



Southwest Transit Corridor – Coordinated Land Use Workshop Notes
Facilitated by Ken Greenberg, Greenberg Consultants, Inc.
Tuesday, September 15, 2009

Ken Greenberg – Opening comments, points to consider as a framework for discussion

1. Configurations – How to create corridor development – how is it managed
 - a. Develop a coordinated vision – Concept Plan – that has started with the station area plans but it needs to be coordinated and expanded upon.
Clarify the vision for the entire corridor. The primary zone is the ¼ mile requires the clarification on building scale and density and circulation.
 - b. The place is...quality living, active living, complete streets, jobs.
 - c. Primary and Secondary Zones/Impact Areas
 - d. Design Principles
 - e. Land Use and Mix
 - f. Block Structure –support 1st floor retail and pedestrians
 - g. Built Form
 - h. Dealing with non-conforming uses in the interim.
2. Criteria for Success
 - a. What are the hurdles to get over
 - b. What are the uses that are necessary:
 - i. Shopping for daily living needs can be accomplished on foot.
 - ii. Working near nodes
 - iii. Shopping
 - iv. Social Interaction
 1. Cultural
 2. Recreation
 - c. Circulation plans and uses interaction – pedestrians, LRT, bicycles, cars.
 - d. Sustainability Targets – energy use, waste collection – develop as a pilot demonstration
 - e. Public Art
 - f. Landscape
 - g. Each station should have some piece of each of the criteria/uses in the first phase (could be part of the performance objectives).
3. Means (Tools)
 - a. Zoning
 - b. Design Guidelines – what is most effective - outcome based
 - c. Subdivision Plan – official mapping
 - d. Public Realm Plan – how to develop and fund

- e. Infrastructure Plan – street patterns/ROW. What utilities need to be updated. Easement. Stormwater management.
 - f. Circulation Plan (all modes)
 - g. What does the public provide? What are the realistic expectations of what is possible?
 - i. Park and Ride should be viewed as a temporary measure to help transition from suburban to urban development areas. One option to make that transition is to require a fee for parking as the area becomes more densely developed.
 - ii. Parking structure as a “public building”
 - 1. Use, quality, sustainability
 - 2. What are the methods to collaborate – design and fund parking garages and mixed uses rather than invest in short term parking lots. Ground floor uses of parking ramps.
 - 3. Create common parking garage ownership and/or management along the entire corridor.
 - h. What does the private sector provide?
 - i. What are the ownership partnership opportunities?
 - j. Are there ways to eliminate or reduce competition for the same development along the corridor?
4. Process
- a. Who does what? Roles for all units of government (city, county, metropolitan council) - coordinated efforts. Integrate LRT line staff with place making staff.
 - b. Land purchase and land banking - explore options to purchase property when available. Is there a role for the Twin Cities Community Land Bank where an affordable housing component is proposed?
 - c. Landowner engagement – ability to engage as a partner, opportunity to create new value, explore options to structure partnership agreements, what are the incentives to participate? Developers are more risk adverse in this economy. Cities/Counties need to work in partnership with the landowner and share some of the risk. The development framework needs to be in place (zoning resolved, etc.) before developers are brought on board.
 - d. Community engagement process – develop a process that creates buy-in, understanding of the process and community self interest in place making.
 - e. Phasing
 - i. Where do you start – start in areas where there is the highest opportunity to incorporate all aspects of place making.
 - ii. What are the opportunities - land for sale, vacant land, areas of non-conformity.

Exploration of 2-3 Cases on the Corridor

- 1. Minnetonka/Hopkins – Shady Oak Station
 - a. The Tech Center location is going to be a key opportunity to develop all components of successful land use. Greenberg suggested a national/international design competition for the downtown station to generate excitement and creativity around proposed land uses. The large amount of site control would be attractive to developers. Consider relocating Shady Oak Road

- proposed density to Shady Oak LRT station. There is a need to buy land both north and south of the station.
- b. Hopkins and Minnetonka are working in collaboration on the site; however, they acknowledge that they may have different objectives when it comes to attracting commercial development to the site. Hopkins is concerned about a station area retail taking away business from downtown and Minnetonka has interest in attracting some large retailers.
 - i. Suggestion to do a significant amount of market research to identify retail opportunities that would support a synergy between the station area and downtown.
2. St. Louis Park – Beltline Station
 The biggest problem with this proposed station is it is located in the middle of auto oriented infrastructure. County Road 25 is built to freeway standards and the frontage roads are a problem. The station area plan calls for 4,000 new residents and 4,000 new employees. To accomplish this, need to change the infrastructure profoundly—more than just sidewalks. There is a need to create a new environment.
- a. Zoning challenges
 - i. Solution could be to build flexibility into the City’s comprehensive plan. Evaluate market conditions and set guidelines for the future.
 - b. Public sector leadership must be to transform the infrastructure to make it more pedestrian friendly.
3. Eden Prairie – Eden Prairie Town Center
- a. Station has been realigned due to grade changes, speed of the line and cost. New location is ½ mile from Eden Prairie Mall.
 - i. Suggestion to wait on building a station at this site until there is a greater potential use for the station. Leave it open to landowner driven development in the future – it could be used as an incentive the adjacent property owners to develop TOD.

