

Community Meeting on Development & Planning, 1.14.2016

Meeting Notes

Other partners in attendance: Bike Pittsburgh, Riverlife, Councilwoman Deb Gross, URA staff

Presentation by Matthew Galluzzo, Lawrenceville Corporation, on existing community plans.

Residents can find all community plans on lvpg.com, including:

- 1) LOLA – key recommendations:
 - a. Connection under 40th Street bridge at Willow
 - b. More parking throughout LV
 - c. Foster Street connection through Arsenal Terminal
 - d. New construction, including Doughboy Square

- 2) Allegheny Riverfront Vision Plan
 - a. Scope = Strip → Highland Park
 - b. Recommendations
 - i. Green Boulevard
 - ii. Green agenda: storm water management & green infrastructure
 - iii. Parking solutions offered

- 3) Allegheny Riverfront Green Boulevard Project
 - a. Hundreds of residents participated
 - b. Completed 2013
 - c. Recommendations:
 - i. Open space, transportation solutions , and 43rd street corridor
 - ii. Restoring Willow
 - iii. Storm water solutions

Community priorities have been distilled over years of planning with the desire to be proactive, rather than reactive, when it comes to development.

Lawrenceville is facing significant changes. Currently, 36 acres are under development currently (not including the Uber site) – Heppenstall, Washington Vo-Tech, Fort Willow, Rite Aid site, Catalyst 2

2015 Parking Study (Sasaki)

Connections

- Scope = 33rd to 48th Street
- Foster connection from 39th to 40th would be ideal but isn't likely within this recommendation
- Willow connection more likely from 39th to 40th

Parking Solutions

- Plans being made with Milhaus for a parking garage at Willow and 40th (400+ spaces)

Public Transit

- Circulator concept revisited by this plan – would do a loop around Willow and Foster, or just Willow to downtown
- Need for public transit will increase with 1000 new units representing an increase of a quarter of the current number of households in Lawrenceville

Open Space

- Alternative to railroad usage, could be trail within private property from 39th to 48th – these site owners would only cede 11 – 14ft of their property – all but RIDC have agreed to consider
- This section ceded for public pathway could be used for storm water infrastructure as well

Affordability

Councilwoman Deb Gross

- 40th Street Responsible Growth District Planning goals: the Councilwoman supports these goals and wants to find funding and solutions
- Willow Street connection – Councilwoman & County Executive have discussed moving Allegheny County DPW site to another location
- Foster Street – will be important to get a second evaluation of viability of this connection
- Circulator – Strip and Downtown community groups are supportive of shuttle concept; as they also have major apartment and business growth simultaneously
- Smart Cities Challenge grant - \$40m – LV will be included in the application
- Goal: to keep LV a neighborhood where people have equity and community, livability

Q & A

Q: Is it feasible to envision a green boulevard extending beyond 37th Street, given the existing buildings in the way?

A: The conversation with the Allegheny Valley Railroad line may change in the future and make that space available. We have also been in talks with property owners from 38th – 39th about the possibility of cyclists to take the trail up to Smallman and downtown from there.

Q: From 37th to 43rd, will you build upon existing riverside trail?

A: The trail we are discussing is further toward Butler than this trail.

Q: Won't adding connections through Foster and Willow add significant traffic on these residential streets? What kind of traffic infrastructure will be added with these?

A: Sasaki is investigating the details of signals, stop signs, so the details are unknown. Willow is an intra-neighborhood connection, for more local traffic.

Q: Regarding the 40th Street Bridge/Foster intersection – can 40th Street be widened between the bridge and Butler Street?

A: The recommendations from traffic engineers include signaling the Foster Street connection to alleviate some of the dangerous traffic conditions.

Q: Why are so many of the real estate purchases made by investors rather than local residents?

A: 27% of real estate transactions over 5 years have been investors, because they're aggressive in making offers and it's such an attractive market. They are able to pay for homes up front, while most potential homeowners have to wait for a mortgage.

Q: Why isn't there a homeowner program for sidewalk repair like there is for businesses?

A: There is; here are some of the URA's resources for homeowners:
http://www.ura.org/pittsburgh_residents/home_improvement_loans.php.

Q: Are you proposing that the shuttle would be run by Port Authority?

A: Possibly, but we have also met with other vendors who could operate this as a public amenity.

Q: There are other buildings at the bottom of the Arsenal Terminal Building that would be in the way of the proposed Foster connection; what are the plans for those buildings?

