

## 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 20, 2012. Mayor Peggy Dunn presided.

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

**Councilmembers absent:** None

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

**Others Present:** James Taylor, Leawood Resident  
Kevin Jeffries, Leawood Chamber of Commerce  
Jeffrey Alpert, Park Place Developers

## Continued Review of the 135<sup>th</sup> 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**

As they go through this study, it is important to consider parameters for residential development as a part of the overall Master Plan. Another work session will be held on September 4<sup>th</sup> to give staff direction on how to proceed.

### **Presentation – Community Development Director Richard Coleman**

Urban Design Concepts and Development Standard goals for the 135<sup>th</sup> Street corridor are:

- Identity, Image and Character – A distinct image to distinguish it from other places
- Organization and Pattern – Produce areas that are logically thought out, functionally effective and understood easily by visitors and neighbors
- Compatibility and Harmony – An effectively designed environment will function well and be visually appealing
- Visual Clarity – Clutter obscures character and decreases the visual impression

Councilmember Bussing felt they had been unsuccessful with these guidelines, thus far, and asked what they could do to change it. Mr. Coleman replied a more detailed development plan needs to be put in place. One of the ways some communities have achieved this is by using a “Downtown Form-Based Code” to create height, bulk and character for new urbanism.

This Code can be tailored to be as specific or as broad as they like. The success of a development may be based upon each individual developer's concept and vision.

### **Design Concepts – Creating a “Sense of Place”**

At least three types of focal points should be created along the corridor:

- Community Gateways
- Intersection Treatments
- Distinctive Development Design

### **Transition within the 135<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor**

A distinct transition should occur as they move from low-density to higher density development.

Councilmember Rasmussen was concerned that large, bulky buildings and their height-to-width ratios could create a “shadow” effect. Mr. Coleman replied this plan did not envision multi-story buildings; therefore, the designers would need to determine the shadow pattern of the building. Mr. Lambers stated multi-story buildings will be encouraged and one-story buildings discouraged unless something is presented that is unique and beneficial to the project.

This study discusses the intense retail at each end of the corridor to the mixed-use development [MXD], or “Market Square” pedestrian oriented area.

### **Defining Urban Space**

- Height-to-Width Ratios

One way to make the street environments more attractive is to provide them with a sense of enclosure and scale. Buildings, landscaping and other elements of the streetscape can help define a consistent “edge” to the corridor. The study uses a ratio of 1:4 (height: width) as the maximum ratio to define an urban space or corridor.

- Consistent Edges

To create a more urban sense of space, this study visualized pushing the buildings up and not having setbacks. The current Leawood Development Ordinance [LDO] requires a 60/40 frontage rule for buildings and landscaping.

Councilmember Filla felt 135<sup>th</sup> Street was located too far south and does not have the density of people to support development. She asked what the correct density ratio would be between residential, office, and commercial. Mr. Coleman replied this would be specific to developer and market studies. A higher residential density should help with this issue. Mr. Lambers noted residents located south of 135<sup>th</sup> Street would be a driving factor for this commercial area. A recent report from a Leawood restaurateur stated the demographics of Leawood are phenomenal. Mayor Dunn noted visitors come from several surrounding areas to dine and shop in Leawood. Councilmember Osman felt the office component was important to include in the mix. Mayor Dunn reminded the Council that all of the 135<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor Comprehensive Plan is currently shown as MXD. Planning Official Mark Klein confirmed a 20% minimum is required to be residential and a 30% minimum is required to be commercial.

**Sidewalk and Pedestrian Plazas**

Councilmember Rasmussen asked if there was a plan for pedestrian traffic along 135<sup>th</sup> Street. Mr. Coleman replied they intend for both pedestrian paths and bicycle trails that could link the area to the remainder of the City. Mr. Lambers noted they want to key on reverse frontage roads that would provide one sidewalk and one asphalt trail for east/west pedestrian access. Mr. Coleman thought a density bonus should be considered if a developer creates a plaza-like space to link pedestrian areas. To make these areas safer, it is important to establish a sense of enclosure for sidewalks by buffering pedestrians from vehicular traffic. This can be done by placing landscaping and streetscape between the sidewalks and traffic ways and locating sidewalks close to buildings.

**Scale**

The treatment of first floor building details, textures and materials, and streetscape and landscaping elements can all contribute to making pedestrian space more comfortable.

**Controlling Bulk**

The study suggests larger buildings should be encouraged to concentrate building masses and keep the bulk of development away from residential neighborhoods. The apparent size of buildings can be reduced and visual interest added through effective articulation and altering the mass of large buildings.

**Creating Pedestrian Space within Parking Lots**

Pedestrian amenities and walkways should be provided within parking areas to achieve the following objectives:

- Create a continuous pedestrian walkway between the sidewalk on the public right-of-way to the primary entrance of each building on the site (currently required in the LDO)

Councilmember Filla asked how they envisioned the continuity of parking. Mr. Coleman replied in order for a new higher density plan to work, structured parking would be encouraged. Mr. Lambers stated they could encourage an additional Transportation Development District [TDD] incentive for sub-terrain parking for office space. This would be sufficient for their needs. Parking structures are not included in the calculation of F.A.R. [Floor Area Ratio].

