

**MAPLE HEIGHTS TLCI (#19024)
COMMUNITY MEETING #1**

December 2, 2019

Location: Maple Heights High School - Cafeteria Time: 6:00pm – 7:30pm

Attendance:	Affiliation:	E-Mail Address:
Mayor Annette Blackwell	City of Maple Heights	ablackwell@mapleheightsohio.com
Linda Vopat	City of Maple Heights	lvopat@mapleheightsohio.com
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Toni Jones	Maple Heights City Council	tjonesd2@hotmail.com
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Trey Williams	Maple Heights Boys League	ronnie.williams517@gmail.com
Melissa Thompson	NOACA	mthompson@mpo.noaca.org
Nancy Lyon-Stadler	WSP	nancy.lyonstadler@wsp.com
Deja Jackson	WSP	deja.jackson@wsp.com
Alex Pesta	City Architecture (CA)	alex@cityarch.com
Juleian Curtis	City Architecture (CA)	juleian@cityarch.com

Summary of Meeting

December 2nd marked the first official time a public presentation has been given in the community. While many factors may have contributed to the meeting being not as heavily attended as the group would have preferred, those that were in attendance were fully engaged, and enthusiastic about the conversation around enhancing their community. Mayor Blackwell made a critical point about carrying this message throughout the attendee's networks, with the goal of demonstrating the City's commitment to creating change that is for the greater community's benefit.

Introductions, Project Overview & Project Team Experience

1. Apart from the consultant and client teams, and community stakeholder, Georgette Vidmar, community members were being introduced to this project for the first time. City staff, city council, and local non-profit's that serve the City's residents comprised the audience, each with a passion for the City they serve or represent.
2. During introductions the members of the audience expressed an interest in exploring the idea of a Transportation Oriented Development (TOD) at Southgate that would include new housing types.
3. City Architecture & WSP briefly described the history of their organization and their collective experience working with the NOACA Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative (TLCI), while Melissa Thompson of NOACA assisted with describing the goals, objectives, and impact of the TLCI program.

4. With the consultant team's existing conditions analysis wrapped up, a review of the project timeline showed we are at about the midpoint and have reached the important first meeting with the community to discuss the project.
5. CA then reviewed the project timeline and described the layered approach this process will follow. Guided by the master plan recently adopted by the City of Maple Heights this TLCI will start to focus in on a specific area with the community that can be elevated and enhanced.
6. To demonstrate its experience working in this space, CA provided several examples of previous TLCI projects (Center Ridge Road, Downton Euclid, & Barberton's Magic Mile) it has coordinated that demonstrated successful recommendations in similarly designed environments, as well as how this work done well can lead to actionable next steps that result in immediate change.

What We've Done So Far

7. Project context was provided before a more focused conversation on the study area began, as Maple Heights like many other east side Cleveland suburban communities are faced with the challenges of aging housing stock, outdated retail shopping centers, in addition to socioeconomic constraints. However, it is uniquely positioned due to its adjacency to one of the region's Amazon Fulfillment Centers.
8. The market study performed by 4ward Planning Inc., as a key part of this project focused on the impact of the recently developed Amazon fulfillment center in North Randall, and the influx of economic activity into the region. A share of this activity, due to proximity, can realistically be captured by Maple Heights in the form of added wages from employment from Amazon directly, services that support Amazon's employees or operations, and other related investment influenced by this international economic engine.
9. Isolated land uses and the Southgate footprint's influence on the surrounding circulation and overall connection to the community was then discussed. Significant community assets, such as Stafford Park, exist in the study area, however connections to these resources can be strengthened.

Traffic Analysis

10. The TLCI program's focus on transportation of all types places significant importance on the traffic analysis performed by consultant team member WSP. The presentation of their analysis focused on vehicular movement and roadway capacity along Libby Rd between Warrensville Center Rd and Northfield Rd.
11. WSP's analysis revealed that traffic on the roadway flows at an above optimal level, leaving room for features to be incorporated. WSP confirmed that converting Libby Road from 4 lanes to 3 lanes, with one travel lane in each direction, bike lanes in each direction, and a two way left

turn lane or median with left turn bays would still allow the roadway to function at an optimal level based on ODOT's standards.

12. Community members gave personal testimony about the danger they feel currently biking on the major corridors in the community such as Warrensville Center & Libby, and how the bike lane would need to be protected to encourage its usage and truly protect riders.
13. Concern was also raised about where a bike lane on Libby between Warrensville Center & Northfield Roads ultimately connects to when traveling west on Libby, as the roadway width is reduced once Libby crosses Warrensville Center. This could present an opportunity for a bike and pedestrian connection to be enhanced to Stafford Park via the currently restricted Stockton Ave.
14. Collectively the group was very receptive of the integration of bike lanes into the street network, with Mayor Blackwell stating that the community needs to adapt to include these component as it evolves.
15. WSP stressed the importance of the transit center within the community, and stated that the 41 bus line is one of RTAs most heavily used routes. Southgate Transit center is a significant asset for the community to harness.

