

# MEETING RECAP

## 5<sup>TH</sup> AVE GROUP INPUT MEETING 8

**MEETING DATE:** November 15, 2017

**MEETING LOCATION:** Naperville Municipal Center, Lower Level Lunch Room, 400 S Eagle St.  
Naperville, IL

### **STAFF ATTENDEES:**

Clare Scott - Ryan Companies  
Angel Douglas Stiemert - Ryan Companies  
Becky Diehl - Ryan Companies  
Amy Emery – City Staff

### **LAND USE**

- Prefer something that would be used versus sitting empty.
- Provided parking and traffic is resolved, resident would like to see commerce that benefits the overall community. Examples might include coffee, ice cream, breakfast place, upscale sports bar, space for kids, dry cleaner, boutique retail, small grocery, quick service family restaurant
- There are lessons to be learned from the Kroehler building. Commuters want to get out of the area and don't use the businesses in Kroehler. Some people felt that Kroehler building wasn't used because it was closed off and not visible.
- Commuter said he would only use retail that was very quick in and out – not a restaurant.
- Rte 59 station was supposed to have commercial space but businesses have failed over the years. Another resident suggests we cannot compare 5<sup>th</sup> avenue to the Rte 59 Station.
- Resident says he sees multiple structures throughout the space to fix the parking issues. Look at lots near Washington (Parkview and Children's Museum lot)
- If it's done right the development will add to the neighborhood.
- Commuters help the neighborhood because when they leave in the evening it is quite and dark, not like a downtown.
- Don't make this the second downtown.
- If there is a residential component to the development it may help to support any new commercial development unlike previous stores.
- The new residential units coming online will put more pressure on the train line.
- 1000 units are about to be built near the Rte 59 station.
- What is the strategic vision for downtown and what is missing?
- If there was a burning desire for something the neighborhood would be speaking up. Parking seems to be the only great desire. Look at actually neighborhood needs – don't just fill the space.
- There is a lack of quality multi-family housing for people to age in place near the downtown area.
- Can't truly make plan if Metra isn't on board and committed to plan.
- Resident feels adding any residential is not an option due to train capacity issues.
- Resident says there aren't any affordable housing options for 55+. She would like to see some in this area.
- Would like something that is tax revenue generating.

- Something would need to be affordable for people, price point for Naperville Station is fine for this area and that is even over in price (\$500,000 to \$700,000).
- If you are 55+ and you want to downsize but stay in Naperville there are no opportunities closer to the center of town. Need a place to enjoy the amenities of Naperville and be able to walk to the train.

#### TRAFFIC

- Potentially make some of the downtown streets one way. Need to look at the best way to get people in and out of the village.
- How can you get more buses in and out of the train station faster - or provide incentives to those who ride a bike.

#### COMMUTER EXPERIENCE

- Local platforms will not accommodate more than 11 cars.
- Waiting on the train platform or dealing with the delays on BNSF is already a pain. Adding more to the area will only compound the issue. Need to think about adding more cars or trains. 5<sup>th</sup> avenue is the second busiest stop in all of Metra.
- Are there other improvements such as Pace commuter lots to help circulate people without bringing more people who need to park at the lot.
- A large portion of commuters are not parking – how are they getting there? Is there a better way to get people to the train station?
- Are there any restrictions from Metra on parking based on the train capacity.
- Resident suggests that the City and Metra may not want to add parking.
- Trains are filled every day, with no places to sit it is standing room only. Commuter experience needs to be addressed, moved here for the train station but if it gets to the point that can't take the train it will become an issue.
- Add a third station between 5<sup>th</sup> ave and Rte 59
- Commuters are the number one priority and parking needs to be fixed first before anything else can be built.
- Trains are standing room only at least 30% of the time.
- Commuter experience cannot be affected negatively.
- Resident does not feel Metra will add cars or trains due to funding issues.
- Commuter issues have not changed since the 1980's people were sitting on the train steps even back then. The train is already full when it pulls into the Naperville station and adding a station will only worsen that. The train station should be moved out of the residential area near the Growing Place. The current station doesn't seem like the best use for the neighborhood, on premium land. What are all the options, a parking lot doesn't seem logical for expensive land.
- Adding a station will only add to the congestion on the train. Potentially move the station east down fifth avenue where there is more open space. Take step back and look at the space available.
- City staff, when asked, clarified that that city has been in discussion with Metra.
- Metra is open to more parking near the station and are open to other uses to improve their commuter experience.
- One of the biggest complainants of the train station is that they can't unload the buses fast enough and they back up traffic down the street. They need a transit center for buses to unload away from traffic.

