



**CITY COUNCIL, PLANNING COMMISSION AND HRA WORK SESSION
RICHFIELD MUNICIPAL CENTER, COUNCIL CHAMBERS
APRIL 12, 2022
6:00 PM**

Call to order

1. Introductory presentation of redevelopment proposal for the HUB Shopping Center by representatives of Brixmor Property Group.

Adjournment

Auxiliary aids for individuals with disabilities are available upon request. Requests must be made at least 96 hours in advance to the City Clerk at 612-861-9738.



STAFF REPORT NO. 10

WORK SESSION

4/12/2022

REPORT PREPARED BY: Melissa Poehlman, Community Development Director

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR REVIEW: Melissa Poehlman, Community Development Director
4/5/2022

OTHER DEPARTMENT REVIEW:

CITY MANAGER REVIEW: Katie Rodriguez, City Manager
4/5/2022

ITEM FOR WORK SESSION:

Introductory presentation of redevelopment proposal for the HUB Shopping Center by representatives of Brixmor Property Group.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Representatives of Brixmor Property Group, the owner of the HUB Shopping Center and the adjacent property containing the former Rainbow Foods building and Sci-Tech Academy, will present preliminary plans for the redevelopment of their property.

In anticipation of future redevelopment, the City studied the area surrounding the intersection of 66th Street and Nicollet Avenue as part of the most-recent Comprehensive Plan update. This exercise resulted in a set of Guiding Principles and an illustrative Concept Plan that prioritized mixed use development; pedestrian-friendly design; placemaking and public art in combination with outdoor spaces for gathering, dining, and play; street-oriented architecture; and a scale that is compatible with adjacent neighborhoods.

Concept Plans had not been provided as of the time of drafting of this report.

DIRECTION NEEDED:

The property owner and staff will be looking to the Council, Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA), and Planning Commission for initial feedback on the proposed plans.

- Are the concepts generally in keeping with the Guiding Principles expressed by the Comprehensive Plan?

- Are there areas/issues that the applicant should consider prior to submitting applications?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

A. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The HUB Shopping Center was initially constructed in 1953. This uniquely shaped shopping center and parking lot have been at the heart of Richfield for nearly 70 years.

B. POLICIES (resolutions, ordinances, regulations, statutes, etc):

The properties are guided for Mixed Use Development and currently zoned Planned General Commercial (PC-2). A development concept with a significant housing component may be better suited to a Planned Mixed Use Zoning category.

C. CRITICAL TIMING ISSUES:

None

D. FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Brixmor Property Group has indicated that they would likely ask the HRA to provide assistance in the redevelopment of the site through the use of Tax Increment.

E. LEGAL CONSIDERATION:

None

ALTERNATIVE(S):

None

PRINCIPAL PARTIES EXPECTED AT MEETING:

Rich Dippolito & Lauren Robinson, Brixmor Property Group

ATTACHMENTS:

Description	Type
D 66th & Nicollet Guiding Principles	Exhibit

fostering economic prosperity. A design guideline matrix allows for a quick and easy comparison of these benefits allowing staff and local stakeholders to easily comprehend potential paths forward in the development of the corridor.

66th Street and Nicollet Avenue

Market Analysis and Concepts

Historically, the land uses surrounding the 66th Street and Nicollet Avenue created a regional destination for shoppers. Since the early 1950's, this area has been anchored by the



The HUB Shopping Center

HUB Shopping Center, a 573,500 sq. ft. commercial and retail center. Over time, the HUB and surrounding area has seen a change in tenants and businesses. These land uses now serve the area more as a community destination. This shift from a regional to community destination is a result of changing markets, consumer habits, and more retail services locating along the Cedar Avenue and I-494 corridor. In that respect, a 2017 Market Analysis (see Appendix C) was prepared to help inform future land use decisions in the



area. Some findings from this study include:

- » The area will likely remain as a neighborhood oriented retail area. Due to the arrival of additional retail space along Cedar Avenue and other retail projects near the I-494 corridor, the area may never regain the retail dominance it had (in terms of size) in the 1950s and 1960s. Larger format retail uses (including junior boxes and bigger boxes) will likely continue to migrate to the I-494 and Cedar Avenue corridors.
- » Retail offerings in the area may be able to reposition to serve more upscale household types based on more “buying power” being brought into the community. The introduction of the Lakewinds Food Cooperative on Lyndale Avenue reflects this trend. Thus, the area may be able to offer more attractive eating and drinking establishments and unique retail shops. However, the area will continue to serve some everyday needs (for pharmacies, some groceries, and casual dining).
- » The local housing market in Richfield remains very strong and is changing to serve a higher income demographic. The area will likely be able to attract additional multi-family construction, as well as potentially townhomes or similar forms of attached housing.
- » The area could develop a relatively small amount of additional office space, geared to professional services and other local uses, as part of mixed-use development.
- » As part of the Comprehensive Plan’s public engagement activities, residents provided input on the area.

In general, residents expressed concerns about the future of the area from a development perspective. Many responses focused on the aesthetics of the HUB area, current vacancies, and perceived safety concerns. Some responses were directed at the need to attract and provide more diverse shopping options in the area. However, as mentioned previously in this chapter, typically-underrepresented populations (e.g., lower income, transit riders, and non-white residents) and seniors in the immediate area value the HUB’s existing businesses (e.g., pharmacy) and its proximity to transit.

Plan Elements

Redeveloping the area may take decades to realize; however, the input received provides direction for a vision. This vision was interpreted through various redevelopment concepts and took into consideration various plan elements.

1. Lifestyle Retail/Shopping Center

A lifestyle center is a shopping center or mixed-used commercial development that combines the traditional retail functions of a shopping mall with leisure amenities and landscaped park-like pedestrian areas. Lifestyle centers are often anchored by specialty stores, a collection of restaurants, or a movie theater. The HUB redevelopment concept calls for transforming the existing auto-oriented traditional shopping mall into a more pedestrian-friendly mixed-use district focused on the retail experience.

2. Pedestrian-Friendly “Main Street”

At the heart of the HUB District, the redevelopment concept identifies a pedestrian-friendly “Main Street”, oriented perpendicular to W. 66th Street. Main Street should be designed with the pedestrian in mind, providing traffic calming measures such as narrow traffic lanes, on-street parking, street trees, street-oriented architecture, wayfinding

and signage, pedestrian-scaled lighting and site furnishings. The Main Street should be seen as an opportunity to get people out of their cars and onto the sidewalks, and provide a strong sense of place to the HUB District.

3. Placemaking Features/Public Art

The redevelopment concept identifies opportunities to incorporate placemaking features such as public art, particularly at the intersection of 66th Street and Nicollet Avenue. Placemaking can also be achieved through well-designed buildings and outdoor spaces that create a unique sense of identity within the district.

4. Outdoor Plaza Spaces

Outdoor plaza spaces for social gathering, seating and dining, and venues for public art and landscaping are key features of the redevelopment concept. The plan identifies opportunities for outdoor plazas at the intersection of 66th Street and Nicollet Avenue, and near potential restaurants.