Parking Analysis

16. Pedestrian experience throughout the study area is challenged. This is largely because this area is built around the use of the vehicle, with many obstructed paths, disconnected site lines and pathways, and large parking lots between the major corridors and businesses' front doors.
17. With over 5,500 parking spaces located in the southern half of the study area, between Libby & Rockside, there is enough impervious surface occupied by parking to fit about 58 football fields within it. A shocking statistic for most in the room, and while it represents a challenge, it also reveals an opportunity to repurpose this excess land for a higher and more beneficial use.

Early Takeaways

18. In summary, the consultant team has identified the presence of significant assets to be leveraged, such as Stafford Park, key anchors in the shopping district, Giant Eagle & Home Depot, as well as the Southgate Transit Center. Traffic Analysis supports the roadway enhancements that the community prefers, however identity and feeling of arrival are currently missing from the district and should be considered as well. Investment continues to occur along the central corridor of the district, while the Mayor continues to support efforts to enhance elements that elevate community pride.

'Your Experience'

19. While the experience at Stafford Park and the Southgate Shopping Center will be different, there is no reason why they should not be equal in quality. This notion was used to lead into the

closing group exercise, where images of Warrensville Center Road at the Libby Rd & Stockton Ave intersections were shown in their current state. At each image the group was asked to state what they saw or felt when looking at these 3 images:

- a. Image 1 – Warrensville Center Rd looking South to Libby Rd

Reactions:

- i. Desire to drive fast
- ii. Lots of pavement
- iii. Large curb cuts
- iv. Nothing eye catching

- b. Image 2 – Warrensville Center Rd and Libby Rd

Reactions:

- i. Long crosswalks
- ii. Unsafe curb cut at the corner of the block
- iii. Well landscaped Key Bank site

- c. Image 3 – Warrensville Center Rd and Stockton Ave

Reactions:

- i. Noticeable barrier at Stockton Ave
- ii. Unorganized parking at Auto Parts store
- iii. Back of house feeling, with noticeable debris

20. Immediately following each of these images a hand sketched rendering over the existing image was shown, demonstrating the possibilities at this critical node in the community. Attendees seemed open to the concepts presented and looked forward to their continued development.

- a. Image 1 – Warrensville Center Rd looking South to Libby Rd

Reactions/Comments:

- i. Enhanced tree lawn and continued wayfinding, starts to help establish a sense of arrival
- ii. Defined edges (ornamental fencing) between parking and pedestrian path, as well as narrower driveways allow for a safer pedestrian experience

- b. Image 2 – Warrensville Center Rd and Libby Rd

Reactions/Comments:

- i. Vertical striping at the crosswalk has been found to be more noticeable for motorists, creating a safer crossing experience
- ii. A signaled mid-block crossing helps create safer movement across Warrensville at a location where crossing is already naturally occurring

- c. Image 3 – Warrensville Center Rd and Stockton Ave

Reactions/Comments:

- i. Potential to function as a trailhead-like connection to the existing path adjacent to the middle school, breaking down the existing barrier place
- ii. Both the auto parts and middle school building edges allow for wayfinding/mural elements to be placed, enhancing the prominence and connection here, and ultimately to Stafford Park.

Gift to your Community

21. At the outset of our conversation a piece of a paper was shared with attendees that asked them to think of a gift they would like to give to their community. As the meeting culminated, attendees were asked to write their thoughts on this paper and turn in their gift(s) to the community. Here are the gifts that were received:

- a. Greenspace & Recreation
 - i. Functional Stafford Park
 - ii. Pool
 - iii. Rec Center
 - iv. Outdoor Theater
 - v. Amphitheater in park
- b. Improved Connections/Corridors
 - i. Extension of Blue line to Southgate
 - ii. Wayfinding Signage
 - iii. Safer Driveways in Commercial Districts
 - iv. Trailheads
 - v. Safer Crosswalks
- c. Economic Development
 - i. New Businesses – not food or clothing
 - ii. Funding
- d. Housing
 - i. Apartments, Senior, on Southgate Blvd

Next Steps

1. Incorporate input and perspective from the community in the continued development of conceptual imagery/recommendations, which will ultimately to be reviewed by the city and stakeholders (CA)
2. Schedule next public discussion to present further developed concepts & recommendations, and collect feedback from the community (CA + City of Maple Heights)
3. Remain engaged with the stakeholder group & overall community as the project progresses (CA + City of Maple Heights)

If any of the items herein are in conflict with your recollection of what was discussed or if any important elements have been omitted, it would be appreciated if you would contact us immediately. Otherwise we will assume the above items are correct.

CITY ARCHITECTURE, INC

Juleian Curtis
Assistant City Planner

Enclosure: Maple Heights TLCI Community #1 Presentation – 2019-12-02 email.pdf

Copies to: All Attendees
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