- Needs a warm place for commuters to wait for their train, currently there isn't a place on the north side of tracks.

## PARKING

- Resident questioned how many people are on the parking waitlist. (Post-meeting update: 1800 people are currently on the waitlist)
- Need enough parking that is efficient to get in and out of for the next 15 years. An additional 500 spaces are needed and they can't go into a parking structure.
- Residents don't want to see parking decks. It effects the character of the neighborhood.
- If the number of commuter parking does not change and you add 300 apartments it would be a disaster for commute parking
- Need more bicycle and motorcycle parking
- The new building in Wheaton has first floor parking and doesn't open up to the neighborhood which is not liked.
- Post-meeting comment from Participant #1: If you build parking to meet all the commuter demand, you'd make the whole target area a campus of parking decks. Then you're relegating the neighborhood to an undesirable future of staring at all those decks. That would undermine the character of the neighborhood. If there's that much demand, it doesn't mean that it all has to be met at the downtown train station. A 3rd station should be looked at to meet that demand, not growing the parking capacity here. A new station doesn't have to be intended to increase ridership, given Metra's capacity issues, but to move a chunk of that traffic away from the downtown station.
- Post-meeting comment from Participant #1: Parking decks for 1500 cars, plus a couple hundred more as a nod to the waiting list, plus more to support new residential construction in this project, plus more for retail customers sounds like a lot of space dedicated to parking decks! Not a fan.

## DESIGN

- Resident would like to see nothing taller than the Kroehler building.
- Development needs to complement downtown Naperville.
- In Downers Grove and Lisle they have 7-8 story apartment building. It dramatically changed the character of the neighborhood.
- Resident worried about the amount of sunshine if tall buildings are included in the development.
- To maintain the neighborhood, any larger buildings need to put up closer to Washington.
- Be careful of the materials used to match the neighborhood.
- Anything being built would need to be closer to Washington away from the homes.
- Quantifying what creates a sense of place.
- Transit Oriented Development - only need one parking place per home instead of two because people will take the train. This doesn't necessarily work, it didn't work at Route 59 with that development. Parking spaces need to be provided for what is required for condos/townhouses. If there are two bedrooms, there should be at least two parking spots. There is no room in the neighborhood to address the issue if not built correctly from the beginning.
- Designing something to fit in with the history of the Kroehler building and designing anything new to match would help create a cohesive look.
- Needs a "neighborhood look" not a "downtown look". Soften the transition into the neighborhood.
- In downtown Wheaton the high rise buildings have no green space, for every new building here there should be a certain percentage of green space set aside.

