

**721 N. MAIN CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN DEVELOPMENT – CITY-WIDE MEETING #1**  
**MEETING SUMMARY**

**Date:** Wednesday, October 10, 2012

**Time:** 6:30 – 8:30 pm

**Location:** Ann Arbor Community Center, 624 N. Main Street

**Attendees:** Public Present: 54 ; *refer to Appendix A for sign-in sheet*

City staff present: 7; Sumedh Bahl; Kayla Coleman; Jerry Hancock; Matt Naud; Connie Pulcipher; Wendy Rampson; Colin Smith

Consultant Team present (SmithGroupJJR): 2; Neal Billetdeaux; Oliver Kiley

**Re:** City-Wide Meeting #1

Meeting Notes:

Project team gave a presentation to provide background; available at [www.a2gov.org/721NMain](http://www.a2gov.org/721NMain).

Opportunities and Constraints Analysis-

- Key point is that site access is visually and physically very limited
- Floodway/ floodplain: limited opportunities for stormwater infiltration because the water table is very close to the surface at this location.
- Day lighting Allen creek is not a recommended option for this site because of the high volume of water, also because of water quality concerns.
- Easement around Allen creek drain (underground pipe) needs to stay clear of significant structures.
- Phase 1 Environmental Assessment for 721 N Main has been completed. The report is in draft form and is being reviewed by city staff.
- The city has met with Reverend Whiten of the Ann Arbor Community Center; she is excited about the project and wants to be engaged.
- 721 N Main is zoned as public land (PL zoning) but that is not a limitation; it can be rezoned.

Scenarios- Some examples of what could possibly happen with the site were presented. The scenarios are not proposed alternatives; scenarios are intended to provide broad examples and stimulate thought. The scenarios show increasing levels of development intensity.

Open Discussion Notes:

(Note: this is not a direct transcription of the meeting discussion. This summary has been developed from notes taken during the meeting; comments are paraphrased. Where staff responses or clarification were provided they are shown in italics)

- When is the project expected to be implemented? *Staff response: That is not yet determined; it will be based on available funding. The City cannot yet say when the plan may become a reality.*
- Will the environmental impact decide which option we pursue? *Staff response: The recommended option will determine how much clean up is needed. The plan drives the clean up.*
- Concern that that city is not using the current floodway mapping. *Staff response: The project team is using the latest Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) issued on April 03, 2012.*
- There are many parks close to the 721 N Main site, but it is important to look at uses of the parks to balance potential for the site with needs.

- Technical Committee- are they analyzing pipes, underground flow, etc? The size of the pipes, state of pipes, pipe capacity?; *Staff response: Current pipes can handle 1 ½ yr flood. Can build a bigger pipe but it is very expensive and there will always be a bigger storm.*
- Pioneer High School- crew team at Bandemer Park, heavy pedestrian traffic.
- Support that the FEMA maps are correct, local neighbor has done investigation, not able to get out of paying flood insurance.
- There is an existing dog park nearby. *Clarification- Ann Arbor Parks & Recreation Services provides two dog play areas in city parks; Swift Run Park at the City's south end (Ellsworth Rd and Platt Rd) and Olson Park at the far north end (Dhu Varren Rd). The City of Ann Arbor does not currently provide any centrally located dog parks.*
- If feasible to poke hole in railroad berm it may shrink the floodplain; *Staff response: A feasibility study is being conducted. Will also research feasibility of a pedestrian crossing.*
- Crossing railroad tracks- support for bridges financed with Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds.
- Local neighbor pointed out that 721 N Main doesn't have great pedestrian access.
- Needs a unique use to attract people through the site.
- Meaning of the term "engage adjacent property owners" in presentation?; *Staff response: how does it affect you? Making sure we look at the surrounding neighborhood and not at the site in a vacuum.*
- Support for dog park.
- Site needs to be looked at in the larger context of N Main.
- Does not support tax financing.
- Would not like to see high rises in this area.
- Need to take time with decision on this property- interim/ temporary uses.
- Why rush to make decision on 721 N Main? Let's wait until we have a North Main Corridor plan; *Staff response: Clarification- We need to determine the best use for the open space component of the site; how to use that space and not preclude future uses in the area outside the floodway*
- Interest was expressed in public meetings for the entire N Main Corridor. The North Main Vision Task force (NMVTF) commented that they will hold public meeting(s) for the broader area. There will be opportunities for public input on N Main Corridor.
- Note- all task force meetings are public and there is opportunity for public comment.
- Has the AARR been engaged?; *Staff response: We will reach out to them as a stakeholder.*
- "Context" and "Neighborhood" are keywords in the discussion of plans for 721 N Main
- Need to think creatively when talking about options for the site. Work with neighbors, e.g. easements; look for mutually beneficial outcomes.
- Need to think outside the boundaries.
- Grant funds may provide opportunities.
- Support the greenway
- Concern about how the greenway is being represented
- Need to keep options open for greenway
- Very close to downtown, increasing density. Great area for a park.
- *Staff input: Schedule set up for application to MDNR Trust Fund, due April 2013. MDNR application requires a proposal and cost estimate. Not just "I want to build a park"; it needs to*

