

HILLCREST REDEVELOPMENT URBAN DESIGN WORKGROUP

Meeting Minutes | Thursday, April 14, 2022

Attendees

- Donna Peterson
- Julie Guzman
- Andrew Wise
- Rachel Finazzo Doll
- Jennifer Brannen
- Monte Hilleman
- Andrea Novak
- Matthew Finn
- Tiffani Navatril
- Jess Vetrano



MEETING SUMMARY

1. Started the meeting by going over homework assignment –
2. Rachel
 - a. Retaining walls could be used artfully as a visual break – gabion walls are a great way to incorporate various types of stone as a reflection of MN's state history of stone export – also supportive of plants
 - b. Edible landscapes -- Native plants related to Native American traditional cooking – how to incorporate edible landscapes that are native and tell the history of the site (i.e., sumac, juniper, wild rice, etc.)
 - c. Signage – educational signage that explains both the history and the sustainable processes at work on the site – how to tie into the art as well in an interpretive way. Could also relate to edible landscapes.
 - d. Sidewalks to express art – stamping/incorporating wayfinding – included throughout the neighborhood to the west of Hillcrest as well (i.e., “Poetry in the Pavement” program in St. Paul)
 - e. Trees required in the boulevard
3. Julie
 - a. Feeling like so many topics/ideas have been covered, that it is hard to come up with new ideas
 - b. Community node building (park building with 4 sides of activation) within open space
 - c. Intersection on Howard and Idaho is going to be a very busy location, and should receive special attention when controlling traffic and protecting pedestrians

- i. Roundabout? Traffic Lights? Tabled intersection would be strongly preferred; At very least, a four-way stop
 - ii. Intersection is 220' from the Howard/Larpenteur intersection
 - d. Amphitheater within park for community use but oriented to not cause negative noise impacts to surrounding neighborhoods
 - e. Schools (private) drive a lot of morning/afternoon traffic on weekdays
 - f. Flashing pedestrian light at Larpenteur and Howard at least
 - g. How will current traffic numbers be impacted by new development – goal would be these numbers don't see much of an increase as ideally people would be living and working in proximity, and trends would increase surrounding reduction in 2 car or any car households
 - i. Residents have the loudest voice in dictating where investment is directed within the transportation network
 - ii. Transit system is also currently underserving the neighborhood – future transit expansion would be based on numbers once the neighborhood is constructed
 - iii. Goal is to maintain majority of truck traffic on Howard
- 4. Donna
 - a. Focused on fountains and how they could fit in different areas based on the land use/density
 - i. How to incentivize the use of water features without requiring them
 - ii. How is stormwater incorporated if at all? "Passive water features"
 - iii. Various reasons for incorporation of fountains, and various types and price points of fountains available
 - iv. Psychological benefits of being near and hearing running water
 - v. Winter version? Water features into ice features?
 - vi. How do water features relate to wetland features?
 - vii. How do water features incorporate the feel of the neighborhood? (Millennium Park Fountain)
 - viii. How can water mitigate noise? (Tanner Fountain at Harvard University)
 - ix. What would a rule about incorporating a water feature look like? Include in homework for Meeting 8
 - b. Walkways of different scales/aesthetics and how they define the public realm
- 5. Andrew
 - a. Intersection south of park near where the Hoyt greenway meets Howard
 - b. How to make pedestrians and bicycles equal owners of the space (or more) as cars
 - i. Graphic cues to cars to make them feel "other" and therefore slow down/look out
 - ii. Patterns
 - iii. Berms as a physical barrier between traffic and pedestrian spaces
 - c. Can the pedestrian realm be contiguous across multiple parcels? Nicollet Mall, Lake Street, etc.
 - i. Highly dictated by City staff and ADA requirements
 - d. Washington Avenue, Hennepin Avenue, and 40th street streetscape where bike lane sweeps between street and sidewalk depending on traffic speed/stopping requirements
 - e. Limited amount of influence over the park – but landform is shaped in our mass grading exercise
 - i. A lot of restored topographical variation would be preferred
 - ii. Respecting/preserving the landscape's unique topographical features is in the master plan (could harken to golf course's sloping/varied form)

