

Hillsdale Terrace Workshop #2 Meeting Notes
8/18/09

Julie Livingston welcomed everyone to the second workshop. She mentioned that the first workshop had been held in June and that during the period between workshops HAP had been waiting for HUD funding availability. She mentioned that the NOFA was in hand and the project could now move forward. She stated that this was a HOPE project which specifically targets the renovation of distressed housing sites. This is HAP's 3rd grant application for HOPE VI money, and that the application proposal is due in November. There will be one more meeting on October 6. At this meeting the final marketing package that will be sent to HUD will be presented. Julie mentioned that the marketing package will be identifying the main issues of the project, including connectivity and sustainability, but that there will be much more time spent on the design of the details in the future after this application. She outlined the schedule as follows: HUD review 3-4 months, planning and design: 1 ½ years (during this time residents move out), construction begins in spring 2011, project complete and residents move back in 2012.

Michael Willis then introduced the design team and thanked residents for coming back to another workshop, stating how important the continuity of commentary was to the design process. He summarized comments made at the previous workshop:

What do you like about living in this area? Access to services, relatively no crime, small town feel, kids and school.

What are your favorite things? SW Community Center pool, library, retail, farmers market.

What don't you like: Not enough sidewalks, isolated, traffic problems at Vermont and 26th, teenagers, how people talk about us.

What would you like to change? Easier access to ground floor, privacy, security, less stairs, community garden, more teen and youth areas, access to technology, clinic, block noise or remove basketball courts, more parking.

How do you envision this in 5 years? Humboldt Gardens, good looking buildings and landscaping, well maintained.

Other issues or opportunities:

Bus access good except steep grade, access on another street would be great, address informal paths leading out of site, difficult to drive in ice or snow, visitor parking not working, problems with unwanted foot traffic from people who do not live here, California St. popular pedestrian access, church has property adjacent to site where they are interested in development opportunities, create more room in homes, have better visuals, want better playgrounds, have office be close to visitor parking, terrace site so it is not one big bowl.

Michael Willis stated that this was just the beginning of the design process and that it was a work in progress.

Bill Lanning commented on the issues the design team had been exploring starting with connectivity. In response to the concern about the intersection at 26th and Vermont, he mentioned that PBOT would be contacted to see if a traffic signal could be located at this intersection.

Resident: The community had tried that before but didn't get anywhere. What if the agency's response was the same this time, what would be Plan B?

Bill: Plan B would be a warning light. Plan A1 would be a light with a push button to stop traffic.

Another resident: In the past 3 years traffic has increased substantially, maybe PBOT's response would consider now.

Bill then mentioned that the team had begun to investigate another vehicular access at the SW corner of the site near California, but after looking at some preliminary engineering studies, it appeared the west end of the site would need to be raised 12' or so to make a vehicular connection at 12%, and even that was really steep, so the idea didn't look feasible. Although a paved pedestrian path and bikeway was achievable, eliminating the existing stair.

Neighbor: Fully pave unimproved California St. It would benefit the neighborhood, adjacent properties and residents.

Resident: Currently this gravel road access to California is very steep and gets very muddy in winter. Agrees with neighbor that it should be paved.

Bill: California would be paved to this site's access point, but not beyond that point. He questioned whether neighbors on California would want the road paved beyond that point.

Another Resident: The church on Beaverton-Hillsdale highway had to put a sidewalk in in a similar situation, maybe that is what would be required here.

Bill then mentioned that another pedestrian connection from 26th south to access properties beyond, including Frisbee golf course was being considered, formalizing an informal path.

Neighbor: There are signs that say "No Trespassing" in that area. *It was clarified that these signs were on property beyond the path being discussed.*

Brad Bane added that from a safety standpoint a better defined trail is better for pedestrians and bikes.

Another neighbor: Heartily endorses any street improvements on adjacent properties. He mentioned that the design team should consider planned improvements at the corner of 30th and Vermont which will be converted into a more squared intersection (eliminating curved portion). This will have an effect on traffic patterns, potentially impacting the intersection at 26th and Vermont.

Resident: Talk to SW Trails Committee, they might want to be a partner in developing trail connection at south end of 26th.

