

HILLCREST REDEVELOPMENT URBAN DESIGN WORKGROUP

Meeting Minutes | Thursday, May 12, 2022

Attendees

- Julie Guzman
- Andrew Wise
- Jennifer Brannen
- Rachel Finazzo-Doll
- Andrea Novak
- Tiffani Navratil
- Jess Vetrano

MEETING SUMMARY

1. Went over the goal of the consensus letter – workgroup members will be signing this formal communication addressed to the Port Authority or other related parties (like the County).
2. Tiffani took notes directly within the draft Consensus letter – accepting or rejecting tracked changes, or adding new amended language were discussed by the workgroup
3. Clarification that the consensus letter is not binding – but will inform the covenants which will be binding
4. General direction for the Heights
 - a. Ensure the “architectural history” is reflected in our design ethos – Modern Ethos are not just about aesthetics, but are about the functionality and psychology behind the design
 - b. Maintenance – language regarding “Common Area Maintenance Fee” perhaps too strong
 - i. Concern regarding the implementation of an HOA as a result of this language – might not be the most appropriate outcome for all development types, particularly single family
5. Private Property Recommendations
 - a. Planting Requirements
 - i. Important to note that Big Lake’s policy was included for reference only, and that the language would have to be adjusted to apply to our more urban condition – deleted and absorbed in other language

DESCRIPTION ASSIGNEE

1. Review revised consensus letter to be sent by LHB Workgroup members
 - ii. The tree spacing/quantity requirements are already quite strict in the Master Plan and Zoning Code, and making boulevard tree quantities stricter would go against forestry recommendations for appropriate tree spacing
 - iii. Workgroup is supportive of turf grass being used minimally and intentionally based on need for active uses
 - iv. 40% required coniferous is too aggressive and should be dropped to 30%
- b. Stormwater
 - i. Clarification requested regarding subsurface vs surface best management practices – this regard how stormwater is managed and regulated below ground (such as a pipe) vs how it is managed on the surface, and what guides these interventions
 - ii. “Impervious surfaces should be limited wherever possible” was suggested as an alternative to the language in the draft document but it was noted this might be too vague – instead it was decided to loosen stormwater BMPs to additional beyond baseline requirements
- c. Retaining walls
 - i. Noting “preferred by this group” is redundant and should be removed

- ii. Group would prefer that walls aim to be resistant to vandalism
 - iii. Unacceptable walls would just include those that are of the lowest, “uninspiring” quality – aim to do better
 - d. Residential
 - i. High Density
- 1. Minimum unit density can be deleted because it can be established by the housing workgroup
 - a. Housing workgroup will use this document as a starting point for this discussion, in addition to the rest of the background info that orients them to the site and the conversation
- 2. Dwelling unit variety inspired a debate between desiring housing the supports arts and live/work but that should be more inclusive to all lower incomes in lieu of just artists and avoid making it more difficult for low-income developers to participate
 - a. Inclusion of artists would support the Arts & Employment district concept
 - b. Language was adjusted to loosen necessities but frame support for inclusion of unit diversity without being exclusionary across all diversity types – Live/Work, Multigenerational,
 - c. Should be reiterated within low density housing as well
- 3. Mixed-rate housing should provide identical finishes to avoid there being an obvious distinction between market rate and affordable units – supported by workgroup as is
 - a. Mixed rate housing is a difficult item to achieve within standard proformas, but this would be a standard ask if a developer would pursue it
- 4. Building Orientation
 - a. Façade treatment should be more specific than just “high quality” – but how that is exactly defined by be beyond the ability of this group
 - i. This comment was more about avoiding a “backyard” treatment when there is a building that has more than one façade facing public right of way
- 5. Front Yard Characteristics
 - a. Amenity space quantity numbers are too specific and should be removed
- 6. Building Structure and Appearance
 - a. Step backs have been flagged as problematic due to increased costs and decreased attractiveness to developers
 - i. Supported as a preference despite costs – clarified that it is not a requirement
- 7. Parking
 - a. Structured parking bonus should be pursued for non-affordable residential
 - i. Developers should de-couple the rent of a unit from the participation in structured parking
 - ii. Low Density
 - 1. Minimum dwelling unit density – maintain lot width quantities and minimum lot areas for affordable projects allowed by structured parking bonus (as affordable developments typically have a lower parking demand but should still be afforded the same density bonus)
 - 2. Missing middle housing types – medium-scale multiplexes are smaller scale (around 12 units)