*be more specific. Largest grant amount is \$300,000. Can apply without matching funds but it is scored against you. Need matching funds to be successful. MDNR grant could focus on just a portion of the site e.g. just the floodway; we do not have to define what will happen on the non-floodway portion of the site.*

- *Staff input: FEMA grant to remove buildings in the floodway- It looks like the grant will be awarded in December, 2012. Grant ~\$100,000, we estimate that it will cost ~\$130,000 to take down buildings.*
- Other grant opportunities may exist.
- Don't see a need to wait on 721. All proposed/ potential options look favorable.
- The question we need to ask ourselves is: "What problem are we going to fix by developing this property." "How will our quality of life be better when this project is done?" "What added benefit will this bring?"
- Walk by space minimum of 2x/ day- need to consider utilization of CNG fueling station- very underutilized. I rarely see anyone there. It is a risk to the neighborhood; we hear the traffic and smell the fumes- we don't need that risk!
- Belize park- over represented on the graphics shown during 721 N Main presentation, it is actually much smaller area that what is shown on the map. *Staff response: point taken; the graphic is just a diagram, however, we will make the circle on the graphic smaller.*
- PROs (*Parks & Recreation Open Space Plan*) plan considerations are very important. This area was not considered underserved for parks in recent evaluations.
- Connectivity is important.
- Is it a high quality natural area? No.
- Support for some development because of safety reasons.
- Opposed to medium or high density development in the area
- Concerns about traffic in the area, increasing congestion
- Development downtown is increasing there is a need for parks.
- Water Hill is defined as the area between Miller, Main St., Sunset, and Brooks streets
- Office space may not create more eyes (*on the park*)- people are only there during the day.
- Support for residential development
- Support for large park
- Other cities e.g. NY, Kalamazoo are generating great funds from their Greenways. e.g. festivals.
- Need for large open space near downtown.
- A lot of opportunity to do better in N Main Corridor.
- Parking lot right on Main St doesn't seem to be the best use of that space. Perhaps some agreement could be made with the Community Center; *Staff Response: This may be an option, will be a continued conversation with the Ann Arbor Community Center.*

#### Comments from Written Feedback Forms:

(Note: all comments from an individual respondent remain grouped together; i.e. each number represents a respondent and all written comments as they were submitted)

1. With density in downtown and near downtown living the size of this parcel offers such opportunity for growing space and mixed use living and working designs.

