

2016 City of Summit – Master Plan Re-Examination
Land Use Subcommittee
June 15, 2016 – MINUTES

The Land Use Subcommittee of the 2016 Master Plan Re-Examination met on June 15, 2016, at Summit City Hall, Whitman Room, 512 Springfield Avenue, Summit, New Jersey, 07901. The meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m.

Present: Bill Anderson, Subcommittee Chair; John Zucker; Eric Mendelsohn; Jennifer Balson Alvarez; Karen Khalaf; and Kevin McGoey.

Krzysztof Sadlej from Topology

Absent: Diane Klaif, Phyllis Sank and Ken Stevenson

Observers: Jeff Wagenbach, Chairman of the Planning Board, and John Kieser, Class I Member of the Planning Board

Agenda

1. Review Tasks 1-6
2. Land Use Process
3. Design Guidelines
4. Prep to Develop Recommendations

Historic Preservation Commission Meeting

Mr. Sadlej updated the Subcommittee on the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) meeting on June 14, 2016. HPC plays an advisory role and doesn't always get involved with development projects especially if the project doesn't require variances. At the meeting, HPC expressed concern that administrative workflow is an issue and communications need to flow better. The Subcommittee discussed putting more teeth into the historic preservation review of development projects. Downtown Summit is on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places as are some individual sites in town. The Subcommittee noted that development could be at odds with historic preservation although it doesn't have to be. One solution is to preserve historic facades while allowing new construction behind the façade. There was some concern among Subcommittee members that a lot of redevelopment in town could result in the loss of the historic places designation on the registers. On the other hand, this designation, hopefully, helps with development.

The goal is to make the Master Plan implementable. It's important to figure out how to treat historic preservation in the Master Plan.

Design Guidelines

Mr. Sadlej reported that design guidelines have come up over and over in the Master Plan meetings. Summit does not have any design guidelines which could be useful to property/business owners and developers as a resource. Lots of design guidelines have been created that could be used as a basis for establishing design guidelines for Summit. Extracts from NYC Street Design Manual and Guide to Storefront Design ([NYC Street Design Manual](#) and [Guide to Storefront Design](#)) were circulated among the Subcommittee.

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Design guidelines could be very helpful to the Review Committee (TRC) which evaluates/reviews applications before a public hearing before the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Adjustment is scheduled. The TRC is composed of city officials. The TRC process is intended to uncover any issues with an application before it gets to the Board. HPC's perception is that decisions on streetscapes and applications are made on the fly so guidelines would be useful. Mr. Sadlej added that street guidelines, in addition to façade/design guidelines, could be useful for business owners when contemplating planters, lighting, etc. There are some guidelines in the ordinances but these are more related to engineering and safety rather than design. The old Master Plan had some guidelines for the CRBD. The City of Summit Downtown Improvement Plan (June 2015) also has some references to design guidelines. Mr. Wadenbach disagreed that decisions on application are *ad hoc*. Mr. Wadenbach added that there are two types of standards to be considered: Municipal for signs and public improvements for which there are criteria and private for commercial sites which have different kinds of issues. Ms. Khalaf added that there are also county standards.

Review Tasks 1-6

Task 1: Second story use utilization in CRBD

Priority: To fully utilize the upper floor spaces in the CBRD to provide diverse housing and to prevent building deterioration while protecting retail trade

Assigned to: Kevin McGoey

Findings and Discussion: Mr. McGoey found that second-floor office space in town is occupied. Converting existing second-floor space for residential use is unlikely to happen because of the expense and logistics of retrofitting the space with plumbing and elevators and other safety concerns. It's not economically feasible. New buildings could have second-floor residential space, but in both cases, parking is an issue. While residential space has fewer parking requirements, buildings can't offer residential tenants parking spaces. Tenants can get passes for overnight parking but 24-hour parking is required to attract residential tenants. In addition, property owners do work on their buildings at night when businesses are closed and this would not be possible if the building has residential space. This led to a discussion of parking in general and where a parking garage/deck could be located.

Task 6: Parking utilization

Priority: Emphasis on a balanced, unbiased approach to parking

Identify key surface parking lots and number of parking spaces in those lots. Visit those lots at the same time for two weeks to verify utilization/availability of parking.

Assigned to: All Subcommittee members

Findings and Discussion: Outside planners in the past have recommended a parking deck at Woodland and Deforest Avenues. However, the disruption over the 1.5 years that it would take to construct a parking deck would "kill" downtown and it's unlikely that business would recover quickly and might possibly never recover. The Subcommittee discussed locating a parking deck behind the post office. Mr. Wadenbach stated that this area was reviewed for redevelopment with a plan to put a deck with covered parking. The proposed deck was to be constructed using a sliver of the adjacent Senior Housing property. However, the Housing Authority did

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not agree to this idea. The development was then deemed to be too expensive. All seemed to agree that this remains a very good location for a parking deck and should be re-examined. The parking shortfall in Summit is between 200 to 350 spaces. Mr. McGoey asked about parking across the train tracks from the existing garage and possibly connecting the two. Mr. Sadlej responded that while this is all the rage, putting anything over New Jersey Transit (NJT) tracks isn't easy and NJT wants to be paid.

Task 4: Broad Street opportunity identification

Priority: Encourage development improvements in the Broad Street Corridor

Assigned to: Bill Anderson, Jennifer Balson Alvarez and John Zucker

Findings and Discussion:

West end from Morris Avenue to Maple Street by St. Teresa's church, fire station, senior housing building, post office and YMCA

Moving the fire station farther east would leave a good site for something of significant size for residential and commercial development. The lot behind the former bank on Morris Avenue could be developed with small office buildings. This area would be a good location for a grocery store such as a Trader Joe's or urban Whole Foods that would keep people in town. Survey data show that residents would like to have a grocery store in town.