- Create a pleasant pedestrian environment complete with landscaping, pedestrian scaled lighting and other amenities
- Create a landscaped separation between vehicles and pedestrians with lighting and other amenities
- Enhance pedestrian safety by creating a walkway within parking lots to serve as a collector of pedestrian traffic

**Greenways and Linked Open Space**

The study encourages developers to link continuous connections between pedestrian and bicycle paths, which are important to create a functional environment.

**The Market Square District**

The Market Square of MXD-use office and Neighborhood Service District is in a unique location along the corridor and provides an opportunity to express a positive statement and create a special place in the community. Mayor Dunn felt Gezer Park was a good example of this with its art and public improvements.

**Development Standards – Concepts and Presentation**

- Streetscape
- Landscaping Plans
- Property Development

Property Development Standards include residential, retail, office park and retirement communities.

Councilmember Rasmussen felt commercial retail should be located internally in a MXD use development and not be located on the main arterial. Councilmember Bussing replied a retailer wants their signage to be visible and would not want to hide their business behind residential multi-story buildings. The plan should include a balance of retail and residential. Mr. Lambers thought a compromise could include an entrance of monuments into the development, such as light fixtures. This would not identify a particular retailer; however, it would soften the development and still draw attention to it.

**Gateways**

The study suggests that gateways be constructed at the eastern and western entries along 135<sup>th</sup> Street to announce the entry into the community. This could include the use of public art, fountains, sculptures and landscaping.

**Median**

The study suggests the median on 135<sup>th</sup> Street be protected to help maintain the boulevard characteristics of the corridor and maintain its maximum designed width. Future street widening should not cut into the median.

**Sidewalks**

The study suggests that continuous sidewalks be provided along both sides of all streets throughout the corridor area. Streets should not be widened at the expense of sidewalks and other pedestrian areas. Mr. Lambers suggested that the pedestrian walkway adjacent to 135<sup>th</sup> Street be separated from the roadway by a tree lawn of at least 10 feet in width.

**Signage**

As a part of the LDO, they require each developer to develop sign standards for their development. There are municipal uniform traffic control signs currently in place.

**Utilities**

All utilities will be underground.

**Street Landscaping**

The study suggests that street trees and landscaping be undertaken as part of capital improvement projects.

Councilmember Rasmussen asked if there was consistency in the streetscape going west into Overland Park. Mr. Coleman replied each City has its own criteria for the 135<sup>th</sup> Street corridor. Mayor Dunn noted each development has its own characteristics.

Councilmember Osman asked if a retail, office and/or residential user would all be subject to not only the development guidelines, but also to developing all of these other amenities. Mr. Lambers confirmed the developer's plan would be required to comply with at least the minimum standards.

**135<sup>th</sup> Street Landscaping and Medians**

A boulevard image is desired. The study suggests street tree plantings along the right-of-way be installed by developers as their projects are built. Mr. Lambers addressed some long-time concern regarding the medians lacking a boulevard impact; stating it would be the City's responsibility, not the developer's. Money was in the budget for this in anticipation of development across both sides of the street, which has yet to occur. Once they begin imposing the requirements for streetscape on both sides, the City should be prepared to upgrade the medians. There are some trees planted; however, if they wanted to be proactive and set the standards, they could proceed with additional plantings.

**Reverse Frontage Road Landscaping**

The study suggests that frontage road landscape easements be at least 25 feet wide and street trees be located at 40-foot intervals. The City's current standards are 35-foot intervals.

**Preliminary guide for 135<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor:**

- Transition Area
  - The area within the corridor that is between the south side of 137<sup>th</sup> Street and the adjacent residential development further to the south will be a transition area
- Multiple Story Buildings
  - One-story buildings will not be encouraged
- Developments will be encouraged to have residential units over commercial uses
- F.A.R. [Floor Area Ratio: Gross Building Area/Gross Area of Site]:
  - The minimum F.A.R. shall be 0.40
  - The maximum F.A.R. shall be 1.00
- F.A.R. Discounts:
  - Standalone residential will receive a F.A.R. discount of 50%
  - An additional F.A.R. discount will be provided for residential above commercial uses
  - Parking structures are not included in the calculation of F.A.R. (current practice)
  - A 25% F.A.R. discount will be given to hotels

- Potential financial participation by the City
  - Use of a Special Benefit District [SBD] for public improvements through a special assessment
  - Use of a Transportation Development District [TDD] for undergrounding utilities through a special assessment
  - Use of a TDD of up to a 1% sales tax for parking structures through Pay-As-You-Go [PAYG]

Councilmember Rasmussen thought there could be exceptions to the use of a TDD for undergrounding utilities and suggested they include the term “as applicable.”

Councilmember Filla suggested they consider additional underground parking because of the increase in density. Mr. Coleman replied all residential use is required to comply with FEMA standards regarding storm shelters.

Mr. Lambers stated they intend to purge any irrelevant material and include all relevant information for guidance in the corridor study. He suggested they discuss building height close to residential and to what extent they would like to see residential development and density levels at the next work session. Mayor Dunn noted the City’s current maximum for residential use is 15 units per acre.

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

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Pam Gregory, Recording Assistant City Clerk