

## **Red Cedar Renaissance Conversation – Report To Lansing City Council, October 29<sup>th</sup> 2012**

On October 13, 2012 a Forum was held at Foster Community Center in Lansing to explore the possible sale and development of the Red Cedar Golf Course. The gathering was called Red Cedar Renaissance Community Conversation. Forty-five individuals participated representing:

- development
- community/neighborhood
- business/economic growth
- transportation/connectivity
- environmental/water management perspectives

Using a small discussion format and a collaborative mapping exercise the group developed several design priorities. They are listed below:

- Having a central gathering spot, a “heart” in the public park
- Creating a multimodal transportation area with bike racks/storage, CATA bus service, and discreet auto parking
- Developing multistory buildings (No single story, suburban style development)
- Placing commercial use along Michigan Avenue (Didn’t define what it would be like or how it would be used.)
- Having year round active and leisure green space
- Connecting the Greenway to Frandor
- Modeling conservation/drainage of the Montgomery Drain Project on the Tollgate Drain Project
- Using flood way & flood plain for green space, parks, water processing
- Defining pedestrian crossing for Michigan Avenue
- Enabling bike connectivity especially through Raney Park
- Connecting the River Trail to the Red Cedar Golf Course site in addition to finishing River Trail connections to other locations
- Creating a “welcoming entrance” on the northwest corner of development defining a route into the site
- Connecting the Red Cedar Development and Park to Trowbridge area including the Amtrak station

- Having ease of accessibility for people with disabilities, etc in the open environment
- *River protection through storm water and wastewater management and continuous water quality monitoring are critical components of any development at the former Red Cedar Golf Course site.*

By the end of the meeting, the general consensus of the group was support for the sale of additional land, and for economically and environmentally sustainable development that effectively addresses the serious environmental issues surrounding the Montgomery Drain, protects wetlands and preserves public access to the Red Cedar River.

This support of the sale comes with the expectation that stakeholders will continue to be involved in the process.

We recognize many questions remain unanswered (see list below) and anticipate working with City Council in the future articulation of this development plan.

### **Questions**

Who will own what parts of the property?

How will people safely cross Michigan Avenue?

Where will the parking be?

How do we tie into Trowbridge area / Amtrak?

Who would manage park and park activities?

How can we assure access for testing, evaluation, and clean up by community groups (Mid-MEAC, Friends of the Red Cedar) as well as the health department in the development agreement?

How can we increase participation with East Lansing, MSU, Clippert /Howard St.:

How can we assure interested parties continue to have input?

How should we communicate with decision makers throughout this process?

## **Red Cedar Renaissance Community Conversation October 13, 2012 – Foster Community Center**

### **Report from Morning Session “What Do We Know”**

#### **“Michigan Avenue Corridor is Critical to the Entire Region”**

**Bob Trezise** – Lansing Economic Area Partnership

(Notes from Bob Trezise, was not able to participate for the full day and provided these remarks)

- Construction in flood plain is extra complicated and expensive. Tenants will have to pay more.
- Drain district will be amended. More development equals less cost on all in district.
- Anticipated incentives are: developer pays, Brownfield TIF for public/green infrastructure, possible state community revitalization money
- City Council in the end is only entity to approve the development agreement/sale
- Cannot and will not build in the flood way
- About 20 acres or so acres on riverfront which are part of the flood way
- This will be a park
- It will have public access
- Could/should be additional access thru development and could be public or private.
- Corner of Clippert and Michigan will not be park; it will be development

#### **“Floodway & Environmental limitations”**

**Pat Lindemann**, Ingham County Drain Commissioner

“Go big or go home!” Taking broad view is essential. The proposed Capital Gateway Project has momentum

The Drain Commissioner is obligated to resolve the pollution issues and clean up the Red Cedar River. The Montgomery Drain is currently the biggest source of pollution for the Red Cedar River and one of the worst drains in the county. That problem can be fixed on a smaller basis, but there is potential for much more! Pat envisions a project for holding and filtration similar to the Tollgate Drain project.

The Capital Gateway developers have enlisted a well-regarded architectural firm and are attracting the interest of national businesses.

All of the proposed development is in a flood plain, which limits how development can occur. Part of the property is the floodway (the area of the river that will have current during floods) and cannot be developed. It should be held in the public trust.