Bill then addressed another informal pathway to Capitol Highway at the northwest corner, through the Kesser Israel property. He said the team was considering eliminating this pathway since it was uncontrolled allowing undesired foot traffic into site, and that an alternate access route would be considered.

Kesser Israel Neighbor: Would like to shut off this access, but has no immediate plans to do so.

Neighbor: The Kesser Israel property is private and needs to be respected, particularly during sacred times.

Beverly Bookin: There may be a different way that minimizes conflict, however does solve the uncontrolled access problem.

Resident: Because it is the only access to the little market on the corner, it is important to maintain. Also wanted to raise what a dangerous intersection the 26th and Vermont one was for kids getting of school buses which let them out on the north side of the street.

Beverly Bookin: The bus stop could be relocated so that it drops off on the south side of the road, or the route could be reconfigured so that it came down the cul-de-sac to drop off kids.

A few additional comments that Bill wanted to add was that the team was considering removing the basketball courts and locating community gardens in their place. He mentioned that the nearby church was interested in community gardens on their property as well, and have also been in discussions with HAP regarding the potential development of their adjacent property as well.

Neighbor: There is another church by 26th that also has undeveloped land as well.

Bill additionally mentioned that the bottom of the cul-de-sac at 26th would be looked at to see if better vehicular access was possible.

Brad Bane then described the two options that had been developed to date indicating how the site might be developed. He mentioned the options incorporated comments that had been made in the previous workshop as well as input from HAP about what HUD is looking for including what type of housing should be considered and how many units. He said that the 60 existing 3 bedroom units would be replaced in kind and that there may be apartment style units (where individual units all have their own door) or apartment units that share a common corridor.

Site Option A

In this scheme the ring road is kept in its existing location, with all the housing units being inward of it. The new ring road would be two-way instead of one-way as it is now. The hillside would be terraced down more gently for better accessibility and there would be a pedestrian corridor halfway down the hillside with secondary personal space for each of the residences looking out onto the corridor. This personal space would allow for a greater sense of ownership than the pathway alone, and would provide some visual screening for the units. There would continue to be a passive green space down the center of the development, but it may also be drivable to some degree as well for access. The community center would be moved to the northeast corner of the site, visible from 26th, with open areas for kids further west, creating a safe place for play and pedestrians. The orientation of buildings would allow for some passive solar use.

Neighbor: Will any of these units be owned outright, or are they all rentals? Didn't New Columbia have some owner occupied housing?

Julie Livingston: All will be rental units, in a combination of public housing and affordable low income housing. HAP is not set up to do owner occupied housing. New Columbia was a special circumstance with a lot of property available.

Betty: HUD and NOFA dictate what we can do on site, and right now the focus is not on owner occupied housing. Early childhood housing and more community space is something they are very interested in now.

Neighbor: What about senior housing or housing for disabled?

Julie: People self select for affordable housing, and both groups are welcome if interested.

Brad: The challenge is that we will have 109 units minimum, and there is also a desire for more community space and we need to fit it all on this site.

Site Option B

In this scheme the ring road has been moved inward so that a row of units occurs along the perimeter of the property. In this case there will be eyes on the ring road on both sides. There could be tuck in parking on the perimeter units, which could be townhouse style, which would create greater efficiency in use of space, and there could be breaks between the units for landscaping and stormwater treatment features, to break up the blocks of units. In this scheme the development would occur on three terrace levels with a central green space. The ring road would be lower than it currently is now, and so pedestrians would go up or down to their units. There could also be porches facing the ring road, creating a secondary activity area. The ring road is two-way in this scheme, too, and there would also be traffic calming devices on it. Bioswales could treat stormwater from the ring road and also serve as a buffer between road and front doors.

Resident: Are larger units on the bottom?

Brad: Lower units could potentially face two sides, lower to the green and higher to the road, so they are oriented to look at street and common areas.

Neighbor: Does two-way street have wide areas for u-turns?

Brad: No but someone could turn into a perpendicular parking space to turn around.

Neighbor: Is there enough parking in Option B?

Brad: The parking is easier in Option B because of the efficiency of the tuck under parking. The minimum parking is one car per each unit.