- f. How do we make places along the streetscape that prioritize pedestrians?
 - g. Stairs within park (or ramp) leading you to an overlook/plaque/installation
 - i. Avoid “stairs to nowhere”
 - ii. Times Square has “overlook” where a ramp that inclines you enough to get a photo of Times Square
6. Frankie (online submission)
- a. Looked a specific building and how artwork is placed/oriented and how that relates to seating/areas where people can view murals/access murals from
 - i. Murals should wrap the corner, so it can be viewed from several oblique angles
 - b. Rough/textured materials deter tagging
 - c. Seating elements should face the murals or be double-sided, so they face the mural and the right-of-way
7. Susan (online submission)
- a. Noise reduction/recreation in the south section (how can these two efforts be combined in a practical/attractive way)
 - b. Sound barriers are not ideal – what is the alternative?
 - i. Tree lined streets absorb noise (especially evergreens) while also cleaning area/reducing heat island effect
 - c. Strategically placing median to prevent/deter truck traffic
 - d. How can the large passive spaces connect to the Furness parkway?
 - i. Placing the bike lane/trail along the east side of Howard could help buffer industrial
 - 1. Western bike trail alignment currents offer more connectivity to the City Park and prevent too many driveways from residential out to Howard (What Master Plan suggests)
 - ii. Benches along the trail and oriented toward water features
 - e. Ivy infrastructure is outdated and will need updates soon – future updates could include a bike trail
 - f. Added bike trail along Arlington to create a loop – no loops (pedestrian or bicycle) exist in the plan currently
 - i. Official vs unofficial loop? More so that they are signed/mileage is identified
 - 1. As simple as no dead ends
 - g. Boardwalks/pathways through southern wetland space
8. Revisiting the scales of development and what is missing?
- a. How to approach design at all scales is a big challenge – things that affect the scale of a person vs the scale of the city
 - b. Roofs – Most are illustrated as flat roofs (urban/contemporary) in the renderings – some would prefer to never see pitched roofs, but Andrew argues there is a way to pitch roofs in contemporary ways
 - i. Pitched roofs are cheaper (timber framing and shingles are cheap)
 - ii. Neither carry much snow load (wind blows most away on flat roofs)
 - iii. Optimal solar panel pitching does not match up with the pitch of a pitched roof (12 degrees vs 45 degrees)
 - iv. Could flat roofs be cost prohibitive for single families/single family developers?
 - 1. Roof type prices equalize at sizes larger than a duplex
 - c. Architecture – goal is to create a unique aesthetic for this cutting-edge neighborhood!!

- i. Good option to consider: more control in larger projects (T2, T3, and IT) and lighter requirements for T1
 - ii. Matching the surrounding neighborhood would be hard because it is a hodge-podge; alternative is to contrast from the surrounding neighborhood purposefully
 - iii. Modern might relate to size/number of stories fitting a modern lifestyle need
 - iv. Modern also relates to aesthetics and where asymmetry is allowed
 - v. Modern relates to larger windows/more glass
 - vi. Modern might mix forms (curves vs lines)
 - vii. Modern includes plant life vertically, on roofs, etc.
 - viii. Modern doesn't try to recreate/copy historical precedents, but often references historical precedent subtly
 - ix. "Contemporary" might be a better descriptive goal than "modern"
 - x. Modern often suggests "clean lines" and small tolerances (thin lines between materials)
 - xi. Modern often suggests a limited palette of materials (not just one, but not 6+ either)
 - xii. Modern often means energy efficient, green/blue roofs, maximized solar production
9. Homework for next meeting
- a. Continue writing more "rules" for the Heights' aesthetic qualities and programming. Focus on the areas and topics that we have been discussing during Meetings 6 and 7.