Pat wants to get 98% cleaning efficiency on the Montgomery Drain, currently at 0%. The project must be easily maintained and should provide active & passive recreational opportunities utilizing features of a healthy ecosystem. Lindemann wants ongoing community input and cooperative planning including City of Lansing & developers. This project is a unique and time-limited opportunity.

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**Morning Breakout Report  
"Design of the Built Environment Type"  
Summary Notes  
(Brendan Boyle)**

**Density:**

Density in structures is more energy efficient, business friendly, and offsets the large amount of unbuildable land on the parcel. Spread out infrastructure, rather than more dense multi-story building on the land, would be more costly. Achieving observation height, perhaps up to ten stories would provide a unique view of the flood plain, the river, MSU and the Cities of Lansing and East Lansing.

**Grid:**

A street grid extension of the existing urban grid, like the downtowns in Lansing and East Lansing would be preferable to a development with few right angles like some sub-urban grids.

**Business sited:**

A wish to see more eclectic, local, privately owned businesses rather than national, corporate chains and franchises.

**Hidden parking:**

Participants would like to see that parking areas are not competing with the center of interest of the development. They would like less surface parking, more parking under buildings (at ground level), and a balance between integrated and perimeter parking. Several options are being considered now.

**Multi-modal transportation:** Transportation hub(s) within the development should connect with Frandor hubs and possibly the Trowbridge multi-modal complex that is under way.

**Aesthetics:**

The group agreed that the built environment should include beautiful architecturally designed buildings, landscape features and artwork (sculpture, murals, etc.)

#### Building materials:

Building materials used should be varied from among structures. The overall appearance should not give the impression that everything was built at the same time (though it may have been?). The materials used should convey a sense of permanence of the structures.

#### Year-round Use:

The built environment should have attraction for use in the cold months as well as the warm. Connectors between structures, like the connector across Michigan Avenue at Sparrow Hospital were considered but there were negative aspects as well as positive associated with this use. It might be worth revisiting, but at this time it was thought that the metropolitan area is "not big enough for this." Other ideas were a heated gazebo type meeting/gathering area, perhaps with transparent solar panels.

#### Entertainment venue:

There was a strong interest in a small scale theater, with at most two screens, as different from the big multi-plex theaters we now have in other developments.

#### Retail Food:

Participants agreed both a grocery store and seasonal farmer's market element would be a strong addition.

#### Restaurants:

As part of the built environment a restaurant incubator was suggested. The restaurants spawned could be kiosks, food truck or other hybrids.

#### Residential structure:

There was a call for diversity in housing types. Participants suggested condos, higher end apartments, and affordable housing with a buffer of commercial space between some groups e.g. retirees, and professionals not adjacent to students.

This section lead to discussion of the pattern observed in international students coming to MSU to school or work. They appear to like to live near others from their culture for support and comfort. This culture "node" aspect has implications for the common spaces in a development that groups might share e.g. Asian residents might want the built environment to consider feng shui in the design. It was agreed that the best approach might be, rather than melting pot, to knit the groups together in a true neighborhood, to draw from the strength and interest diversity among peoples carries.

#### Live and Work Spaces:

It was acknowledged that some people would want to work where they live. Structure that could accommodate a range of multi-use from electronic telecommuting through individual workshops to shared spaces for artists, designers could be a draw and a benefit.

#### Utility infrastructure:

One participant brought up the fiber optic telecommunications network "cabling" that is being installed under Michigan Avenue. This will be an interest for businesses (at first) to locate in the area with this capability. It may also be of interest for private sector partners to MSU endeavors as well as independent start-ups and (data hungry) individuals.

#### Community Gardens:

There was great agreement on this feature because of the benefits of bringing people together for produce and perennials, and reducing landscaping maintenance costs for the property.

#### LEEDS:

Participants felt seeking developers who built to attain LEED N.D. standards was desirable. LEED N.D., we were told, stands for an approach that considers "neighborhood development" rather than just the quality of individual structures.

#### Accessibility:

Everyone agreed that the development should be handicap accessible throughout.

#### Generationally Friendly:

Participants expressed a desire that this would be a place where anyone would be welcome regardless of age. They would not be prohibited from entering it nor caused to live/recreate elsewhere as their age changed.

