

Minutes

The City Council of the City of Leawood, Kansas, met for a Special Call Meeting at City Hall, 4800 Town Center Drive, at 6:00 P.M., on Monday, August 6, 2012. Mayor Peggy Dunn presided.

Councilmembers present: Debra Filla, Jim Rawlings, Julie Cain, Carrie Rezac, James Azeltine, Gary Bussing and Lou Rasmussen

Councilmembers absent: Andrew Osman

Staff present: Scott Lambers, City Administrator
Richard Coleman, Comm Dev. Director
Mark Klein, Planning Official
Dave Williams, Fire Chief
Patty Bennett, City Attorney
Joe Johnson, Public Works Director
Deb Harper, City Clerk
Pam Gregory, Assistant City Clerk

Others Present: Jeffrey Alpert, Park Place Partners
James Taylor, Leawood Resident

Review of the 135th Street Corridor Study

Welcome by the Mayor

Mayor Dunn called the meeting to order at 6:10 P.M. Introductions were made by those present.

Opening Comments – City Administrator Scott Lambers

During the goal setting session, the City Council had requested to review the 135th Street Corridor guidelines to take a proactive position to update the study with greater detail, similar to the Mixed-Use [MXD] Zoning in the City's Leawood Development Ordinance [LDO]. The density levels currently in place need to be evaluated to consider expansion to achieve consistency throughout the City. A second work session is scheduled on August 20th to discuss how they want to proceed.

Presentation – Community Development Director Richard Coleman

This original corridor plan was adopted in 1996 and was divided into two primary categories: Urban Design Concepts and Development Standards. The following goals were identified for the 135th Street Corridor Development area:

- Establish Leawood Identity
- Encourage Quality Development
- Protect Surrounding Neighborhoods
- Determine Appropriate Land Use
- Control Traffic
- Foster a Positive Investment Climate

It was determined these goals could best be achieved through the following strategies:

- Creating a Sense of Place
 - Community Gateways
 - Intersection Treatments
 - Distinctive Development Design
- Transition within the Corridor
 - Regional to Local Focus
 - Vehicular to Pedestrian Friendly
 - Intense Retail to Mixed-Use Development
- Defining Urban Space
 - Height-to-Width Ratios
 - Consistent Edges
 - 135th Street Corridor Identity
 - Sidewalk Space
 - Pedestrian Plazas
- Creating Pedestrian Scale
 - Treatment of First Floor Building Details
 - Texture and Materials
 - Streetscape Elements
 - Landscaping Elements
- Controlling Bulk
 - Articulation of Building Mass
 - Locate Large Building Masses along 135th Street
 - Control Bulk and Height of Buildings Near Reverse Frontage Roads
- Creating Pedestrian Space Within Parking Lots
 - Continuous Pedestrian Connections
 - Landscaped Separation Between Vehicles and Pedestrians
 - Create a Pleasant Pedestrian Environment
 - Enhance Pedestrian Safety
- Integration of Greenways and Open Space
 - Enhance Visual Appeal of Corridor
 - Link Districts
 - Help Establish “Sense of Place”

At this time, the City’s entire Comprehensive Plan is MXD Zoning. The Site Planning Base Map shows different land-use categories, focusing on office and retail. The focus of this study will be from State Line to Nall Avenue, which is approximately two miles. The site map shows some residential development to the north and south of 135th Street. The urban design standards for the corridor were presented in the following categories:

- Streetscape
 - Gateways
 - Street Medians
 - Sidewalks
 - Street Furniture

- Linear Park/Bike Trail
- Signage
- Landscaping
 - Buffers
 - Interior Treatments
 - Open Space Landscaping
 - Parking Lot Landscaping
- Property Development
 - Architectural Standards
 - Site Planning and Improvement Standards
 - Density (FAR or % Coverage)
 - Parking
 - Sidewalks
 - Lighting
 - Signature Markers & Signage

The study recommends implementing a “bonus” system to allow for higher density; however, it doesn’t discuss how to create it.

Planning Official Mark Klein confirmed the LDO was designed to include “bonusing” or extra floor area ratio [FAR] for the developer if they provide extra amenities.

The study discusses avoiding the visual clutter of urban corridors, the historic strengths of its original neighborhoods, commercial growth, and traffic flow. The following lists two alternative design concepts for access:

- Access limited to the intersections of the arterial roads at ½ mile intervals, with limited right-in and right-out curb cuts
- Mid-block access across the 135th Street median with signalized intersections every 1,300 feet, rather than just at arterial roads

These two alternatives for traffic access have not been studied. The study discusses buffering and creating setback standards along the corridor and along the reverse frontage roads. Moving forward, they need to include the support of the property owners and neighborhoods.

Councilmember Rasmussen thought they should consider whether they want to allow solely retail opposite heavy commercial or possibly consider a mixed-residential concept.

Councilmember Azeltine commented there are several “empty-nesters” close to retirement that want to downsize; however, there are not enough options for them in Leawood. Mr. Lambers replied there are almost no options in that regard and they need to target that market. As they move forward, they should discuss the possibility of incorporating a residential concept. Currently, they have a very low ceiling of FAR with very high standards required of the developer. As part of this process, they should continue the high development standards; however, consider raising the FAR from .25 to .4 and then have the bonus system kick-in.

Councilmember Filla felt the study was lacking in terms of pedestrian walkability, bicycle amenities, and greater transit options and wanted to encourage these amenities to the developers.

The study discusses land use, beginning with residential by dividing it into three categories as follows:

- Medium-Density Detached (3 to 5 units per acre)
- Medium-Density Detached & Attached (5 to 10 units per acre)
- Bonus-Density Attached (11 to 15 units per acre)

Mr. Lambers recommended they provide incentives for structured parking to eliminate surface parking. An incentive system could be established for developers willing to put greater density where they want it and would get more of a bonus.

Councilmember Rezac questioned if this entire area along 135th Street made of up separate parcels would be classified as a 'district.' Mayor Dunn stated that would be difficult because these parcels have different owners. The Corridor Plan would assist in maintaining consistency.

Mayor Dunn stated she wanted to ensure the neighborhood was included in this process, once a plan is formulated.

Mayor Dunn received consensus that all were in favor of increasing the density ratio.

There being no further business, the work session was adjourned at 7:28 P.M.

Pam Gregory, Recording Assistant City Clerk