Village Green and train station

Not much can be done in this area. A concession stand might be of interest and attract people to the Village Green. The Department of Community Programs (DCP) has a plan for concessions. Use of the space for programs and events is important. Toplogy met with students from the high school: High school students feel left out of the programs at the Village Green as most of them such as the movies in the park are geared for children. Students would like, among other things, to have a place to roller skate. Temporary closures of Broad Street along the Village Green for roller skating was discussed.

Central portion of the corridor by the parking garage and lot, south side of the street where there is a small industrial district, Industrial Place and over to Walnut Street

This area generally has one-story small businesses and seems like an opportunity for mixed use. Perhaps an extra level could be added to the parking garage. There's an opportunity for height because of the slope. The Subcommittee discussed whether the small industrial district should be there. The general feeling is that the businesses in the industrial district don't really have to be located in this area which is prime real estate. However, the problem with redeveloping this area is that there are multiple owners and the spaces are occupied. The Subcommittee discussed three to four stories on Broad Street scaling down to two stories along Industrial Place as it backs up to Walnut Street that is primarily a single-family and duplex residential street. This would be a prime area for housing. It has multiple access points and redevelopment could make the Village Green more useable. Redevelopment of the area between the parking garage and Salerno Duane with townhouses has been discussed: There are other options for development in this area besides relocation of the fire station.

Eastern section including Salerno Duane and on both sides of the street

Gateway 2 covers this area and allows mixed use. The three buildings on the eastern end could be preserved and used for artists' lofts/galleries. This area could be developed for residential use with one to three bedroom units. The size of the residential units could be smaller to attract young people, which would limit the strain on the school system, rather than families. Affordability is an issue in attracting young people.

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Gateway 2 was re-zoned in 2006 but the development plans fell through. The ordinance was changed to permit uses requested in the zone. The proposed development included three, four- to five-story buildings with 48 units. The developer has asked the city to look at the zone again. The developer has proposed 200 residential efficiency units which would increase the density. Mr. Anderson, who worked on the original Gateway 2 plan, then explained that 200 units are far too dense for that location.

Task 5: Existing development patterns review

Priority: Encourage residential development in locations and at densities which are compatible with existing development patterns and which public roadways and utilities can serve

Assigned to: Karen Khalaf and Eric Mendelsohn

Findings and Discussion: Mr. Mendelsohn created a zoning overlay on Google Maps (<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1QCxWUWsR02okg5zFcSLsUwNGMMg&usp=sharing>) identifying zones and zoning requirements with pins to show areas that he believes represent good, medium and bad transitions with accompanying photographs. Opportunities are also identified on the overlay. Mr. Mendelsohn reviewed the overlay.

Good transitions:

- Northernmost multi-family tower (MFT) in the MFT zone because of its size and scale.
- Multi-family Victorian homes on Euclid Avenue to neighborhoods above on Beechwood Road.
- Bicycle shop at the eastern end of Springfield Avenue to the residential neighborhood.
- The buildings in the ORC zone have been repurposed and have kept the character of the area (e.g., Peapack-Gladstone Bank).

Medium transitions:

- The large apartment building on Woodland Avenue across from Lincoln Hubbard School is dense for its location across from the school and in relation to surrounding smaller scale buildings.
- Parmley Place in Gateway 1 is large and dense.
- Apartment building on Euclid Avenue in Gateway 1 is also very dense.

Bad transitions:

- Multi-family tower on Euclid Avenue to the multi-family Victorian homes and single-family residential zone. This may be because these are “bad” buildings that are too big and are five stories in an area zoned for four stories. It’s possible that these were built before the area was zoned for 4 stories.
- New office building on the western end of Springfield Avenue on the site formerly occupied by Bagel Chateau because of its size and density.
- 47 Maple Street office building to downtown. The building is too large and imposing and out of character with nearby buildings. It’s modern and adjacent to historic buildings.

Opportunities:

- More could be done with buildings on Summit Avenue at the end of Deforest Avenue. These buildings are not visually pleasing.
- R-5 zone by Winberie’s Restaurant which has small businesses and multi-family properties.

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- The area by 7-Eleven is underutilized and it would be nice to have some re-investment in this area.
- Multi-family houses are being constructed on Franklin Place. Franklin Place has some odd mixed use. This may be a place to explore for residential development. The area across from the new construction (the former Infinity dealership) was approved for 10 -12 residential units but these haven't been built.
- Summit Avenue across from the Village Green by TD Bank and the A&P liquor store presents an opportunity for residential development.

Additional transition areas and opportunities for development are indicated on the zoning overlay. Mr. Mendelsohn noted that there are lots of development options near town and especially south of the CRBD that could be explored that would serve to better integrate the town, better utilize the Village Green, be closer to major roads and shift development away from the fringe of the residential neighborhoods where it doesn't belong. Also identified on the overlay are several areas with traffic constraints including Deforest Avenue by Summit Avenue where traffic backs up all the way to Maple Street. Some of this is from the Morris Avenue bridge closure. Traffic is also an issue at Euclid and Summit Avenues: It's difficult to turn onto Summit Avenue from Euclid.

The Subcommittee discussed opportunities for shutting down streets for events particularly Beechwood Road and Broad Street. Also discussed was a land bridge over Maple Street to connect to the train station.

Next steps

Topology will prepare recommendations for discussion at the next meeting based on the Subcommittee's work and public feedback/survey data from the public meeting. The Subcommittee was comfortable with this knowing that the data might change. Mr. Sadlej will circulate the recommendations to the Subcommittee for review prior to the meeting.

Next Meeting: June 30, 2016 at 7:30 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Submitted by Margaret Koontz.