

HILLCREST REDEVELOPMENT URBAN DESIGN WORKGROUP

Meeting Minutes | Thursday, March 17, 2022

Attendees

- Frankie Torbor
- Julie Guzman
- Andrew Wise
- Rachel Finazzo Doll
- Monte Hilleman
- Andrea Novak
- Matthew Finn
- Tiffani Navatril
- Jess Vetrano

MEETING SUMMARY

1. The goal of today's meeting was for each work group member to have time go over their homework in front of the entire group and receive feedback
2. Julie focused on pedestrian access to the site from the north (where she lives) and prioritized locating crosswalks across Larpenteur at safe locations
 - a. She also looked at locations for street lighting and furniture – aesthetics of these features is important for overall neighborhood “vibe”
 - b. The feeling/scale of buildings also largely impacts how a pedestrian feels in the space – step backs can be implemented but might negatively impact the economic viability of the building – focusing on pedestrian amenities like trees, lights, benches, awnings, etc. would be one way to combat this, or step backs could be focused on streets with higher anticipated levels of pedestrian traffic
 - i. Step backs should be prioritized facing Howard, with Larpenteur and McKnight being secondary
 - c. Design elements should not be sacrificed purely due to economics though if they are important to this team
 - d. How do the front yards of buildings play into what is happening in the pedestrian realm – what is private and what is public?
3. Rachel focused on the purposes of front yards vs back yards, and how alleys and garages serve houses
 - a. Preference would be that garages are serviced through alleys as opposed to private driveways, and that garage doors are not visible from the front yard
 - b. Alleys are not currently part of the infrastructure package – could be constructed by the developer
 - c. Boulevards are a very important aspect of City living – with big, beautiful trees being prioritized at the front of the space
 - i. What tree densities are possible in the front yards vs streets?
 - ii. Species diversity – we don't want another emerald ash borer situation
 - d. The front yard is the priority as a neighborhood amenity, but what is the backyard's purpose because that matters as well
 - i. Driven by lot sizes – as they are currently drawn would drive very square building types due to setbacks and these being somewhat shallower than a typical lot size
 - e. Language about activating the front yard should be included in the covenants – less setback/restrictions should be placed on multifamily houses that have common spaces of their own
 - f. Variety is very important – the zoning code sometimes works against variety, and we want to introduce as much as we can without contradicting
4. Frankie was very focused on stormwater, and how bump outs could be a good location to incorporate stormwater management strategies
 - a. The intersection of Howard and Idaho is an important area to activate/address correctly
 - i. Festival street on Howard between Larpenteur and Idaho
 - b. Seating is a great cue for drivers to slow down and be attentive
 - c. Howard would be a good location for a linear stormwater element
 - d. Stormwater basin structure with either walls or boulders that acts as a shared stormwater condition in front of the townhomes

- e. Rooftop or other green space amenities around commercial buildings – employee spaces that face the street/activate the street
- f. First floor glass for businesses that creates interaction/cohesion between the indoor and outdoor spaces
- g. Celebrating thresholds/edge conditions across the site
 - i. How is entrance identified
 - ii. How are entries connected with public ROW
 - iii. All code requires as of now is a connection between the street and the front door
- h. Crosswalks are a good way to reinforce directionality – connects with walking loop ideas presented last week
 - i. Enhance the glazing level at entry points and at public facing/pedestrian heavy locations
 - j. Enhance the emphasis of entries
 - k. Celebrate stormwater adjacent to the street
- 5. Andrew focused his efforts on the node – where things come together and how to interface traffic/people/buildings
 - a. How can alleys be redesigned to serve purposes other than vehicle access – they can be much more easily closed due to the reduced traffic loads
 - b. How does repurposing the alley affect parking counts/access
 - c. The success of alleys is dependent on buildings having “dialogue”, or them being directly across a space from each other – the area directly south of Larpenteur is the best example of this – if Howard did not wiggle, the dialogue would be stronger in this location as well.
 - d. Varying levels of intimacy in public spaces is important – prospect vs refuge
 - e. Prioritizing block on Larpenteur/McKnight for a privately owned public space – as well as potentially the space across Howard as well
 - f. String lights!