

## MEETING SUMMARY—721 N. MAIN CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Technical Committee Meeting #2

Monday, October 15

5:00 – 7:00 pm

Basement AB Conference Room – Larcom City Hall

**Attendees:** Technical Committee (TC) Members present: 10; Sumedh Bahl (City of Ann Arbor- Community Services Area Administrator); Jonathan Bulkley (Allen Creek Greenway Conservancy); Ray Detter (NMVFT Member- Old Fourth Ward); Julie Grand (NMVTF Member- PAC); Jerry Hancock (City of Ann Arbor- Stormwater/ Floodplain Coordinator); Amy Kuras (City of Ann Arbor- Park Planner/ Landscape Architect II); Darren McKinnon (NMVTF Member- Water Hill Neighborhood); Matt Naud (City of Ann Arbor- Environmental Coordinator); Heather Rice (Office of the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner); Cresson Sloten (City of Ann Arbor- Systems Planning Manager)

Technical Committee Members absent: 3; Wendy Rampson (City of Ann Arbor- Planning Manager); Colin Smith (City of Ann Arbor- Parks and Recreation Services Manager); Coy Vaughn (Washtenaw County Parks Commission)

City staff present for meeting facilitation: 2; Kayla Coleman; Connie Pulcipher

Consultant Team for meeting facilitation: 2; Neal Billetdeaux; Oliver Kiley

Public present: 1; Alice Ralph

1. Introductions
2. Project Process and Schedule (C. Pulcipher)
3. Phase 1 Environmental Assessment Update
  - Phase I is a historical review of the site, no holes in the ground or sampling. Tetra Tech conducted the Phase I assessment for 721 N Main; no surprises or “deal-breakers” were revealed. The Phase I identifies sampling needs for the Phase II, and Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs). Once the site use is determined then planning level estimates for remediation costs can be collected.
4. Scenario Feedback (JJR)
  - Quantitative and qualitative feedback was reviewed
  - Q: Are we assuming that people will be interested in investing on the property? A. Market analysis is not included in the scope for the Technical Committee; so the assumption is that further study will be required to determine interest in the property.
5. Public Feedback
6. Option to Carry Forward (JJR)
  - The Technical Committee engaged in a detailed discussion to determine their recommendation for the portion of the site to designate as open space. Previous options and alternatives were narrowed to 3 for the Technical Committee meeting discussion:
    - Open space = Entire 721 N Main property (5.1 Acres)
    - Open space = Floodway area only (2.5 acres)

- Open space = Floodway area plus a non floodway portion that would otherwise have limited development potential due to size, shape and underground utilities (3.1 acres)

Some key points from the discussion are provided below:

- The City of Ann Arbor is currently studying the feasibility to construct a hole in the railroad berm. The next step would determine feasibility of placing a path there, and determine if the railroad is willing to have a path traverse through their property. The study will not be completed in time to inform the recommendation for 721 N Main.
- Q. Could anything be done to make the floodway wider, so that it wouldn't be such a choke point in the Ashley & Felch area? A. At 721 N Main we are not anticipating that there will be huge water volume improvements but we could do water quality improvements.
- Plans for 721 N Main needs to work within the 721 N Main property; not extending to the private property.
- Potential 'Parks' uses for the site:
  - Dog Park
    - Q: What is a dog park? A: This is an area where dogs are allowed to run off leash in a fenced-in area. This type of area generally does not support other uses since people don't always pick up after their dogs.
    - Space requirements for dog parks are variable; could range from acres to the size of a city lot.
    - Concern- mud: it was discussed that the dog park could be properly designed to minimize mud.
    - Concern- water quality implications due to pet waste; it was discussed that the dog park could be properly designed to divert/ limit water quality concerns.
  - Basketball and tennis courts? Recent studies show that this area is not underserved for basketball and tennis courts; there are existing nearby.
- The TC agreed that plans for the 721 N Main site should provide maximum flexibility for the future. Plans for 721 N Main may be a phased approach that evolves and is improved over time.
- The Michigan Department of Natural Resource (MDNR) Trust Fund grant application does not need to specify plans for the development portion of the site.
- Some development is needed in order for the park to be successful; residential development is favored (to be consistent with the scale and character of surrounding properties). The surrounding neighborhood is zoned R2A and R4C and one TC member representing the local neighbors voiced strong support for expanding that type of zoning to the 721 N Main site.
- Clarification: the meaning of 'eyes on the park' is the need to consistently have people using the site, so that people feel safe and to deter illicit uses of the site.
- Discussion of plans for existing building:
  - Recommendation that the building stay until a user comes forward, or a developer comes forward and they demolish and build something new.
  - The existing building will need to be flood proofed or elevated if improvements are made that exceed 50% of the building's market value.
- Assuming that the City applies for an MDNR Trust Fund grant, the technical committee makes the recommendation as outlined in APPENDIX A. (This recommendation was partially developed during TC2; committee member Darren McKinnon led the effort to improve the recommendation post-meeting. The final recommendation was approved via email by TC members)

