffany Scott Knox
 - o There is a lot of anxiety on the Maplewood side.
- Comment from Anne DeJoy
 - o Networking and talking to people in the community is great. We should try to get people to community engagement events and to express their concerns in a public venue.
- Question from Kathryn Murray
 - o Will you be doing a traffic study?
- Answer from Bill Dermody
 - o Yes, we will have detailed transportation analysis, including a traffic study, from our consultants as master plan concepts are created and refined in about the May to September 2020 timeframe.
- Question from Kathryn Murray
 - o Is the Port required to set aside parkland?
- Answer from Kathryn Sarnecki
 - o Yes, any development in Saint Paul must, regardless of the developer.
- Question from Kathryn Murray
 - o Are sustainability and water management practices included in this?
- Answer from Kathryn Sarnecki
 - o Yes, Beacon Bluff is a great example of sustainable development led by the Port and for Hillcrest the Port wants to take this to another level. LEED for Cities is something that the Port will be aiming for this entire site. Sustainability is a core part of the Port's mission statement as well.
- Comment from Linda Martinez-Higgins
 - o The Ramsey County public meeting that I attended recently about McKnight Road's conversion to a 3-lane road made it seem like it was a "done deal". I'm hoping that this is not the way that the Hillcrest process goes ... we should educate, inform, and involve the community.
- Comment from Anne DeJoy
 - o Yes, we all signed up for this because we want input and we are concerned and interested in how this all turns out.

Trends to Consider: Looking Toward the Future

Andrew Dresdner of Cuningham Group presented on three big picture topics: demographics, economy, and climate change/resilience. On demographics, he highlighted that population in our region will grow by 30% by 2040. Immigration is the major source of that growth. We will be older, more diverse, and live alone more often. Downsizing will account for a large portion of housing demand. On the economy, there will be more automation and computers will continue doing more for us. And climate change will impact us. Flexibility and adaptability should be the focus of a forward-looking development. The committee discussed what this might mean for housing on the site.

The City's 2040 Comprehensive Plan

Bill Dermody gave a presentation introducing the City's 2040 Comprehensive Plan. He explained the process for creating the plan, including demographically and geographically representative input from over 2,300 people across the city in 2016. He explained how the Technical Advisory Committee is now working to identify the policies and goals in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan that are most relevant to the Hillcrest Site. He highlighted a couple policies relevant to the Hillcrest Site and the master planning process: that the site is

designated for mixed use with a neighborhood node (north half) and urban neighborhood (south half), and that the City has a modal priority for designing rights of way: 1. Pedestrians, 2. Bicyclists, 3. Transit, and 4. Other vehicles. On question about school impacts, he noted that they are in contact with the school district about the project. On questions about public transit in the area, he noted that Metro Transit is part of their technical team and they will look at opportunities to improve service to the area in coordination with the development.

The City's Street Design Manual

Bill Dermody gave a brief overview of the City's Street Design Manual, adopted in 2016, that will inform the design of public streets running through the Hillcrest Site. He noted that the document gives guidance, not a prescriptive set of rules. The committee had a few basic questions about what the manual does or does not address, in addition to the discussion items below.

- Question from Ethan Osten
 - o Is there a policy about creating a grid?
- Answer from Bill Dermody
 - o Yes, the 2040 Comp Plan sets a maximum block size of 600 feet in order to encourage pedestrian-oriented streetscapes, as compared to the feel of super blocks. They are working with the Port to figure out how this would apply to light industrial areas.
- Comment from Tiffany Scott Knox
 - o Mounds Park Academy traffic gets really crazy at peak times. Be sure to account for that.
- Comment from Kathryn Murray
 - o About narrow streets, the Port's initial drawing shows very wide streets, but I would want to see narrower streets
- Comment from Anne DeJoy
 - o The development on Phalen has some known very bad traffic issues and is dangerous for pedestrians especially. We don't want to see that repeated.

Google Streetview Site Tour

Bill Dermody informed the CAC of the availability of [Google Street view](#) for the entirety of the former Hillcrest Golf Course and encouraged everyone to check it out. He showed the CAC how to access it.

Upcoming Schedule

Andrew Dresdner presented a draft schedule for the coming year that maps out the dates for public engagement events and project milestones. The CAC's role in the community engagement events was outlined as well. CAC members may be asked to attend the open houses. The CAC asked about the January/February community forum and how it will work. It was expressed that we should have early public meetings with few decisions made so that people can have genuine input. Bill Dermody noted that in December the City expects to get the stormwater study from the watershed district and an updated market study from the Port to inform the work.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.