- Community gardens
  - Multipurpose civic facilities
2. A community gathering space would be preferable, with a bike/ pedestrian path through. Folks suggested a dog park, flea market, concert/ arts space – the steep slopes would be well suited to seating. What about transport depot for light rail, or circulations downtown bus between parks, downtown, parking, hospital. Consider selling few feet of land to the adjoining neighbors to create a buffer.
  3. Good meeting
  4. Adjacent zoning needs to be analyzed for possible changes needed (not necessarily or “just” the PL)
    - Recreation + Public Use section: Very important to integrate enhancements with existing character
    - Natural/ cultural interpretation: a balance likely most successful.
    - Residential focus: except on the existing to integrate in with positive impact
  5. Floodplain/way is not reliable for planning for this site. Spicer who drew images indicated this in writing as well as verbally. Festival and connection to AC Greenway would be a great improvement and economic and environmental gain.
    - Festival use with income potential
    - Improve quality of life, recreation
  6. Is there any possible connection over railroad through easement on Triangle Towing site or adjacent properties?
    - For special programming/ civic facilities I am especially interested in the possibility of having some sort of performance stage venue or shared art space. Would be perfect for Water Hill Music Fest.
    - If development occurs → residential focus would be preferred, but NOT high rises.
  7. Art
  8. I really like the ideas that Lou G. mentioned- festivals, fairs, flea markets. The older brick building is aesthetically interesting and those ideas could be tried there.
    - I realize that daylighting Allen Creek has been ruled out but I am not convinced!
    - Thanks for the good work!
  9. Integrate with N. Main Corridor development plans. Slide 721 toward the river with walkways OVER N Main, OVER Depot.
  10. Great opportunity – make good use of it for the good of all
  11. Dog Park, bike access to North Corridor
    - Too much industry in area already (e.g. Beal)
  12. It would have been nice to meet Rail company reps and Community Center reps to hear their perspective. Feels sneaky not to include them from the beginning of the process.
    - Preferences section- This is a terrible way to ask this question, VERY confusing
  13. Max open space and connection to Conceptual Greenway and Argo
  14. Prefer mixed use with majority open space. Access (drive ways, paths) will be critical in virtually all of resulting projects. If it is not integrated well within the streetscape, it will not be used.
  15. Do we really need another park for drunks and bums (been to wheeler lately?)

16. Prefer open space/ ecological/ flood management and connection to greenways. No TIF no dense development.
17. My preference would be flex space- permanent. This would accommodate Greenway and temp space for events and flea markets.
18. High rise development is not needed, this is a vibrant residential neighborhood NOT downtown. We don't want downtown development. Water Hill lives.  
I want park space  
I prefer natural  
Residential- 1 to 2 story  
I think current needs for both residential/ office and park land do not take into account current development of multiple high rises and offer development downtown and the proposed development across the street on N Main. A park is needed, water quality treatment is needed, Greenway/ parking is needed.
19. Wasn't discussed. What if Mich Con area becomes a park?  
Agree best ideas were dog park area and spaced programs/ civic use for example Water Hill Music Fest events. Why not 3-5 venues along the tracks. Why not a monthly flea market/ craft shows. Move the natural gas pump! This is no longer an industrial area!
20. Dog park would be valuable to neighborhood and greater Ann Arbor area. Enhancement of water quality and flow is very important.  
Enhancement of ecology would improve water quality for water entering Huron River.  
Removal of natural gas refueling pump is vitally important.  
Arts center in refurbished existing building would benefit Ann Arbor  
Please report written comments.
21. Thank you for allowing open questions and dialogue. The format was much better than previous public meeting during which comments were submitted on cards and responded to without dialogue.  
Open space enhances character and attractiveness.  
Dog park is ok, public availability for picnics, events, gatherings, performances.  
Maximize habitat creation to support water management  
I prefer maximum green. Rehabilitate to existing wetlands.  
Let this be a place for people who live in the area and want to use the open space. I agree that safety can be an issue, remember that there are lots of parks with poor sight lines and we use them!
22. Looks like the Community Center and City could have a very good mutually beneficial entrance and parking.  
Dog park along RR where already have fence.  
Show Greenway through the floodway (not right next to RR)- great opportunity to have bike boulevard  
So much of this Floodway and fringe flood should obviously be park/ trail/ dog park/ recreation use.  
Central area needs to be able to see open space – really need a bigger main street entrance.