- Put parking decks along the train and then build homes outside of that to provide a buffer to the neighborhood.
- Architecture and space matters, when Water Street was developed it was narrowed by 9 feet. It has a different feel from Jefferson. At Main Street Promenade there is a large set back that creates a nice feel. Anything should be pushed back so there is more than just the 5 feet sidewalk to allow people to congregate.
- Look at Main St. Promenade – more space from retail to street.
- Enhance the walkability of the neighborhood.
- The downtown area near City Hall is not inviting for people to walk and hang out at.
- Can there be a theme developed to tie it in with the history of the area and the Kroehler building so people don't forget that this was one of the biggest furniture manufacturing places in country?
- Look to downtown Naperville for style – its new but still feels old. Apartment building on Ellsworth is not appealing. Sticks out like a sore thumb.
- Naperville has a nice history and with tear downs you lose sight of that.
- There should be connectivity to the neighborhood so it doesn't stand out, it needs to fit the character of the neighborhood, don't want to lose the adorable little homes which a large building would do.
- Do we really need more housing?
- Don't want housing that is so affordable that the North Central College students move in and cause noise issues.
- Use the idea of a renovated/converted Kroehler building as a template for any other buildings in the area. Imagine the Kroehler owners had built more buildings alongside the existing one, which were expanded and repurposed within just the last few years. What would those buildings look like? Look at warehouse conversions. Think thick beams, painted girders, rounded rivets, rows of 12-panel windows, loading docks converted to coffee shops. Maybe one bldg had a 2-story section in the middle removed for a large, open-air pass-thru to the train platform. That gives you a covered place for a couple storefronts and cafe seating. Maybe a number of the small windows were removed and replaced with 15-foot-tall glass walls, blending a simple modern esthetic with the retro charm that makes warehouse conversions popular.
- Downers Grove has row homes that could fit into the neighborhood.
- The Water Tower sticks out in this area and does not flow into the area now. This maybe the most difficult design use.
- Accessibility to the existing building, commuters like cutting through it but like having to go through few entry ways for shopping. There should be different access points for residents or retail then commuters.
- Separate access point for residents in the building versus retail patrons.
- If Nichols library could be disassembled and moved, could it be moved to the North side of the tracks. Could it be used as the train station? That would add to the historic character.
- Post-meeting comment from Participant #1: Look at what things Kroehler made and see if there's a way to honor that history.

## BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN

- Add bike lanes
- Improved bicycle routes are needed as it currently isn't safe to bike to the station.
- Pedestrian bike route is sorely overlooked. You can't ride a bike to the park from the train station.
- The width of the street needs to be more generous for walkers and students to get past the park and through the intersection. There should be more of a buffer from the roadway.

- If parking is removed down 5th Avenue so that sidewalk could be expanded or bike path.
- From Loomis to Washington the right of way is narrow and limits what can be done.
- Resident who lives on the north side of the tracks is concerned about safety of school children walking to school.
- Child was killed 10 years ago crossing Washington at 5<sup>th</sup>.
- A lot of Jr. High students cross at the platforms because they think it is safer than at the grade crossing.
- The cow tunnel would provide safety for students and make the area accessible. Would need a ramp to go up to the platform then go across Washington to the cow tunnel.
- Against the idea to put a temporary parking facility at Kendall Park during construction as it is used by the neighborhood.
- Keep crossing open at Loomis. Potentially add additional crossings.
- Washington is not a safe area for walkers both students and commuters.
- Creating a more comfortable walk way that is moved farther away from the roadway would encourage walkers. It doesn't feel safe because it is so close to the cars.
- Moving the cars out of the Kroehler lot will hopefully help the traffic issues.
- Widen the sidewalk under the Washington St. Bridge. Cars are too close.
- Near the Water Tower parking it is super dark and doesn't feel safe to walk late at night. The lighting should be away from the homes but along the tracks for people to be able to walk to their cars safely.

#### STORM WATER

- Flooding is a major issue, especially at the low points on streets.
- Neighbor at 705 N. Sleigh has flooding issues. Sewer system can't handle the current capacity. Any heavy rains they cannot leave their driveway.
- City should take the opportunity to improve the flood water situation.
- 8th Avenue was flooded in the recent storms and could be accessed.
- Pilgrim has similar flooding issues.
- Storm water basins in the Kroehler lot would help the communities flooding issues.
- When the engineers in the past have looked at flooding, they have looked at cheaper alternatives and can create issues where issues didn't exist in the past. At School and Wright it now floods where it didn't in the past.

#### OVERCROWDING

- Ellsworth School is at capacity and anything built cannot add to that.
- Resident expressed concerns with overcrowding at schools. Need to engage district 203. An enrollment study was just completed in the last month ([naperville203.org](http://naperville203.org))
- We live where we live because the kids can walk to elementary, junior high and high school. We don't want that to change.