Discussion/Next Steps:

The Corridor should be seen as a “Change Agent” with not only a coordinated light rail line but also a coordinated plan for development. How do you get there?

1. Move toward the corridor becoming a Hennepin County “Community Works” program at the suggestion of Hennepin County Commissioner, Peter McLaughlin. The “Community Works” structure can help to finance development planning efforts around major county infrastructure projects. The structure can serve as a champion and catalyst for coordinated development around the infrastructure. The development of the structure could provide funding opportunities, help bring the engineers to the table and provide more focus on the creation of place and economic development rather than just the rail line infrastructure. Also help to create synergy around the management of the land uses and development plans.
 - a. Commissioners Jan Callison and Gail Dorfman are willing, along with Commissioner McLaughlin, to bring this option to the County Board for consideration.
 - b. Develop a strategy through the Community Works structure for local political interaction to discuss issues together.

2. Develop innovative public finance and investment options. Evaluate land banking capacity - land purchase is beyond the County and City's ability and strengthen redevelopment tools.
 - a. Explore development of a Southwest Corridor Community Development Corporation (CDC) along the corridor with bonding authority. Create a funding source that would not be perceived as a grant but rather as a long term investment with the potential for repayment in the future.
 - b. Evaluate the use of RALF funding that could be broadened for the transit corridor.
 - c. Explore funding to hire a public finance consultant to assist in exploring innovative public and private financing options.
 - d. Evaluate use of Twin Cities Community Land Bank for land purchases
 - i. Started as a response to the need to acquire foreclosed single family housing properties at bulk.
 - ii. Can also be developed as a tool to hold land for transit.
 - iii. Elizabeth Ryan is available

3. Develop an integrated planning process. What is it? What would we do?
 - a. Need a set communication pattern.
 - i. There needs to be enough common sequencing so that everyone can share in identifying what is missing and speak in the same voice to address that. Helps when advocating with public officials and funders.
 - ii. Prepare a common communication process with property owners along the line.
 - b. Develop a checklist of what each station has in common/what is different. Each stop is unique so integration can only go so far. Need to identify commonalities and areas where stations are unique. Agree upon common performance objectives.
 - i. Common performance objectives could include sustainability goals, parking requirements/cost, mix of housing types, design standards, zoning process and methods of approval.
 - ii. Evaluate the whole rather than individual performance measures. Discuss areas of conflict and ways to minimize market saturation.
 - c. Evaluate detailed demographics around each station using – ULI MN Excensus data.
 - d. Explore useable land use and redevelopment tools. Determine if legislative change is necessary to be innovative.
 - i. Form-based zoning, performance objectives, modified PUD, overlay districts, TOD districts, TIF, bonding etc. Evaluate tools in a work group session with key city planning staff.
 - e. Public Realm - How to finance? Are there opportunities to share access/funding for public art? There should be a common theme and a balance between art and public realm at each station.

4. Identify a Pilot Project – demonstrate the process and how each component would be implemented . Apply performance measures, design criteria, land use approvals, citizen engagement and incorporating financial mechanisms to serve as a model for approvals along the entire corridor.

5. **Attendees:**

Carol Lezotte-Anderson, Hennepin County
John Shardlow, Bonestroo
Jay Demma, Bonestroo
Katy Lindblad, Minnesota Housing
Lucy Thompson, City of St. Paul
Dennis Engen, Met Council
Karen Lyons, Met Council
Michael Huber, Blue Cross Blue Shield
Tara Beard, City of Hopkins
Katie Hatt, Hennepin County
Loren Gordon, City of Minnetonka
Elise Durbin, City of Minnetonka
Amanda Arnold, City of Minneapolis
Bob Close, Close Landscape Architecture
Dennis Welsch, Center for Policy & Planning
Hennepin County Commissioner Jan Callison
Dave Nuckols, Hennepin Co. Board
Randy Newton, City of Eden Prairie
Kevin Locke, City of St. Louis Park
Adam Fulton, City of St. Louis Park
Meg McMonigal, City of St. Louis Park
Jeanette Blankenship, Minnesota Housing
Katie Walker, Hennepin County
Kristin Peterson, Hay Dobbs
Hennepin County Commissioner Gail Dorfman
Regina Herron, City of Eden Prairie
Adele Hall, Hennepin County
Hennepin County Commissioner McLaughlin
Elizabeth Ryan, Family Housing Fund
Cathy Bennett, ULI
Jill Kiener, ULI
Caren Dewar, ULI
Julie Wischnack (Minnetonka)
Kirsten Elvlerum (Hopkins)
Jim Uttley (Met Council)
Kerri Pearce Ruch (Hennepin County)

Adele Hall