

**2016 City of Summit – Master Plan Re-Examination
Land Use Subcommittee - Workshop # 1
May 11, 2016 – MINUTES - AMENDED**

Workshop # 1 of the Land Use Subcommittee of the 2016 Master Plan Re-Examination was held on May 9, 2016, at Summit City Hall, Whitman Room, 512 Springfield Avenue, Summit, New Jersey, 07901 at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Bill Anderson, Subcommittee Chair; John Zucker; Jennifer Balson Alvarez; Diane Klaif; Karen Khalaf; Kevin McGoey; Eric Mendelson; and Phyllis Sank

Krzysztof Sadlej, Dan Gordon and Colin Goam from Topology

Absent: None

Observers: Mayor Nora Radest; Mike McTernan, Council President; Richard Sun, Councilman at Large; Jeff Wagenbach, Chairman of the Planning Board; John Kieser, Class I Member of the Planning Board; and Amy Cairns, Public Information Officer

Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Questions to consider
3. Re: vision process
4. Review master plan objectives
5. Identify focus areas
6. Mission objectives

Mr. Sadlej, Topology, reviewed the agenda and asked the Action Committee to think about land use in a broad range as it touches on other Subcommittee work and across other elements of the Master Plan. It's crucial to include information in the Master Plan that is usable by the Planning Board. Mr. Sadlej encouraged the Subcommittee to think about how to create an implementable, actionable and useable plan.

Questions to Consider

The Action Committee members were asked to anonymously answer the following four questions:

1. Describe Summit in one word... Summit is...
2. Describe the Summit of tomorrow in one word... Summit will be...
3. How do visitors see Summit? Visitors think Summit is...
4. If a 2-acre vacant lot were discovered downtown, what would we build there? (This response was not limited to one word)
5. Who needs to be heard during the Master Plan process? We have to get a point of view from...

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Initial discussion items tend to dominate the discussion. This exercise captured thoughts and ideas that will be used in the re-examination process without allowing them to dominate the discussion at this workshop. The responses were publicly posted but not further discussed at this point.

Re: vision process

The Master Plan Re-Examination process is not starting from scratch. A Master Plan was done in 2000 and a Re-Examination was completed in 2006. The Master Plan is an important document that guides policies and helps coalesce decisions the city makes. The current Re-Examination is a statutory requirement done every ten years and is undertaken to determine if the objectives of the prior plan are still relevant and, if not, to make alterations. The goal is go beyond fulfilling the statutory requirement and make the Master Plan Re-Examination document usable and actionable.

The Planning Board ultimately owns the document. The work done and recommendations proposed by the Subcommittees during the re-examination process will be moved up the chain with recommendations put forth to the Planning Board at the end of August. In addition to the Subcommittee workshops, two public workshops will be held to determine what's important to the public. Throughout the process a lot of data and information will be collected and distilled. Subcommittee members were encouraged to use their networks to reach out to those not typically involved in the planning process.

Mr. Sadlej addressed questions about the structure of the Subcommittees. The Subcommittees make up the Steering Committee: There is no separate Steering Committee. The historic preservation component of the Master Plan Re-Examination will be addressed in a one-day workshop. Phases of the Re-Examination process include: Define, Discover, Design and Develop. The Re-Examination is now in the discovery phase. At this point, there are no "no's" or solutions/ answers as to what needs to be changed or added to the Master Plan. The purpose of the workshop was to ask questions, define and prioritize goals, generate ideas and identify stakeholders and what's missing from the Master Plan.

Review master plan objectives

The City of Summit has had many plans over the years:

- 2000 Master Plan
- 2003 Master Plan Re-Examination
- 2005 CRBD Master Plan
- 2006 Master Plan Re-Examination
- 2007 Village Green Master Plan
- 2008 Action Plan for a Sustainable Summit
- 2015 Downtown Improvement Plan
- 2015 Broad Street Corridor Plan

The Subcommittee broke into two groups. Each group was given handouts of the circulation and transportation objectives of the prior plans and asked to prioritize the objectives into three categories:

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- Immediate priority – What is urgent and relevant and who are the stakeholders
- Mid-term priority – What’s already started, making progress and still relevant, and
- Long-term priority – Things that may be considered down the road or are no longer as relevant or relevant. If not relevant, the groups were asked to identify why not

De-briefing Discussion

Both groups found that 30 minutes was not enough time to review and prioritize the objectives of the prior plans. It was difficult to assess what has been done in the past 16 years since the 2000 Master Plan. There was general concern about the resulting Master Plan if the language from previous plans is used. Some of the objectives/goals should stay but maybe they could be incorporated in a different way to refresh them and make them more actionable and measurable.

One group got hung up on one goal: Housing opportunities for senior citizens. What has been done to address senior housing since the 2000 Master Plan? Has the issue been resolved and if so, what has been built to address it? The Cloisters, the townhouses on Norwood Avenue, were meant for downsizers but now families are moving in because the cost is less than buying a home and they’re located close to town and schools. More affordable senior housing is needed. Smaller sized apartments might help result in less competition between seniors and families and may also lower the tax bill. The discussion of affordable housing gets contentious when one says low income. Affordable housing is too broad a term and needs to be more defined. An overlay of potential areas for affordable senior housing might be useful in determining the number of units and the economics of affordable senior housing. Several factors influence affordable housing: 1) there’s a limited amount of land, 2) Summit is not an affordable city, and 3) there is no agreement on where to put it. Broad Street from Ashwood Avenue to the parking garage at Summit Avenue seemed to be a logical place but it turned out to be quite complicated. The transportation issues were too great and the idea was dropped. The economy, however, has changed since then.

A survey done in 2012 showed that few (6%) respondents felt that Summit was growing too slowly with the remainder believing it is growing too quickly or just right. There is some “not in my backyard” resistance to growth.

The Subcommittee noted that air conditioners and side-yard setbacks were a big issue in the 2000 Master Plan and recommended contacting the Zoning Board of Adjustment to determine if objectives/goals identified in previous plans have been addressed. If so, they should be removed from the 2016 Master Plan Re-Examination. Mr. Anderson responded that a survey was just sent to the Zoning Board of Adjustment to identify issues that need to be addressed. He can get a copy of the survey for the Subcommittee.

The objectives from the previous plans are vague. This vagueness allowed too much room for interpretation. The Subcommittee believes the objectives should be more specific but is concerned about making them so specific that they are no longer relevant in two years. Although some of the objectives were vague, the 2000 Master Plan and the 2006 Master Plan Re-Examination gave

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neighborhood businesses at the west end of Morris Avenue a shot in the arm and the Development Requirements Ordinance (RDO) were put in place.

Identify focus areas

Prioritization of the objectives from the previous plans took considerable time because of the robustness of the discussions among the two groups. As a result, the Subcommittee did not have enough time to complete the mapping exercise to identify areas of opportunity for the immediate, medium- and long-term objectives.

Next steps

The public workshop will be held on June 1, 2016, at 7:30 p.m. at the Elks Club, 40 Maple Street. Subcommittee members were encouraged to disseminate information about the public workshop to their networks.

The Subcommittee would like to meet prior to the public workshop on June 1st and again after the public workshop. The Subcommittee will meet as follows:

- May 25th at 6:30 p.m.
- June 15th at 6:30 p.m. subject to confirmation
- June 29th at 6:30 p.m. for Workshop #2 which will be devoted to reviewing and interpreting results of the public workshop; recommending initial shifts in objectives and priorities identified at this workshop and from the public workshop; and, identifying shifts and objectives/priorities per feedback and data.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.