

## **NORTHWEST SIDE AREA PLAN FOCUS GROUP NOTES**

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The consultant team conducted three focus group meetings to gather input on what is needed to increase successful development in the neighborhood. The goal was to find out what landowners, business owners, agencies, lenders, elected officials, police, etc. wanted to see in the neighborhood and what they thought was needed to achieve their objective. Three investment groups were targeted for these meetings, 1) residential investors, 2) industrial investors, and 3) commercial investors.

The consultant presented a brief overview of the planning process and discussed national projects that were similar in context to the Northwest side neighborhood. These projects illustrated opportunities and new development concepts that might be implemented here.

### **RESIDENTIAL FOCUS GROUP**

November 8, 2006

#### **Factors to Increase Residential Development**

##### **Market Attractions**

- Create a “destination” in the neighborhood. There are no primary destinations within the Northwest Side that attract residents and visitors. The only destination-oriented facilities are private/public golf courses, parks and some industries.
- Redesign major arterials to enhance aesthetics and reduce traffic volume. Redevelopment could encourage redevelopment of housing along, and adjacent to, traffic corridors.
- Evaluate traffic patterns, traffic circulation, and traffic spend for all new and redevelopment projects. Street connections and development should be designed to minimize speed. Speed, in addition to traffic volumes, was a concern on major arterials.
- Encourage developers to redesign duplex units to target home ownership. Redevelopment should focus on creating independent units with shared walls. Consider replacing parking lots with attached garages (rear or side), providing private entrances, and partitioning the exterior landscape to delineate distinct yards.
- Locate a substantial health care facility in the neighborhood to serve the needs of the local population.
- Promote the establishment of higher-education facilities to serve both the local and outlying population.
- Develop entertainment and dining establishments to serve area residents and business employees. Spending in this market is not locally captured.
- Ensure that the Department of Public Works provides for street enhancements in an equitable manner, when compared to other areas of the City.
- Encourage redevelopment of housing in selected areas along major arterials will create stronger commercial nodes.

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- Incorporate Brown Deer Road if creating a Tax Increment Financing District for Granville Station. Improvement of Brown Deer Road is necessary to attract customers into Granville Station.
- Crime and perception of crime is one reason people do not shop locally.
  
- Develop a mix of uses at Granville Station to create a ‘town center’ for residents and businesses. A town center will create an identity for the area and assist in marketing the development.
- Retain individual identities for sub-areas and neighborhoods within the Northwest Side to allow for individual marketing efforts.

#### **Partnerships**

- Revise the municipal policy for notifying neighboring property owners about development proposals. The use of the City’s website should be encouraged to reach more residents and property owners surrounding the development.
- Work with neighborhood associations to establish Landlord Compacts that focus on a code of ethics for landlords and tenants.
- Work with the State, County, and area residents to manage the perceived negative consequences and identify problems/solutions early in the development process for the job corp.

#### **Financial Resources**

- Explore the potential of more Tax Incremental Financing to subsidize neighborhood improvements.
- Encourage taxpaying uses for new development projects.

#### **Land Use and Urban Design**

- Encourage single family housing instead of more multi-family housing development.
- Encourage the redevelopment of large multifamily complexes. Consideration should be given to reducing the density, reconfiguring access, and converting to owner-occupied units.
- Locate new or redeveloped multi-family housing on scattered, small sites to avoid large complex style developments that currently exist throughout the Northwest Side.
- Redesign large parking areas associated with large multifamily developments to be more visually appealing and pedestrian friendly.
- Develop high quality development standards for major commercial arterials. The appearance of the arterials is important to attract homeowners, investors, and shoppers and create a positive atmosphere.
- Promote the Oak Leaf trail extension as an important greenway connection to area residents and businesses.

**INDUSTRIAL FOCUS GROUP**

November 10, 2006

**Factors to Increase Industrial Development**

**Market Attractions**

- Follow up on the Timmerman Field Master Plan, which is expected to be completed in 2007. Additional runway capacity is recommended. Increased light jet capacity at Timmerman will attract corporate jets, which is a positive attribute for attracting businesses.
- Attract more sit-down restaurants to provide options for client lunches and dinners.
- Attract multiple anchors for retail/office projects to create a sense of identity. Park Place is an example of a strong anchor with a mix of offices and restaurants.
- Consider building select projects to attract quality businesses before tenants are secured.
- Consider creating additional Business Improvement Districts to assist in aesthetic improvements and safety concerns for target areas.
- Brown Deer Road, 76<sup>th</sup> Street, Silver Spring are critical commercial corridors that influence the perception of the whole northwest side.

**Public Resources**

- Create more choices for entertainment and dining.
- Improve transit service to the Northwest side including, increased routes and increased frequency. It is very difficult for people that live or work in other areas of the city to reach the northwest side (employees and consumers). Specifically, routes should be extended along Brown Deer Road and Good Hope Road.
- Increase bus service in the area to decrease the waiting time.
- Explore tax incentives in order to compete with surrounding suburban communities.

**Identity Creation**

- Maintain the individual identities of business parks and business associations in the area. The area is too large for one name like “Granville”; marketing of the unique, smaller areas would be difficult.
- Locate civic buildings and uses where they are visible to the public to encourage a sense of identity.

**Safety**

- Explore actions implemented in the Riverworks Business Improvement District to improve safety and perception of the area. Actions included: condemning problem bars and drug houses by utilizing public/private partnerships to identify and remove nuisance properties.