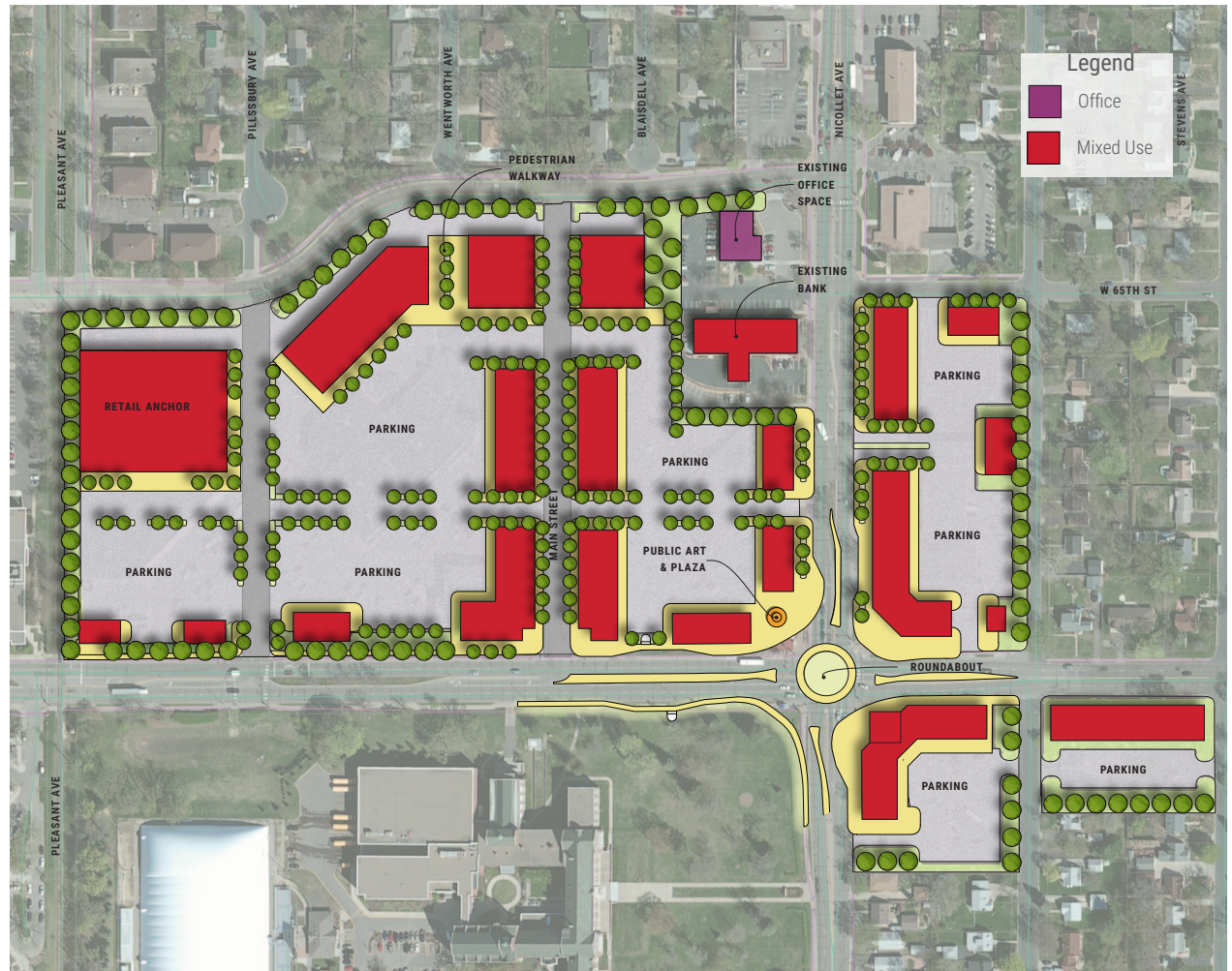
5. Pedestrian & Bicycle Amenities

Pedestrian and bicycle amenities such as sidewalks, trails, pedestrian crossings, bike lanes, bike parking, pump stations and bike lockers can create a more vibrant outdoor environment for residents, employees and shoppers, as well as augment the public transportation facilities along 66th Street and Nicollet Avenue.

6. Street-Oriented Architecture

The redevelopment concept illustrates a development pattern of street-oriented architecture, where buildings face 66th Street, Nicollet Avenue and Main Street. Buildings that face the street and sidewalks create more friendly and interesting places for people to walk and shop.

Figure 2-4. 66th Street and Nicollet Avenue Concept



Precedent Examples



7. Reduction in Parking

Current parking supplies are based on an auto-centric, single-story retail and commercial environment at the HUB. The redevelopment concept identifies a broader mix of land uses developed in a more compact and vertical way, adjacent to public transportation facilities. These factors, coupled with the potential for shared parking supplies could lead to a reduction in parking needs per square foot of building development.

8. Development Scale (size) that Considers Adjacent Neighborhoods

It is important to consider the scale of future development at the HUB relative to the surrounding scale of neighborhood development. The scale of new development should be sensitive to the scale of existing development and provide transitions in scale where appropriate.

Findings & Guiding Principles

The concepts were presented to the public and CPAC for input. Based on input, a preferred concept emerged (Figure 2-4). This concept embraces the plan elements above and depicts a mixed use format that includes commercial or retail uses (50%) with some form of residential (50%). The concept and plan elements can be further achieved through a set of guiding principles (see sidebar).