#### GREENSPACE

- Would like to see a dog park, more people are out walking than kids outside playing.
- Change park south of the tracks to something the community could use and draws people in. See Maggie Daley Park.
- Modern park for children that satisfies multiple age groups.
- Would like public plaza gathering place; could be between buildings
- Water feature

- Include a place to sit in greenspace
- Post-meeting comment from Participant #1: Green space doesn't need to be separate from buildings, as the current parks are. If, for example, two L-shaped buildings facing each other were built on the Lower Burlington lot to make a rectangle, a path could cut between them, leading from 5th & Ellsworth to the Washington St. bridge. That path could go thru a courtyard with trees, grass, a fountain, bench seats, etc. That gives you a more urban-style park which could also act as a gathering place. And it gives kids in Park Addition a nice pedestrian route to the Jr. High.

Participant #1 added the following post-meeting:

I've read various past comments about neighbors' requests, such as a bike lane thru the area, wider sidewalks, reopening the cow tunnel, safer access to Washington Jr High, better pedestrian routes, and Pilgrim Addition wanting better access to downtown. I was noodling how all these could be accomplished and came up with an idea.

It occurred to me that since the cow tunnel is midway between Washington and Mill streets, it doesn't integrate well into any city-wide bike or pedestrian traffic plan—it would be more of a private access route for Pilgrim Addition (the neighborhood just north of it). Even if it was within the scope of this project to open it, there's the problem of the neighbors right by it not wanting it opened. But the idea would address a number of neighbor requests if it was used by the Washington St. bridge! Right now, there is no way to add a bike lane under the bridge. Losing a car lane is a non-starter and the sidewalks are too narrow and can't be widened without expensive reconstruction of the bridge. And the sidewalks are bad for bike traffic because people coming down the stairs from the platforms walk into the path of cyclists at blind corners. On top of that, cyclists lock their bikes to the sidewalk railing, further narrowing the space.

A wide bike/pedestrian tunnel under the tracks on the west side of the bridge would solve all of these issues. To the north, it would open to a park (no neighbors to object to the privacy intrusion) and would be fed by bike paths to the north and northwest. To the south, it would gently curve over to meet the existing sidewalk. But because the sidewalk is narrow, the retaining wall on the south side of the bridge would need to be pulled back enough to allow for the path to the tunnel and a wider sidewalk. If the children's museum is to stay there, this also improves the sight lines for cars leaving the lot, in that the current view is obstructed to the left and encourages cars to nudge forward to overcome it. This idea of course means losing space from the parking lot, something that won't be such an issue if the museum gets moved.

People on the east side of Washington will need a safe way to access this tunnel without crossing Washington, which is one of the problems in getting students to the Jr. High safely (one child was killed at the 5th Ave intersection). To access the tunnel, there should be a wide bike path built on the east side of Washington between 5th Ave and the bridge, following the existing slope up to the tracks. The path would traverse the (potentially widened) train platform over Washington and then curve around to meet the tunnel. Because cyclists should be discouraged from using the sidewalks under the bridge, I'd suggest aligning them so that it is obvious they're for pedestrians. By having them curve to meet the bike path with a couple steps, you both make it obvious it's a pedestrian route, and take away the straight-line route to them that might make distracted riders not notice that the steps are there.

Whether this tunnel is done or not, there is a need for a covered bike rack to be added by the bridge, like the one at the east end of the north platform. This would discourage cyclists from using the sidewalk railing to secure their bike, as well as fill demand that exceeds the other racks. It could be placed either in Kendall Park by Washington, or by the train platform at the northeast corner of the bridge.

