

HILLCREST REDEVELOPMENT URBAN DESIGN WORKGROUP

Meeting Minutes | Thursday, March 3, 2022

Attendees

- Frankie Torbor
- Donna Peterson
- Jennifer Brannen
- Rachel Finazzo Doll
- Monte Hilleman
- Andrea Novak
- Jess Vetrano
- Tiffani Navatril

Meeting Summary

1. Brief introductory presentation on basic guidelines for a design charette
 - a. All ideas are good ideas! Or at least the beginning of a good idea, so we will refine them and expand upon them as we go.
 - b. "Bad" drawings are good. The goal is not to create beautiful drawings; the goal is to communicate our ideas to each other. Drawings don't have to be lovely to be informative and to convey an awesome idea.
 - c. Two heads are better than one. So, we will discuss each other ideas and refine as a group until we come up with goals that the group can support.
2. Design charette
 - a. Split into two groups – one group of people who already have decided on an area of interest, and one group of people that did not yet know where they want to concentrate their efforts for the upcoming homework assignment.
 - b. Group 1
 - i. We began by discussing how ideas could be represented graphically, and what the difference is between plans, sections, and perspectives – scale was also discussed as a good way to communicate.
 - ii. Both Andrew and Donna were immediately interested in exploring the proposed neighborhood node area of the Hillcrest site, both in the building layout and the streetscape on Larpenteur.
 - iii. Andrew focused on configuring the buildings on this block so that the corner was maintained, and the central circulation could service both traffic and pedestrian movement while functioning as an event space when traffic is closed off.
 - iv. Donna was particularly interested in trails and how they related to both their surrounding buildings and the adjacent road.
 1. She identified that she likes to walk where other people are gathering, so buildings that activate the building frontage on the road were preferred and should be focused along both Larpenteur and McKnight.
 2. We looked at what the current plan feels like in section, especially when there are trees and people added into to offer a sense of scale – Donna felt that the current trail alignment, with a 10' buffer from traffic and a 10' building setback, would be great.
 3. Zooming out, we thought about trail loops – after drawing several routes Donna might take through the future neighborhood, we established that a comfortable loop is between .75-1 mile long, and that it connects people with water futures, areas of activity, and areas of historic significance or public art.

4. Pause areas were also explored – where people might want to stop and rest or gather while on their trail loop.
 5. Donna wanted to further explore how lighting could be incorporated into these loops to add artistic interest and pedestrian safety.
- c. Group 2
- i. We began by discussing each person's preliminary thoughts on items that they found intriguing or important from the presentations during Meetings 1-3.
 - ii. Jennifer initially mentioned parking conditions for low-density residential areas as an important place to start for how the block will look and function.
 1. The group spent time generating word clouds for desirable qualities in front and back yards, and how they should operate differently.
 2. The group felt that alley access with parking in the rear would probably be the most desirable condition.
 3. Several different strategies for parking were listed, to be diagrammed for Meeting 5.
 - a. No private parking, with on-street only
 - b. Driveways facing the front of the lot
 - c. Driveways facing the back of the lot with alley access
 - d. Structured parking
 - e. Tuck-under parking, where it is feasible with grades
 - f. Side driveways with parking in the back
 - iii. Rachel thought setback variation was an important variable to explore, as there seems to be a lot of variation in setbacks in the surrounding residential neighborhoods.
 1. The group discussed how the setback of a residential building strongly impacts what you can do in the front yard
 2. Variations in setbacks for a variety of housing sizes (2-story, 4-story, and 6-story) will be diagrammed for Meeting 5
 - iv. Jennifer redirected her interest toward planting strategies on private properties
 1. Different options ranging from no-regulation beyond the zoning code to various requirements that could be written into the covenants will be explored for Meeting 5.
 - v. Frankie was interested in the streets and their interaction with stormwater treatment facilities.
 1. The group discussed traffic calming options and how they work: bump-outs, tabled intersections, changes in surfacing material, crosswalk art
 2. We discussed how brick pavers are typically installed in modern constructions in Minnesota (with a concrete subbase, to prevent heaving)
 3. We looked at precedent examples of art/design features within stormwater areas, intersections, and sidewalks
 4. Different options for art, stormwater features, and site furnishings will be explored for Meeting 5
- d. Both groups spent time sketching their preliminary ideas and then presenting them to the group in a mini pin-up
- e. Everyone left with the print-out of their homework assignment (with a 1" = 100' base map for reference)
- i. Emails with questions are welcome, as well as any requests for different base maps, if you would like a blown-up version of a specific area.

