

Cultivate Hopkins Advisory Committee
January 10, 2017 Economic Environment Meeting
Notes from Discussion

What makes a walkable community?

- Lighting, especially important on short winter days
- Sidewalks, with a focus on closing the gaps in the system
- Properties fronting on the street without lots of parking in front – shorter setbacks make areas more walkable
- Availability of shade

What changes have you seen in the economic environment in your lifetime?

- Used to work in a brick and mortar building, but now everyone works at home and telecommutes; changes where money gets spent and the amount of office space needed
- Increase in home values – people sometimes move to areas that are more affordable and farther out of the area
- Health of downtown area seems better; strong right now and well positioned for the future

Land use

- Need to make a policy choice on the intensification of growth in single family areas
- Questions about whether it is appropriate to have mixed uses in residential areas
- Discussion on appropriate designations and classifications in change areas

Pedestrian/bicycle connections input:

- Can you find any more information on how car ownership rate compares to other communities?
- Crossings on Blake Road need improving to be more safe; sidewalks are rough
- Connect Lake Minnetonka Trail and Cedar Lake Trail more directly; need more wayfinding to Downtown so people can explore the area
- Crossing Shady Oak Road is not safe, and existing crossing often not observed by cars; people do bike through area because route is nice and flat and avoids hills farther north
- 11th Ave needs better sidewalks – no shade, not an enjoyable walk even though there is a dense population living nearby
- Chemical smells in industrial area make it less pleasant to walk/bike; think about what uses are in the area and their impacts
- At Depot and Excelsior, might be good to put bike/ped bridge but would people use it?
- Valley Park Ave has parks but not sidewalks
- Minnetonka Mills needs a bike connection

- Generally need to connect sidewalk gaps
- Need for better connections and crossings in the Supervalu area

Should there be sidewalks?

- Need them on at least one side of the street even if there's opposition, because don't always know what users there are in area that need them (e.g. seniors and kids, need for safe routes to school, etc.)
- Depends on character of the neighborhood (Avenues yes, Interlochen no); more important where there is thru traffic and higher speeds and traffic amounts
- Some neighborhoods should have sidewalks and some do not need them, sometimes it is ok to walk in the street
- A dot exercise was completed to help identify bicycle/pedestrian facility priorities of the group, inclusive of some of the input verbalized in both large and small group discussions
- Speed bumps/traffic calming needed in some places
- Need priorities for ped crossing – really hard to cross Hwy 7, takes forever because priority is given to auto traffic
- Less need in areas that are flat, have good visibility
- Policy will need to be flexible to address range of conditions
- More expensive to install them in some places; when lots are smaller it also represents a bigger percentage of the lawn that's being given up
- Need education on "share the road" policy, since people walking/biking in road sometimes get yelled at by auto drivers

Affordable housing

- What is just cause non-renewal? Requiring landlord to give reason for non-renewal/eviction (possibly from list of approved reasons); gives people more time to find a new place; not a major solution but helps low income households with transition – though constrained by state law regarding how much they can do (minimum is 30 days)
- Affordability impacts regional economic competitiveness and job growth
- Should address history of discrimination and segregation that contributed to current conditions; dealing with the legacy of these intentional policies
- Policies should not be too tenant-focused, since landlords (even nonprofits) at times need to have the ability to get rid of problem tenants
- Don't focus too much on requirements for developer – should also look to single family homeowners and how much they are willing to help subsidize (through taxes) the cost of building affordable housing
- Watch "Sold Out: Affordable Housing at Risk" video on TPT <http://www.tpt.org/sold-out-affordable-housing-at-risk/video/sold-out-affordable-housing-at-risk-pstfdh/>
- People losing affordable places to live can cause them to lose jobs as well
- Concern of potential for developers to flip properties to bring in higher rent tenants

Business development

- Need flexible requirements for businesses so they can respond to opportunities – e.g. regulations, zoning, parking and transportation requirements, etc.
- Find ways to use existing spaces more efficiently
- Be aware of impacts of “silver tsunami” – 50% of businesses in Twin Cities are owned by baby boomers; as they retire, may transfer out of local ownership (sold at auction, private equity firms, etc.)
- Lack of local ownership can be a negative for community; should consider ways to facilitate employee ownership models

Poverty and disparities

- Need to look at new forms of collaboration with other partners; e.g. schools and how they address related issues
- Need more holistic conversation on this, to get all the contributing factors and the role of the city relative to others
- Hopkins has a racial mismatch of who lives in city vs. who is employed in jobs; other cities do too
- City should revisit procurement policies to ensure they are designed to offer more opportunities for small and diverse contractors to participate
- Need to look more in depth at this issue, including the root causes – e.g. racial discrimination, people new to the area, people from different cultural backgrounds, etc.
- This may need its own special study to explore in depth – goes really deep, including people’s background, schooling, even whether they have food available at home
- Direct assistance concept as presented is “too easy” a solution
- Need to consider people who are poor, but not poor enough to receive direct assistance for the very lowest income group; this forms a “donut” of people who need help
- Poverty reduction programs can backfire and make an area too expensive as well
- The City is limited in what it can do
- Need some examples of what other cities have done successfully