## Landuse:

### Want: Dog Park

#### Better ped/bike route

- Neighbor hood commercial that's not dominating
  - Coffee - playspace
  - Ice cream - dry clean
  - Sports bar - lounge retail
  - Small grocery - upscale sport bar
- Commuters might use services that are quick
- Learn from the K Building Commerce
- EAS street parking
- Long-term parking
- Bike paths - extend to other areas
- Affordable living

#### Maybe other parking lots

- This area is not the downtown like other stops
- Current commuters leave the right of way
- Commuter experience - just walking & waiting is a challenge
- Improvement on drop off / PACE commuters
- Increase Rt 59 from new homes
- Keep design in line w/ neighborhood
- What is missing from downtown Napier?
- Biking to the train is impossible
- What can be added that isn't there.
- Can look at nearby multi-family housing

#### Donor intent:

- No use development
- Train station to look like Rt 59
- to look like parking station
- Equal height to the K building
- Do not want to look like parking history
- Large parking decks
- Negative connector exp.
- to complete the downtown Napier
- Rising housing
- 7-8 story apartments
- Sad, old, tired apt. bldg or other bldg

## Historic Building names maybe

- Special & unique
- Branchford & speed
- Downtown Washington apt building is not wanted here

#### Dislike parking on 1st floor

- No street scape
- No cosmetic center
- No profits
- Not blended into the neighborhood

#### Like quiet neighborhood

- No giant structure
- Nothing beyond height of what's there now
- Maybe no heavy so. Affordable that college kids can live there
- If it's downtown of K building - what would that look like
- Downers town has small row houses, 1.5-2 story density
- Needs to be market
- Needs to be distinctive
- Over 55 crowd - doesn't have smaller nearby close to downtown & train <sup>mainline</sup>

#### Bus line (not efficient) drop off.

- Accessibility to K building is not efficient
- Different access points to retail to residents
- Warning building on North side of tracks
- Could the lounge be moved to North side of tracks
- Width of street - should be roomy for side pass up for western th. for
- Area max space for shelter from readings
- Just parking off 5th & do parcel stadium
- In improvements to safety, & road crossings

- Current streets aren't designed for the volume of traffic
- How can we get more buses in and out of the station
- Some bike paths
- If the development is speedy - hard for homeowners to denigrate

#### Design-

- No 7-8 story apt. bldg
- 3-4 story sunstone/sky views
- Maintain neighborhood feel
- Have to bring in the \$
- Concentrate toward Washington
- Keep away from corner northbound
- TOD - transit oriented development - less parking needed
- Transit works well on Rt 59
- Connection between K building & new development
- Keep neighborhood look - trees/shades/leaves
- Plant
- Keep greenspace - keep in line w/ new development
- Maybe put all parking against main tracks
- Keep housing/development close to transit stop
- More space for bikes/mobility/scooters
- No bike & walk end.
- Like main street promenade set back from street
- Walking kids to Ellis north is scary
- more inviting walking paths
- more bike lanes
- Feel of water street isn't user friendly
- Potential K building theme & what was built by the factory

## Washington & 5th Crossing is unsafe.

- Kids tend to cross street from
- Cow tunnel near Washington
- Ped ramp to tunnel
- Don't put construction parking in Kinross Park
- Traffic on Loomis is unsafe to ped.
- 5th & Loomis - unsafe
- Keep a crossing open @ Loomis
- Better ped walkway on Washington
- Dark by water tower sign - maybe more safe legs away from neighborhood
- Current flooding: North Side, 8th pm, Ripin ave. School & bridge
- Current Street Sweeper can't handle water flow
- Could stormwater basin be added to green space
- Don't take short cuts on storm water collection
- Green space - (is the park on the south side of the fence used often)
  - Make it usable
  - Modern park for all ages (kids)
  - Cool
  - Artwork
  - Public Plaza gathering space
  - Neighbor hood friendly
  - Water features
  - Green space added to Burlington det
- No school overcrowding
- appeal of kids being able to walk to all schools

# PARKING LOT

- BNSF timing
- New trains/cars
- PACE improvement
- 3rd train stop
- Can the train platform be extended
- Could Napier station be moved
- Low turn, crossing to station