23. The Ann Arbor Rail Road has begun to remove a feeder track from their main track at Summit down to Felch St. At present it is in a mess of scattered ties and rails and spikes and weeds. This spur line follows the fence line all the way to Felch st on the western border. Working closely with the railroad will be important to greatly improve the site. Homeless people and children often walk down this track as a shortcut. It could pose a problem.

I believe that the gas station on the corner must be removed and relocated. This would also improve the access to the site from the gate on Summit which is better than the driveway off Felch.

Common Themes (sorted by number of references for suggested use/ topic):														
Suggested use/ topic	Keywords	Written Feedback Forms*					Open Discussion Notes**					Total count		
		# references			Representative Quote	# references			Representative Quote	Total count				
		Positive	neutral	negative		Positive	neutral	negative		Positive	neutral	negative		
Greenway; bike/ pedestrian path	Greenway, Bike, Pedestrian, Walk	11	2		“Max open space and connection to Conceptual Greenway and Argo”	3	1		“Need to keep options open for greenway”	14	3			
Civic Facilities/ flex space	Civic, Flex, Fair, Festival, Concert, Music, Perform	8			“For special programming/ civic facilities I am especially interested in the possibility of having some sort of performance stage venue or shared art space. Would be perfect for Water Hill Music Fest.”	1			“Other cities e.g. NY, Kalamazoo are generating great funds from their Greenways. E.g. festivals.”	9				
Dog Park	Dog Park	6			“Dog park would be valuable to neighborhood and greater Ann Arbor area”	1		1	“Support for dog park”	7		1		
Residential Development	Residential	3	2	1	“If development occurs, residential focus would be preferred, but NOT high rises”	1			“Support for residential development”	4	2	1		
Water Quality	Water Quality, Stormwater, Management	4			“Enhancement of water quality and flow is very important.”				<i>No representative quotes</i>	4				

\* One reference per respondent is tallied (A single respondent that cited the keyword(s) multiple times is tabulated as 1 reference).

\*\* One reference is tallied for each time given keyword(s) is cited (Because comments were not attributed to a particular respondent during the open discussion, we cannot limit tallies to one per respondent on a topic); Open Discussion quotes are not direct transcriptions.

**SIGN-IN SHEET** 721 N Main City-wide Meeting-#1

Name (Please Print)	Represent
1. Sarah Howard	
2. Jack Eaton	
3. Kate Harris	
4. Kevin Le	
5. Martha Hill	
6. David Crouse	
7. Susan Simons	
8. BARBARA JACKSON	
9. JOHN SWERLOW	
10. Mary Wigton	

**SIGN-IN SHEET** 721 N Main City-wide M

Name (Please Print)
21. DAVID SING
22. JOE O'NEAL
23. ALICE RALPH
24. Bob Simons
25. Erin Burkett
26. David Santacrose
27. Ethel Potts
28. Mike Mitchell
29. Pat Preston
30. MIKE FORGACS

NAME

SABRA BRIERE  
 Marge Haute + Jay  
 Eric Jensen  
 Andrew Lee  
 Kaz Ishikawa  
 Hannah Ree  
 Nivetha Sany  
 David Diephuis  
 SANDI SMITH  
 Peter Allen  
 Catherine Riseng  
 Chris CROCKETT  
 Anne Bannister

**SIGN-IN SHEET** 721 N Main City-wide M

Name (Please Print)
11. Ray Anderson
12. Francesca Cassara
13. TOM MIREE
14. MARGARET SCHANKLER
15. JULIE GRAND
16. Liz Mena
17. Andrew Perry
18. Rita Mitchell
19. Mike King
20. Elizabeth Ruggs

**SIGN-IN SHEET** 721 N Main City-wide M

Name (Please Print)
31. Vince Calvo
32. Wendy Rampson
33. Barbara Baraden
34. Jonathan Bulky
35. WAYNE COLQUITT
36. Joan Harris
37. Rob Thumel
38. Sandy Weiment
39. John Gaven Nystrom
40. RAY DETTER