

# HILLCREST REDEVELOPMENT HOUSING WORKGROUP

Meeting Minutes | Thursday, July 21, 2022

## Attendees

- Jamila Taylor
- Mail Yang
- Becky Winslow
- Rick Chen
- Karen Aguirre
- Nathan Hakseth
- Gretchen Nicholls (LISC)
- Monte Hilleman (SPPA)
- Andrea Novak (SPPA)
- Laurie Siever (SPPA)
- Tiffani Navratil (LHB)
- Matthew Finn (LHB)

## MEETING SUMMARY

1. Gretchen Nicholls kicked off the meeting with a discussion about gentrification. Group members shared what their personal definitions of the subject. The conversation led to concepts that workgroup members felt would make their neighborhood a better place to live. Concepts include amphitheater, green space, ice skating, roller skating, community rooms, daycares, breweries, and food halls.
2. Monte Hilleman discussed the challenges of creating "new" retail commercial spaces where none previously existed. He suggested that service amenities are best suited, from a marketability standpoint, on the first floor of larger residential units. Other commercial opportunities will be better suited for White Bear Avenue, which he expects will see a boost because of The Heights redevelopment.
3. Gretchen went on to highlight a [study](#) LISC was involved with in 2019 that focused on gentrification in the Twin Cities. Gretchen emphasized that investments can be good for a neighborhood, but it is important to monitor changes. Tips for preventing the negative consequences of gentrification, which could drive some people out of the neighborhood, include:
  - a. Ensure there is a variety of housing types available for different income levels
  - b. Provide access to homeownership and generational wealth building opportunities
  - c. Implement policies that support affordable housing and stability
4. Matt Finn led a discussion around housing units. He started by highlighting projects he's been involved with, which includes extensive experience working with affordable housing.
5. Per Matt, in-unit washers and dryers are becoming more standard for rentals. Balconies and private outdoor spaces can be a challenge depending on orientation; some neighbors are opposed because they are sometimes used for storage with smaller units. He added that perceptions are changing following the pandemic, as people are putting more value on the need for outdoor space.
6. Matt showed numerous examples of multi-family housing units. The common theme was that you couldn't tell from the outside of the building how big or small the units were inside.
7. Workgroup members asked about the plan for parking and the need for public transportation. Parking may include outside lots, in the back of buildings, and could have solar on top. The varied elevation also makes it easier to have ground level parking in the back of buildings; underground parking is cost prohibitive. And, while the City no longer has parking minimums, it was said that developers are most in-tune to the parking levels needed for marketability. It was also highlighted that there would be parking near the new sites and parking wouldn't be forced into the existing neighborhood. EV charging stations will also be a priority.

And, while the Port Authority does not influence public transportation, there is confidence that Metro Transit will be looking at the site once people and businesses start moving in.

8. Matt discussed additional amenities that are important to residents' quality of life: places for kid to play that are in the sight lines from the unit, lobbies, lounges, fitness rooms, and storage capabilities. Per Matt, these are common in both affordable and market rate projects.
9. Monte talked about the concept of POPS (privately-owned public spaces), which could be located near multi-family residential buildings or in green space managed by the Port. Possible amenities could include places to sit, tot lots, or installations like the ones found at The Hub.
10. Homework for meeting #4 was assigned. Participants were asked to take photos of housing examples on the East Side that reflect the uniqueness of the neighborhood, especially smaller apartment buildings and other medium sized properties. Group members were encouraged to focus on recent developments that could serve as a model for future development. To show places that feel like home. This will help foster common language around what it means to live on the East Side and what Eastsiders value. The goal is share as many photos as possible.