



NOTES
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
CITY OF WHITE BEAR LAKE, MINNESOTA
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2023 – 6:30 PM
BOATWORKS COMMONS COMMUNITY ROOM
4495 LAKE AVENUE SOUTH

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

A. CAC members

- Kevin Edberg, City Council
- Bill Walsh, City Council
- Jim Berry, Planning Commission Chair
- Ken Baltzer, Planning Commission
- Jan Johnson, White Bear Lake Economic Development Corporation (EDC) & County Road E Corridor Committee
- Sara Markoe-Hanson, Executive Director White Bear Lake Historical Society
- Chris Fry, Environmental Advisory Board & Housing Taskforce
- Sharon Hanifl-Lee, Board Chair & Senior Advising Director Children’s Performing Arts & Arts, Cultural & Educational (ACE) Area Study
- Mike Greenbaum, Executive Director at Newtrax
- Nora Slawik, Executive Director of Foundation and Institutional Advancement at Century College, former Mayor of Maplewood, and former Chair of the Metropolitan Council

B. City staff

- Jason Lindahl, Community Development Director
- Lindy Crawford, City Manager
- Tracy Shimek, Housing and Economic Development Coordinator
- Ashton Miller, City Planner
- Shea Lawrence, Planning Technician

C. Consultant team

- Andrew Dresdner, Bolton & Menk
- Haila Maze, Bolton & Menk

2. MEETING PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

A. Prior CAC meeting summary

- CAC members were provided with copies of notes from the CAC kickoff and developer focus group meetings in their packets
- Consultant Haila Maze provided an overview of the CAC kickoff meeting, which was focused on introducing the scope of the zoning code update process, and setting goals for what issues would be addressed; it introduced the concept of place type, to be cover in more detail within this current meeting
- Jason asked the CAC members how the preferred to receive the meeting packet information. It was the consensus of the group to receive an electronic packet before the meeting but to have printed copies available at the meeting.

B. Developer/real estate listening session summary

- Haila also provided an overview of the developer focus group, which included a project overview and input from developer and real estate professionals regarding what they would like to see

- Questions were raised regarding how much developers should be driving versus responding to community needs; it was clarified that their input was received not as direction but as helpful context so that results can be market responsive
 - It was noted by the CAC that some of the topics covered by developers related to project details that the City Council pushed back on; questions about how accessible City Council members should be outside of regular meetings to discuss potential developments
- C. Objectives for today's meeting
- Objectives included understanding the role of place type, and talking through the definition and structure of some of them throughout the city, with a particular focus on center place types
 - CAC participants are asked to review the materials presented, provide feedback, and consider how this may be shared with a broader audience in the future

3. PLACE TYPE DEFINITIONS

- A. Overview of place type approach
- Consultant Andrew Dresdner provided an overview of the place type approach, as a front-end step for preparing for zoning code update
 - The goal is to define place types citywide, which will be translated into the basis for new or updated zoning districts in the code
- B. Neighborhood, center, and district structure
- The place type concept considers the uses and character of subareas of the city that have some common identity within them; they define what is there now and what the city wants to be
 - They are divided into categories of primarily residential neighborhoods, mixed use commercial centers, and primarily single purpose districts
 - Some initial, non-parcel specific areas were shared on a map, to be further refined
- C. Discussion on approach
- One goal is to allow for all the things that are supported by policy and Council direction; the city currently approves a high level of variances, suggesting that the code is not well aligned with city priorities
 - The zoning code also needs to be brought into consistency with the comprehensive plan, per the requirements in state statute
 - This meeting will focus on the centers, delaying more in-depth coverage of neighborhoods and districts until the next meeting
 - Question regarding the color scheme on the map: it was clarified that yellow is residential neighborhoods – suburban, traditional, and lakeside; red is centers – downtown, regional, and community, and purple is districts – industrial, business, and campus
 - The consultant team clarified that lakeside neighborhood applies to lakeside parcels along all lakes in the city, not just White Bear Lake