A: That will be addressed in the Milhaus meeting on January 25.

Q: How can we revisit the Washington Vo-Tech plans?

A: Following the October 8 community meeting, we gave updates at block watches and through our e-newsletter. Some residents did attend the ZBA hearing and met individually with the developer to resolve specific concerns within the plans.

Q: Does the new iteration of the Green Boulevard call for passenger rail?

A: No, it doesn't.

Q: How does the latest plan for a green boulevard relate to the earlier riverfront plan?

A: This is the Phase 1/pilot of that program, with the key difference being that the trail is moving from the railroad property for a 9-block span onto private property.

Q: What can I do as a resident to support the community plans?

A: Our elected officials need to hear from the community to affirm our neighborhood priorities and to give feedback on individual development proposals. Attend block watches, January 21 Air Quality Meeting, January 25th Milhaus Meeting – developers need to understand that residents support these plans. LU will organize residents when we need to show major support or opposition on a project.

Q: What leverage do we have as part of the Milhaus development for affordable housing?

A: The federal government does not sufficiently support affordable housing units, unfortunately. There is currently a 9% and a 4% tax credit option for developer, with the 4% deals being easier to obtain but only being appropriate for smaller developments. For instance, 4 of 12 applications for the 9% tax credit made from Pittsburgh last year were accepted – so it's a competitive process. The recommendations from the Affordable Housing Task Force will be useful for LV on a neighborhood level, and the Mayor's office has expressed support for our plans to include affordability as part of any significant new development.

Q: Does the Milhaus project provide sufficient parking solutions on their site?

A: They are presenting plans showing the details of the parking proposals at the meeting on January 25th.

Q: Regarding the shuttle concept combined with parking garage – won't it turn into a park 'n' ride for non-Lawrenceville drivers who work downtown?

A: It's a valid concern. We will analyze ways to avoid this happening. Deb Gross has asked Port Authority about plans to encourage more parking on the periphery of downtown where there is already large parking structures. We haven't given up on the riverfront greenway – still working with property owners. We will work with Riverlife to make that possible – we now have signed contracts through 29th Street.

Q: Did you ask Uber to run the shuttle through Smallman Street?

A: We are currently working through Traffic 21 at CMU regarding the circulator/shuttle concept and potential vendors. They are very early in the planning stages. Obviously, Uber would be an interesting partner.

Q: What is the development/proposal stage for the site near the 62nd Street bridge?

A: The owner of the site, the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh, issued a Request for Proposals late last year for the property. Both LU and LC were active in the initial review committee. Staff at the Urban Redevelopment Authority are currently evaluating those proposals.

Q: Where are all the people coming from to move into these expensive apartments? Is Pittsburgh gaining that many jobs?

A: Interesting questions. To the first one: we understand from our colleagues at the University of Pittsburgh's Center for Social and Urban Research that the new residents in the larger multifamily developments in the East End roughly fall into three categories: 1/3 are city residents moving within the city, 1/3 are moving to city from within the region, and 1/3 are moving in from outside the region.

To the other question: there are some interesting answers here: http://pittsburghtoday.org/view_economy_job_growth_view1.html

Q: At what point can Lawrenceville developments be restricted? Can we put an "occupied" sign on the Doughboy?

A: The existing Zoning Code places some limits on density and use—though that may not be what you're seeking.

As to the other question, there are no plans to install such gateway signage. There was this failed attempt last year at secession: <http://www.breakingburgh.com/lawrenceville-secedes-from-city-of-pittsburgh-to-form-first-hipster-republic/>

Q: How do we stay informed on projects that are ongoing?

A: LU has a development news eblast list, which you can sign up for by emailing info@lunited.org with the subject "Development News." We also give updates at block watch meetings, through our regular e-newsletter, through articles in the Bulletin, our website, facebook and twitter pages, and we flyer the surrounding neighbors for any upcoming development-related meetings. We can also take questions at any time at our office on 4839 Butler, or by phone at [\(412\)802-7220](tel:4128027220).

Q: What is happening at 34th and Penn?

A: The Lawrenceville Corporation owns 3400 Penn Avenue and recently entered into exclusive negotiations with the owner of four contiguous parcels in the adjacent block (3330-3350 Penn). The LC was just awarded predevelopment funding to complete design work for both sites. Our anticipation is to pursue a mixed-use, affordable housing strategy on both sites.