Notes recorded and summarized by Brendan Boyle, Newgrange Communication

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**Report from Morning Breakout Session  
Green Space Group  
(Doak Bloss)**

**What do you want to see regarding the DESIGN OF THE GREEN SPACE in the development of the Red Cedar Golf Course land?**

*1) What we want to see*

The seven participants in this group brainstormed a long list of things that they would like to see, and then identified that they fell into three clusters: Conservation/Restoration, Accessibility by Trains, and Recreation.

**CONSERVATION/RESTORATION**

Some people appreciate the space as it is now, wild and undeveloped, and wondered if there was any consideration of establishing a conservancy for native, non-invasive species. It was noted that nothing on the land is native now, nor is it natural, having served as a golf course. Creating a conservancy would therefore involve essentially starting over, and possibly be quite expensive.

There was strong support for conservation being combined with ecological efficiency. If developed, the land should be used to eliminate pollution and improve water quality as naturally and efficiently as possible. Ponds and natural plants should be part of the purification system. The Tollgate park between Fairview and Wood Streets was cited as an excellent model for this.

The woods should be preserved, with hiking and biking trails incorporated into it.

**ACCESSIBILITY BY TRAILS**

Extend the River Trail on the north side of the river, all the way to campus. This would be a great way to integrate existing space. Also, remove all obstructions created humans and other animals. Assure safe access to the river for monitoring water quality (which does not exist now).

**RECREATION**

Currently the space is used as a Cycle-Cross course, which at least one person in the group hoped would continue. Support for this hinged on ensuring that the course would not obstruct or damage the space for other passive recreational purposes. (Current use

tears up the ground quite badly.) Ideally the green space should support multiple purposes, and be monitored regularly to ensure that those purposes are maintained. Participants suggested the following: walking, running, dog-walking, cross-country skiing, cross-country running, and Frisbee golf. Participants felt strongly that the space should not be high-maintenance or highly groomed. A Frisbee golf course, for example, should be natural and not require chemicals to maintain.

Other recreational uses that were suggested for the overall space: 1) a place to sell homemade goods without having to sign on for a monthly rental, open to all; 2) the inclusion of some rec-center functions such as showers for bikers and a bike co-op and repair hub; 3) and a canoe and kayak livery, once water quality is assured.

There was discussion of an outdoor amphitheatre, but a great deal of concern about adding to noise pollution for the surrounding area. Participants suggested that it should not be on Michigan Avenue and not be near the water for this reason. If concerns about noise pollution could be attended to, everyone in the group was amenable to the idea of an amphitheatre.

## ***2) What we don't want to see***

Participants only specified two things that they did not want to see. They were both characteristics that would apply to all of the potential resources described above:

- Spaces should not be “manicured.” For example, participants were not interested in a lavish garden that would require a lot of upkeep and attention; community gardens however would be welcome.
- Buildings, recreational resources, etc., should not require excess water and electricity. Participants felt very strongly that the space should not be created as a “showcase”— i.e., something to admire and look at but not be welcoming and useful to the whole community.

## ***3) Unanswered Questions***

- If the ballot initiative fails, how much green space will be available for use in the ways we've described? It was speculated that without ability to sell the land to a developer who would respect the community's priorities, the Drain Commissioner would have to come up with a “mechanical” solution to the use of the space, which would be costly.
- How will the whole 60 acres be maintained? This includes the question of waste management for the built environment.

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**Report from Morning Breakout  
Public Access & Ownership  
(Nancy Lombardi)**

**Want:**

- A process for resolving conflicts among different owners/users/stakeholders
- A public park
- Public recreation utilizing the floodway area, river and existing ball park
- Infrastructure to support increased public use (e.g., restrooms, parking)
- Connect the river trails, bike paths
- Permeable surfaces
- International sports fields (e.g., soccer, rugby, cricket, bocce)
- Public access 24/7/365
- River protection through storm water and wastewater management are critical components of any development at the former Red Cedar Golf Course site.
- Access for testing, evaluation and clean up by community groups (i.e. Mid-MEAC, Friends of the Red Cedar) as well as the health department must be maintained in any development agreement.
- Increase non-motorized access/use
- Access to commercial parking after business hours
- Tollgate drain
- Integrate residential, commercial, and public areas

**Don't Want:**

- More traditional-U.S. ball fields (e.g., softball, baseball)
- Hard surface parking, pathways
- Barriers to public access and use
- To add to pollution of river and environment
- A sterile water detention site (i.e., hole in the ground lined with rocks)
- Suburban setback from streets

**Questions:**

- How do we balance access and security/safety?
- How do we balance the requirements and requests of various owners?
- What's an acceptable setback from streets?