Michael McHugh: To clarify, at the perimeter along the ring road, there would not be a wall of cars, it would be broken up with a significant amount of landscape.

Resident: A lot of people here have 2 cars, and there is limited parking on the street. Where will the rest of the cars go?

Brad: That is an issue we will need to work out.

Resident: Would tuck under parking be enclosed? There is a lot of vandalism here and covering it might create more vandalism.

Brad: People in units across ring road would be able to see parked cars.

Michael McHugh: Also, the units above the parked cars will be raised so there will be about 3' of clear space, which will allow light into the parking area, so it won't be dark in there. They are open parking areas, not garages.

Jane Hansen, Andrea Saven and Paul Dedyo then presented some landscape imagery for character and sustainable methods to elicit comments. The focus was on how to treat the varied grades on site with different landscape features such as amphitheater style seating and natural play spaces. Andrea and Paul also spoke of different ways that the stormwater can be captured and either stored or dispersed on site. These ideas included green roofs, cisterns, dry creeks and flow through planters. They discussed the importance of capturing the adjacent neighbors run-off and controlling it before it hits impervious surfaces.

Resident: What type of plants are you planning to use?

Jane: Native plantings that are easy to maintain and hardy enough to withstand the kids. Not planning to replace Juniper shrubs.

Resident: Since it rains nine months out of the year what kind of outdoor areas are planned that are covered?

Jane: Planning for space outside the apartments for residents to gather such as porches. Also have the ability to design covered terrace spaces at the community center.

Resident: Is it possible to have water play area for children? You could use rainwater to help run it. There were examples of Beaverton Library fountain and Jamison Park given.

Jane: This is something that we can explore as the project moves forward.

Neighbor: It is important to reuse ceramic address numbers and for everyone to have their own address. The ceramic numbers came out of the public works projects in the 30's and their history is very unique to Portland. Also, this property isn't in the Hillsdale Neighborhood, it is in the Multnomah Village neighborhood, so consider a new name as part of this project.

Resident: Community Gardens have been tried before and didn't work.

Bill: A lot has to do with the size of the area, and location is important.

Another Resident: Likes amphitheater idea.

Another Resident: Is there too much grass?

Jane: The amount of grass and paved area will need to be balanced.

Bill: At Humboldt Gardens the common open space and green areas were designed so more units faced out on them, with more eyes the areas became self policing.

Brad: Resident accountability is important. HAP wants redevelopment to be successful.

Another Resident: What about something overhead to protect from rain and a place to go when the grassy areas are wet?

Jane: An overhead structure is a good idea so there are outdoor places to be when it rains.

Paul: With stormwater treatment in place the ground should not get as saturated as it does now, so that issue will be improved in the redevelopment.

Another Resident: What types of plants are you considering?

Jane: Native plants that have grown well in the area and low-water use hardy plant material?

Another Resident: Will you get rid of the juniper? Sometimes the kids are hard on the plants.

Jane: Yes.

Andrea: It will important to place plantings in a way that they won't get trampled.

Another Resident: Could there be a water feature for kids?

Jane: There are a number of play equipment products on the market that incorporate water, and we'll look into that.

Another Resident: A fountain or wading pool at the bottom of the amphitheater would be a nice feature.

Jane: We'll discuss that idea with HAP.

Bill: We are looking at project globally as well as understanding the nuts and bolts of it. Other items under consideration are sustainability. We recently had an ecocharrette where we looked at issues of safety and health of residents, energy efficiency, and better connections to services.

Michael Willis then wrapped up the session giving everyone a last word:

- I like what I've heard, go for it.
- What about putting a park in this bowled site and relocating housing elsewhere?
- Like green roof idea.
- Livability.
- Have security doors, screens and air in apartments.
- Likes curving pedestrian paths
- Likes curving path in green street image when she is not in a hurry, but wants a straight path when she has somewhere to go.
- Fountain at Beaverton Library is good example.
- Provide more services so people have a shot at the American dream.
- Would like more community events like outdoor movies.
- More space for computer room.

- 8 desktops and 5 laptops-one bedroom-more space (?)

End of Workshop.