4. PLACE TYPE MAP REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

- A. 35E Interchange Area
- The 35E interchange area was shown as a regional center, due to location, size and market orientation
 - Most uses and subareas are likely to remain the same, except for an area in the NE quadrant that is currently inconsistent with the comprehensive plan
 - No question or concerns raised, except to clarify that labeling on map did not apply to nearby residential neighborhoods

B. Neighborhood Centers

- An overview was provided of neighborhood centers citywide – mixed use locations anchored by commercial/retail uses, often around an intersection; the division by type refers to both the scale and the market served by their uses
- Questions regarding how development may change in these areas over time, especially in terms of infill; clarified that this could involve redevelopment of buildings or parking lots with multifamily, commercial, or mixed use development
- Questions regarding how parking will be handled; noted that replacing parking lots with development may be only possible where lots are significantly underutilized and/or parking is replaced as part of the redevelopment project
- Questions regarding whether this type of project would be attractive to developers, as well as acceptable under city policy
- Clarification that infill development concepts shown are conceptual and illustrative only

C. Highway 61 Corridor

- An overview was provided of the Highway 61 corridor, with core and edge areas around three main nodes; some redevelopment assumed based on comprehensive plan change areas identified here
- Question about who gets to decide when and how transitions happen; clarified that this would be through typical willing seller/developer private market projects and potentially Council initiatives, eminent domain is not a legal option for redevelopment projects in Minnesota.
- Question about what makes a car dealership (identified for redevelopment) underutilized; note that the car dealership had previously talked about selling and redeveloping as something else – though there has subsequently been some investment in the business
- The expectation is that the model of car sales may require much less land in the future for inventory, but need more building space for service
- Some complexity in terms of working with adjacent municipalities that have different land use guidance and regulatory requirements on nearby sites; noted that the Hwy 61/County E intersection and area is multijurisdictional and does not look great; redevelopment coordination is needed here and will be informed by the County Road E planning work.
- Note a printing error on the map – will replace with updated version

D. Downtown

- Downtown has core, sub core, edge, and transition subareas, each with differing guidance
- Issues being addressed include walkability, mix of uses, urban form including presence of auto oriented uses, expanding commercial areas, and transition to surrounding residential
- Question if fade in color for downtown core meant anything in terms of change in guidance – no, it was just meant to signify that the boundary is not fully defined
- Downtown Edge area is primarily housing – with discussion about what is appropriate type of housing in this area; Downtown Edge area south of school is residential and should remain so
- Downtown Transition includes service and office uses
- In Hwy 61 area, question about how we deal with high speeds and traffic via zoning; note that land use patterns can have a traffic calming effect by narrowing field of vision, providing visual interest for travelers, and amenities for pedestrian and bicyclists.
- Note a printing error on the map - will replace with updated version

E. Residential Neighborhoods

- Discussion of this was deferred until next meeting

5. PUBLIC OUTREACH AND NEXT STEPS

A. Planning for public engagement

- Question that zoning is designed to meet the needs of community – how are we articulating community needs and wants? This will be based on the comp plan, which reflects community input and policy direction
- There were general questions from the group about how the comp plan addresses housing needs; yes it does, staff responded that the City Council continues to discuss the city’s housing policy through the comp plan, housing task force report and ongoing economic development needs; additional guidance from some small area plans like Lake Area Village Plan will need to ensure incorporated into zoning
- Comment that City Council did not get into the implications of the decisions made in the comprehensive plan – so support for that policy should be heavily qualified, and the assumption should be made that things can evolve; think how comp plan and zoning will both evolve together, especially with upcoming 2050 comp plan update

B. Schedule for future CAC meetings

- Next meeting will discuss neighborhoods and districts, share a detailed map, and introduce the Directions and Diagnostics Report
- A public open house will follow – to help create community buy-in for the concept
- May need to explore implications and concerns about the comp plan with Council
- Jason will send out calendar invites for next CAC meeting

6. ADJOURNMENT