a. Funding—Grant Opportunities

- The MDNR Trust Fund grant application needs to show how 721 N Main will connect to other trails. The Technical Committee discussed potential trail connections, and existing barriers. Although the ideal plan for the Allen Creek Greenway has not been determined, an initial connection may connect through the 721 N Main site and could serve as a catalyst to the development of alternative routes and improvements. The MDNR grant application will need to show that 721 N Main connects to existing and planned trails (Border-to-Border connection, a proposed Allen Creek Greenway, etc.).
  - Match dollars for the MDNR grant? Connie Pulcifer- City of Ann Arbor will follow up with Coy Vaughn- Washtenaw County to discuss the County's potential interest in providing funding support for the 721 N Main project. *Post meeting note: Coy Vaughn, Deputy Director of Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation suggested that the City of Ann Arbor apply for the [Connecting Communities Initiatives](#) program which may serve as matching dollars for the MDNR Trust Fund application. The application is due December 31, 2012.*
- State Revolving-loan Funds (SRF) through the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)- a low interest loan, which has included 50% loan forgiveness in the past. SRF projects are for water quality improvement projects, i.e. rain gardens; surface treatment, or other underground options (e.g. West Park).
- Connecting Communities Program through Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission.

7. Other (all)

8. Public Commentary (3 minutes/speaker)

- Alice Ralph:
  - Recommendation that removal of Compressed Natural Gas fueling station be included in the Technical Committee recommendation.
  - Suggested that we might be successful with a MDNR trust fund grant.
  - Acknowledged that it would be much easier if public comments could be integrated with the conversation.
  - Support that Ann Arbor is truly striving to have the first built portion of the greenway.

9. Adjournment

## APPENDIX A- Technical Committee Recommendation and associated graphic

October 24, 2012

### 721 N. Main Technical Committee Recommendations:

- Per City Council Resolution 374-8-05 approved on August 15, 2005, the area of the City properties at 721 N. Main within the floodway will be included in the new Greenway. The 721 N. Main Technical Committee recommendations are to develop walking and biking paths within the approximately 2.5 acre floodway portion that will form the first component of the Allen Creek Greenway. Paths should connect from Felch Street to both N. Main and West Summit Streets. It is the hope of this committee that the development of such paths at 721 N. Main will encourage future connections beyond the site limits to the Washtenaw County Border-to-Border Trail and the Allen Creek Greenway.
- It is essential that any development of open space coincide with efforts to activate the amenity and the timing of a grant application. Such efforts should consider unique and unmet needs near downtown (e.g., a dog park adjacent to the floodway portion).
- The existing masonry buildings outside of the floodway are to remain in the near term and be investigated for reuse. Efforts should be made to minimize the potential for nuisance activities around the building.
- If any future development occurs on the non-floodway portion of the site, such development should remain consistent with the residential character of the neighborhood and residential height limits in adjacent zoning districts.
- Within the floodway portion of the site, design strategies and partnerships should be employed to improve the quality of stormwater.

### Additional Considerations:

- Removal of the Compressed Natural Gas fueling station.

\*These recommendations are based substantially on the assumption that the City will apply for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund grant in 2013. Other possible grants or low interest loan programs may help inform the recommendations.

