

City of Summit – Master Plan Reexamination  
2016 Focus Group with Community Organizations  
June 7, 2016 – MINUTES

The Focus Group with Community Organizations of the Master Plan Reexamination was held on June 7, 2016, at Summit City Hall, Large Conference Room, 512 Springfield Avenue, Summit, New Jersey, 07901. The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m.

**Present:** Krzysztof Sadlej, Topology; Wendy Graeb, Connection; Terri Clinton, Summit YMCA; Judith Josephs, City of Summit; Susan Permahos, Summit Public Library; Christy Hodde, American Red Cross; Sandy Bloom, Summit Public Library; Michael Decclessis, Summit EMS; Angela Sullivan, SAGE ElderCare; Celine Bennet, CHAT Por Summit; Teresa Usme, CHAT Por Summit; Bill Callahan, SADC; Marin Mizon, SPI; Patricia Trenton, Hispanic Liason; Hank Gibson, SADC; Fred Jenny, SAGE ElderCare; Michael Girouard, Reeves-Reed Arboretum; and Karen Hadley, Suburban Chamber of Commerce.

**Absent:** None

**Observers:** Mayor Nora Radest; Amy Cairns, Public Information Officer

**Agenda:**

- I. Introductions
- II. Key Focus Areas
- III. Parks/Urban Areas
- IV. Transportation
- V. Libraries
- VI. Economic Development
- VII. Outreach

**Key Focus Areas**

Various departments of City Hall will be involved. There will be a separate focus group on Historical Preservation. Public meeting towards the end of August for the Master Plan.

Demographics - Medium income is high, but the other demographic will be addressed as well. Disability, immigrant population, and Senior population will not be left out of planning process. “Everyone has a level of accessibility.”

**Parks/Open Space, Community Facilities**

YMCA - “very hard to walk and ride your bike in Summit, safely”. The “under-usage of the Green” is a topic. Need benches and places for children and family closer to the YMCA. Two quadrants incomplete, but plans for construction. Village Green plan is separate from previous Master Plan. Some improvements are better paths and lighting. “Funds for new benches may be difficult”. Safety is an issue with current walking paths, mostly due to cars.

*CoUrbanize/Crosswalks*

*CoUrbanize* is a new mapping tool. Help with dangerous intersections and walking paths, to improve. Can also translate to Spanish, or other languages. Calmer downtown, due to the inability to turn right on red lights. May alleviate feelings of a lack of safety. “We don’t have a lot of loading zones,” in downtown. Walking on Bank Street is “horrendous”. There is no crosswalk on one side. The parking lot is difficult, both to park and to navigate. “I do think that there could be a lot more accidents than there have been, and I do see people struggle daily”. Eliminating street meters, 2 a.m., etc., help deal with parking spaces in the parking lot.

*Cycling*

What is the sense of the need for cycling infrastructure, and what will it look like?

Not all locations are heavily used for bike racks. Some will be put in after roads are finished. Fear of accidents for cyclists in downtown, mostly with children. More cyclists in streets cause drivers to go slower, and fewer accidents. Trail had been mapped out previously, and plans for more.

### *Benches*

Seniors- folks out walking, and tire, “where do they stop to pause?” Can be costly. “Many merchants are beginning to put out benches in front of their store and restaurant”. Can be used for parents with children, and people other than Seniors that “serves larger community”. Idea for converting a parking space to a sitting area. “Cooperative effort to help people.”

### *Arboretum*

Large space not utilized. Need for “creative ways to handle parking”. Original plan for sidewalks not finished on Hobart Road near Arboretum. “I believe it is a friendly road to bike on, but not to walk on”. Programs heavily “utilized by families with younger children”. Drivers are fast on that road, but large sidewalk gap. Big event parking concept of shuttle bus, from municipal parking lot to events. Help deal with event overflow. Shared parking strategy.

## **Transportation**

### *Shuttle Bus*

Concern for Seniors. Senior Connection bus is available. Dealing with going to places other than SAGE and those available. Extension for Uber, or other service. Seniors want to engage with community, “but are not able to”. Way to connect towns is also an issue.

Low-income families struggle with school transportation, especially with poor weather. Job opportunities are often walked to, or provided for. “Right now, we have families who live in the Shoprite area, [and walk to the schools], and it is a long walk”. Lack of sidewalks past the train station is an issue.

### *Parking*

2 hour parking is too short. Issue for movies and Senior citizens. Different from Downtown.

## **Libraries**

Use of, and importance of libraries. Usage of libraries is “one of the highest in Union County... but not with all age groups”. Business people, children, and other groups. Issue with strollers and storage. “An example of a truly accessible place for everybody.” Still a certain percentage of the population that does not know about all services. Libraries are “for all different populations”. Access for internet and job application help for free. Electronic mediums and program are highly used across age groups. The “synergy of it” makes it a “community resource”. Spanish language programs or reading programs are often asked about. Location makes it “accessible to everybody”. Signs for low-budget and “low-tech” but easy to advertise events.

## **Economic Development**

### *Housing*

Affordable housing is being worked on. Survey and demand to be examined. What type of housing is most needed in Summit? What does affordable mean? Hispanic Community – lack of rent control is “troubling”. Tenants Rights is an issue, and can become hazardous and a problem with fire safety.

Seniors – Many are being pushed out, and wish to stay. More people want to live downtown, and “in town”. More apartments becoming available. Can be helpful for multiple groups, not just Seniors. Connectivity and mobility issue, in every aspect of plan, including Housing.

### *Density*

Idea for Multi-family housing for “empty nesters” and also those who cannot afford to live closer to town.

Some people do not wish to live in a clustered area. Lincoln School area is worried about traffic, especially during school dismissal time. Elementary schools with more capacity are not near correct housing, there is an “unequal distribution of elementary schoolers around the City”.

#### *Low-Income and Seniors*

New units of apartments not affordable. Upscale living and luxury does not “service some of the diverse community”. Access to bicycle can help, as well as more bus service. Some Seniors living in larger homes wish to live in places with better access to the City. Another structure dedicated to Senior Housing, especially one that is affordable. Most “would love to be in a community”. However, “some also want to stay in that neighborhood”. Gated communities not needed, but no Senior alternative. Senior Shared living idea. “Multiple Seniors living together” in a larger home. But, a person who is an intermediary is needed. Allowed some to move out, and gave some resources to stay in the larger house. But zoning issue with group homes. Courtyard Units are not available in Summit, but an opportunity. Can provide more homes for children and parents. Many older apartments do not have elevators either. Visitability is an issue. Parking and property values may be some issues. Multi-family living situation in a single-living environment.

#### **Outreach**

CoYrbanize big tool. Also meeting accessibility and knowledge is an issue.

#### *Deer*

Complaints with managing deer and carcasses on side of roads. Some families and Arboretum find it an issue. Pushing them out makes it “someone else’s problem”, which is not favored. Should be included in Master Planning, since it can be a problem with the entire community and City. Wildlife Management.

#### *Children’s Activities*

Need to accommodate children after school. “Healthy alternatives”. Focus group at High School will be held. Open space and downtown retail options. Response discussed in Courbanize. Missed opportunity. Use laws are outdated for retail space and businesses.

#### **Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:33 p.m.

Submitted by Cassidy Wells.