Near West Neighborhood Land Use Plan
Redevelopment Work Group
Summary – First Meeting
Haughville Branch Library
July 24, 2013

Attendance:
Farooq Ahmed
Len Ashburn, Rainbow Ridge
Linda Ashburn, Rainbow Ridge
Alice Baker, Rainbow Ridge Crime Watch
Fred Beck
Kim Boyd, Goodwill Industries
Anthony Burke, MCPHD
Mark Cooper, Westside Loan Co.
Richard Cornell, WINC
Suzanne Cunningham, Hearts and Hands of Indiana
Joyce England, Fairfax Neighborhood
Marion Ficarro
Richard Harris, 500 View Neighborhood
Sarah Harris, 500 View Neighborhood

Candace Holcomb, Little Flock UPB Church
Martha Judkins, Fairfax Neighborhood
Diane Lurvey
Bessie Mobley, 500 View Neighborhood
Betty Shutters, 500 View Neighborhood
Marshall Shutters, 500 View Neighborhood
Trent Spoolstra, Hearts and Hands of Indiana
Jeffrey Thomas, Kings and Priests Ministry
Richard Vonnegut, Hoosier Rails to Trails
Phil Votaw, Westside CDC

Staff:
John Byrnes, Division of Planning
Alice Gatewood, Division of Planning
Keith Holdsworth, Division of Planning
Helen Jackson, Mayor’s Neighborhood Liaison

Summary:
The meeting began with a summary of the planning process to date. The participants reviewed the results of the priority-setting done at the kick-off meeting (attached).

Participants were then provided with a draft list of principles and objectives for redevelopment of the neighborhood (attached). The items were drawn from previous planning efforts and from the work-to-date on this plan. The group did not modify the list.

To set the stage for the discussion of land use, information was provided on the supply of commercial land in the Near West in comparison to the demand for commercial space. Based on:

- U.S. average of 20 square feet of retail space per person,
• Actual retail space being only about ¼ of the size of the lot that the store sits on, and
• Near West population of 17,750
The amount of community commercial land that the Near West can expect to successfully support is 32.6 acres. This is a rough estimate that provides a starting point for discussion.

The amount of community commercial land existing in the Near West is 67 acres. This includes used, underused and vacant retail properties. It doesn’t include heavy commercial space such as car lots and lumber yards.

Because there is double the supply of commercial land compared to the demand for commercial land, how do we close the gap between supply and demand? Three major potential solutions are:
1. Reduce amount of retail property
   • Convert marginal retail property to other uses
   • Halt conversion of other land uses to commercial space
2. Bring in customers from outside the neighborhood
   • Washington Street and 16th are each used by over 20,000 vehicles a day, which is a source of many potential outside customers
   • IUPUI is also a potential source of outside customers, although there is a lot of competition for their business
3. Increase the population
   • Increase the number of people living in the neighborhood
   • Increase the number of people who come into the neighborhood to work
A strategy that combines all of these potential solutions was recommended.

Land use:
A brief overview of land use planning was provided. A land use plan is required by the State of Indiana for any city that wants to have zoning. However a plan does more than just satisfy a state requirement. It is intended to provide stability and predictability for those people who have a decision to make about the use of a property, such as property owners, neighbors, neighborhood organizations, developers, City staff and the Metropolitan Development Commission and the Boards of Zoning Appeals.

The City of Indianapolis uses 19 land use categories in its maps of recommended land uses. The categories are based on both use and intensity. Typically a land use can be accomplished through more than one zoning district. The land use recommendations are a guide, not law, and they do not automatically change anyone’s zoning district. By state law, the land use recommendation is one of the considerations that the MDC and BZAs must use.

Proposed land use was presented for the northern third of the study area. Particular attention was paid to 16th Street, Luett Street and 10th Street. Commercial space along 16th Street was recommended to remain at its current extent, neither getting larger or
smaller. Heavy commercial uses such as car lots were recommended to be concentrated to the eastern potion of the street in areas where they would least impact surrounding homes.

Luett Street north of 16th Street has a mix of industrial and residential land uses. Because these two land uses can often be incompatible, the meeting participants were asked if they envisioned a future where the industrial and residential uses continue to be mixed or if they envisioned the industrial uses gradually leaving the area and being converted to residential uses. After considerable discussion, the general consensus was a mixed-use future. The hope was expressed that the industrial users would better maintain their properties.

On the northeast corner of 10th Street and Holt is a vacant parcel. It is residentially zoned. It was the subject of a recent zoning case. The case was for a gas station. The case was withdrawn by the petitioner before the MDC’s vote. The land is still owned by the petitioner. The meeting participants came to the conclusion that this was not a likely site for residential development and recommend that the plan show a low-intensity commercial use for the site; a use that is less intense than a gas station. It was noted that the business to the west across Holt Road, Crystal-Clean, was frequently very smelly.

The next site that was discussed was a heavy commercial/light industrial site on the south side of 10th Street just west of Tibbs. The site is currently home to a fencing company. The site is roughly triangular with housing to the north and east and a railroad along the southwest. Its relationship to the adjacent housing makes its current use problematic, while its position on a railroad makes residential use less than ideal. The group eventually concluded that the site should be recommended for multi-family residential development.

A site at the intersection of Tibbs Avenue and Garden Avenue is surrounded on three sides by industrial uses and on the fourth side by a residence. The site currently has a house on it. Although asked about possible conversion of the site to an industrial use, the group decided to recommend that the site remain residential.

10th Street between Tibbs Avenue and Miley Avenue is currently a mix of small businesses, residences, churches and vacant lots. Many of the structures along the street are vacant. Almost without exception, the entire stretch is zoned for neighborhood commercial uses. As a general rule, existing businesses and churches were recommended to remain; the businesses as a part of a mixed-use recommendation and the churches as part of a special use recommendation. Existing residences were recommended to remain. Vacant lots and vacant, underutilized and dilapidated commercial sites were recommended for redevelopment as housing.