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**Report from Morning Breakout  
Transportation and Connectivity – Summary of Points  
(Ann Francis)**

- 1) Easy and safe access to the site focusing not only on Michigan Avenue but Kalamazoo with feeder lines from surrounding areas to connect with public transportation, bike and walking paths.
  - a. Attention needs to be made to a variety of modes of transportation: walk, bike, motorized wheel chairs, strollers, buses, entertainment express, cars, kayaks and canoes.
  - b. Connections to site from Frandor, Groesbeck, Raney Park, across 127, across Clippert near River Trail and particularly neighborhoods east, west, north and south of the site.
    - i. Overhead crossing at Michigan Avenue
    - ii. Overhead bike lanes e.g. London (state of the art)
    - iii. Wider sidewalks all around
- 2) Within the site
  - a. Walking and biking through whole site
  - b. Bike parking, bike sharing (depot), bike shelters
  - c. Pleasant and safe with drinking water, bathrooms, smart lighting, benches
  - d. Attractive all weather shelters and gathering places.
    - i. Pavilion
    - ii. Public Gardens
    - iii. Meeting places
  - e. Focus on nature and non commercial activities
  - f. Toll gate atmosphere with walking and riding paths
  - g. Canoe and kayak entry
- 3) Welcoming Access to Site
  - a. Ensure no 'dead zones' either on Michigan Avenue or Kalamazoo to deter people from walking or biking to the site – particularly from Eastside
  - b. Welcoming entrance(s) into the site on Michigan Avenue and Kalamazoo
  - c. User friendly everything for people of all ages and abilities

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**Afternoon Breakout Report  
Design Priorities – Mapping**

Parking not on Periphery – Permeable

Recreation options also after hours

Start with access – ways in and out of site and various function areas

Include public restroom / benches

Enclosed / accessible green space – year round

Tourism draws for active transportation – bike / walking trails, bike share, enclosed bike parking, etc.

Public access first – easements

Bus hub toward Kalamazoo side of property (instead of Michigan Ave.) that goes to terminal

Density – of student housing, other residential and commercial - build up rather than out / maximum 10 floors

Tall buildings – more on North Side of property – lighter on south side

Attractive businesses – not box stores

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**Reports from Breakout 2 - Mapping  
Similarities, Differences and Questions**

(Charted by Doak Bloss, Brendan Boyle, Lynne Martinez)  
(Noted by Jennie Gies)

**What similarities do you notice?**

- Bike connectivity and especially through Ranney Park
- Connecting River Trail and finishing its connections
- A way for pedestrians to cross Michigan Avenue
- Year round green space
- Where the park belongs
- Connection of the Greenway from Frandor (but different ways: green vs. street)
- On northwest corner of development having a Welcoming and provided route into the site.
- Connection to Trowbridge Entrance
- Conservation/Drainage-Tollgate Model
- Having ease of accessibility for people with disabilities, etc in the open environment
- Having a central gathering spot/ "heart"
- \*\*\*Having a multimodal area with bike racks/storage\* (?some words I couldn't make out?)
- No one advocated single story, suburban development
- Know where the commercial use goes but didn't define what it would be like or how it would be used.

**Where do you see differences?**

- Different methods of sound control
- Priority of the development such as housing type and locations
- Location of transportation hubs
- Crossing at Michigan Avenue – difference on green vs street
- Use of land across Clipper Street
- Sense of neighborhood and Multi Modal Race
- Grids (urban) vs more open layouts
- More Lansing Perspectives from East Lansing, MSU, existing businesses

### **Still have questions?**

- How do we cross Michigan Avenue?
- Where will parking be?
- How do we manage grocery carts?
- How to tie into Trowbridge?
- How do we get parties together?
- Who would manage park and park activities?
- How to increase development participation with East Lansing, MSU, Clippert/Howard residents?
- Will there be continuing input into the development design?
- Who owns what?
- How do you impact decision makers?
- Will there be a statement of support/acknowledgement before November 6<sup>th</sup> vote?
- How do we communicate with decision makers?

### **What's next?**

- Create and share report from today's gathering
- November 6<sup>th</sup> vote on the sale of the property
- Reassess next steps
- Continue ongoing public process