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- Increase security or police patrols, specifically at strip malls located at 35<sup>th</sup> Street and Villard Avenue and Appleton Avenue and Hampton Avenue.
- Create relationships between businesses and the police department.
  
- Address the perception of crime and how it impacts business owners and investors in many areas of the northwest side. Block watch programs in some areas of the NW side (ex. Havenwoods) have been very successful in decreasing crime. In the Havenwoods area, there is a staff person devoted to organizing residents and block watches. This is essential to a successful program. In addition, landlord compacts were developed to eliminate nuisance properties and encourage responsible landlords to invest in the area.

**Land Use and Urban Design**

- Increase the amount and quality of retail near industrial uses to help attract new industrial tenants and retain existing tenants. For example, restaurants, service retail, and entertainment venues provide opportunities for employees to shop near work.
- Allow some zoning changes from industrial to retail on older, vacant industrial properties.
- Consider land-banking for future industrial development.
- Develop design standards and guidelines for the area, specifically major corridors. Aesthetic improvements will help to change the perception of the area. Major arterials are the first image/impression that clients and employees see as they drive to the industrial areas.

**COMMERCIAL FOCUS GROUP**

November 14, 2006

**Factors to Increase Commercial Development**

**Financial and Support Resources**

- Promote redevelopment of Granville Station through subsidies and incentives similar to projects that occur in downtown districts (Pabst Brewery, Third Ward, Menomonee Valley, and Midtown Center). Require a comprehensive redevelopment proposal that delineates site configuration, uses, infrastructure, and phasing.
- Examine federally-designated Community Block Grant boundaries to ensure that areas which possess redevelopment potential are not excluded as grant applicants.
- Encourage job training programs that focus on improving the talent pool and labor force. Finding quality retail employees is a problem for businesses.
- Provide financial support for a local economic development not-for-profit organization that “champions” the Northwest Side Area Plan, and endorses implementation of plan actions.

**Partnerships and Coordination**

- Explore models or case-studies of mall redevelopment that promote a viable option which considers demographic variables and purchasing power of the Northwest Side.
- Generate a comprehensive redevelopment plan for Granville Station that considers adjoining uses, contributes to successful economic development, and attracts national investors.
- The Midtown and Bayshore shopping concepts should be explored for Granville Station. The area can not directly compete with stores found in Bayshore but the concept of mixed-use and pedestrian friendly development can be applied to Granville Station.
- Identify factors that contribute to commercial demise, and ensure actions that preclude future investment failure.
- Improve public transit service to and within the Northwest side, including a route along Good Hope Road.
- Support for redevelopment of the Northwest Side needs to be cultivated at the level of the City Council in order for substantial change to occur.
- Installation of publicly-monitored security cameras in select locations should be implemented.
- Actual crime around Menard’s and Pick n’ Save in Granville Station is very low, but the perception of crime is high.

**Land Use and Urban Design**

- Establish guidelines that prevent large-scale redevelopment from occurring in an uncoordinated fashion.
- Develop guidelines and actions that improve the safety of commercial areas. This will improve the long-term viability of commercial investment.
- Redesign vehicular interchanges at primary commercial nodes to increase visual and physical access, and encourage retail shopping. This should occur at junctures which include 76<sup>th</sup> Street - Brown Deer Road (Granville Station), and Silver Spring Drive – Teutonia Avenue.
- Develop design guidelines for the public right-of-way along streets and for buildings that face commercial-oriented arterials (76<sup>th</sup> Street, Brown Deer Road, Silver Spring Drive). Guidelines are necessary to promote a more pedestrian-friendly and safe retail environment.
- Create a stronger connection between commercial buildings and the street. This will help improve the pedestrian experience, slow traffic, and create an identity for the area.
- Redesign and reconfigure parking lots so that they do not include large, uninterrupted expanses between road corridors and buildings.
- Promote outlot development where appropriate within “strip” commercial centers.
- Ensure that lands designated for commercial use are not too abundant and therefore promote a saturated market that competes locally. Concentrate commercial redevelopment within specific intersections (nodes)
- Redevelop the former Menard’s site, on 76<sup>th</sup> Street, in a way that meets local commercial or retail needs.
- Encourage more mixed-used developments within redeveloped areas to create more daily activity.
- Raze the mall portion of Granville Station to allow for comprehensive redevelopment to occur.
- Increase the variety of retail stores and restaurants to increase customer counts for existing businesses (ex- Menard’s).
- Concentrate retail uses at the nodes of major cross streets along 76<sup>th</sup> Street. Retail uses along 76<sup>th</sup> Street were developed as a ‘feeder’ to the former Northridge Mall. Without that strong retail center, 76<sup>th</sup> street is too long to support the amount of retail that once existed.
- Attract a healthy balance of not-for-profit “anchor institutions” (health care, secondary education) to relocate to the Northwest Side
- Implement traffic mitigation plans that assist to reduce traffic speeds and encourage automobile-oriented retail redevelopment.

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**Neighborhood Identity**

- Establish a commercial “anchor” destination that contributes to the identity of the Northwest Side, and attracts both local and non-local users.
- Identify nodes that can support redevelopment for neighborhood retail, such as Mill Road and 91<sup>st</sup> Street.
- Improve the perception of the area to bring more customers and improve the overall identity of the Northwest side.