3. Rental and ownership comments/section should be omitted
4. Front yard setback
 - a. Larger setback is necessary to achieve tree planting goals
5. Front yard characteristics – again delete the exact quantities of amenity space
6. Parking
 - a. Structured parking bonuses should be maintained for low density as well – as well as the decoupling of rental rates from the inclusion of structured parking
 - b. Surface parking screening at 90% was to strengthen the opaqueness, but workgroup members were comfortable with quantities outlined in the zoning code
 - e. Light Industrial
 - i. Yard Setbacks – 15' landscape buffers should be reserved along all parcel edges
 - ii. Building structures and appearances
 1. Color enforcement, particularly non-traditional, “funky” colors should be encouraged – workgroup will review renderings on their own screens
 2. Murals should have a suggested coverage percentages – 30% for public facing facades, 15% for trail-facing or south-facing with solar paneling
 3. Murals should wrap corners of building a minimum of 1 pre-cast concrete panel
 4. Artist selection for murals should prioritize local artists with an emphasis on diverse representation
 5. Solar heating panels that transfer heating to interior from south facing facades
 - iii. Parking
 1. 20' vegetative buffer should be included in lots between bays of parking that run parallel to each other
 2. Every 10 parking spots should trigger the need for a vegetative island, sized to one space (9'x18') and including a canopy tree
 3. Sidewalks connecting the parking lot to the building are necessary for walkability, hard to quantify due to the unknowns regarding retaining walls/topography that still need to be worked out
 - iv. Storage screening will be reviewed and presented to the work group next week
6. Public Realm Recommendations
 - a. To be combined within the same letter as private property recommendations, and redundant initial language to removed and absorbed at beginning of same letter
 - i. Planting diversity
7. Be more specific about desired habitat specific to pollinators and encourage native/adaptive plant species
 - a. Community amenities
 - i. Crosswalk art has been potentially correlated with an increase in traffic accidents – calling it out specifically might be inappropriate, or loosening the language to “colorful and visually prominent without being distracting to drivers”
 - ii. String lights should be solar powered and/or energy efficient fixtures and how they are mounted/connected does not need to be specifically outlined

- iii. POPS should incorporate directional and tactile pavers to make public spaces more usable and safer for people who have no or diminished sight
 - iv. ADA requirements already absorbed in zoning and building codes are adequately strict to ensure that spaces and areas are accessible to all
 - b. Safety Lighting
 - i. Sidewalk and alley illumination are very important safety considerations and should be considered in all development projects
 - c. Traffic Calming Measures
 - i. Roundabout should be included as a consideration – workgroup members still appreciate the strategy as a traffic calming mechanism, and the suggestion should emphasize that pedestrian safety and connectivity is a major priority in the design of this feature
 - ii. Intersection sight triangles specific quantities are not needed – triangles outlined in zoning code are sufficient
 - d. Planting
 - i. We strongly encourage the use of planting strategies that consider long term pest and disease prevention and climate change
1. Don't want another emerald ash borer or Dutch elm situation – diversity is the key to avoiding this
 - ii. Edible landscapes are strongly supported and should include both cultivated and forageable food sources
 8. Native American food traditions are important to represent as part of the history of this site – workgroup suggests further planning/coordination be completed with a representative of this community to appropriately include these palettes within the site
 9. These landscapes should include educational signage
 10. Metro transit should strongly consider the addition of a stop on bus route 64 within this neighborhood to support both the new development and the existing surrounding residents
 11. Letter should be sent to Port, with Metro Transit, County, Parks Department, and PED copied
 12. Feedback from other workgroup members not in attendance, other technical review, and today's meeting will be absorbed and distributed as soon as possible for review prior to the final UD workgroup meeting on May 26th