The guiding principles are intended to serve as a starting point for achieving a described vision and redevelopment concepts for the area. By leveraging these guiding principles, the City can evaluate potential development concepts and ideas for the area and help create an environment that represents an attractive destination for surrounding neighborhoods, and for all of Richfield.

Guiding Principles (66th Street & Nicollet)

The HUB redevelopment concept and key plan elements can be further achieved through the following guiding principles:

- » **Building Uses:** A mix of building uses should be promoted in the HUB District with a focus on retail and/or entertainment uses. Where feasible and parking can be accommodated, either underground or within a structure, vertical mixing of building uses, with active ground level uses, is encouraged. Upper stories should be developed with residential, office, or service uses.
- » **Building Orientation:** Orientation of buildings toward 66th Street, Nicollet Avenue and Main Street is highly encouraged in order to create a more attractive, pedestrian-friendly, and vibrant streetscape environment within the HUB District. Buildings should be developed to front the street rights-of-way as much as possible, minimizing setbacks unless it's being done to provide plaza spaces in front of buildings for outdoor dining or landscaping.
- » **Building Scale and Character:** Building scale and character should be sensitive to the surrounding context of the built environment. If multi-story buildings are being proposed at the HUB, and adjacent buildings are single-story, then bulk reduction strategies should be considered to reduce negative impacts to neighboring development patterns. The character of proposed buildings should be attractive and complement surrounding building character.
- » **Parking Type and Configuration:** Surface parking facilities should be located behind or to the side of the primary structures they serve as much as possible to reduce the negative visual impacts of large areas of surface parking lots along roadways. Parking lots should be landscaped and well signed to orient visitors. Underground and structured parking supplies are encouraged in order to reduce the negative impacts of large parking lots within the development and to serve multi-story building development. Parking ramps should be screened or incorporate active ground level uses when facing primary roadways.
- » **Access and Circulation:** Provide a safe, convenient, attractive and well-designed circulation system that accommodates and encourages pedestrian and bicycle movement, and provides connectivity to all land uses and major destinations within the HUB district. Vehicular access and circulation should be clear, well organized, and functional without compromising the ability for pedestrians and bicyclists to move conveniently and safely throughout the district. Provide adequate sidewalks, trails and pedestrian-friendly streetscape elements to encourage walking within the area. Bikeways and bicycle parking should be provided to encourage bicycle transportation within, to and from the HUB District. Enhanced crosswalks at intersections that incorporate highly visible markings, lighting, signage, and countdown traffic signals are encouraged.

- » **Public Transportation:** Public transportation is currently provided along Nicollet Avenue and 66th Street. Bus dropoff and pickup facilities should be incorporated into any redevelopment of the district. Transit shelters, signage, and wayfinding should be included to enhance the transit user experience and encourage public transportation use. Bicycle parking should be provided at bus stops to encourage multi-modal transportation alternatives.
- » **Public Spaces:** Public spaces are an important element to the success of the redevelopment concept. Attractive and pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, plazas, and landscaped areas are encouraged. A well-designed public realm can serve to attract visitors, businesses and residents to the district. Public spaces should incorporate special paving, plantings, lighting, site furnishings, landscape structures, and focal elements such as public art and/or water features.
- » **Landscaping:** Street trees and landscaped planting areas are highly encouraged. Well-designed landscaping will enhance the pedestrian environment, improve air and water quality, reduce heat island effect, and strengthen the identity of the HUB District. Landscaped areas can also help to mitigate stormwater runoff by providing infiltration areas within the development. The use of low maintenance, native plant species, and plant materials that can withstand harsh urban environments is highly encouraged.
- » **Site Furnishings:** Promote the implementation of a unified set of site furnishings that provide comfort and convenience for the public, help keep the public realm a clean and safe place, and lend identity to the HUB district. Site furnishings should be unified through design by sharing common characteristics of style, materials and color. Public seating, bicycle racks and waste receptacles should be provided to serve public transit stops, building entry areas and public spaces such as plazas and parks.
- » **Lighting:** Promote a safe and identifiable public realm in the HUB district by providing well designed lighting systems for streets, sidewalks and public spaces. A consistent standard for district lighting should be developed and approved by the City. Unique and pedestrian-scaled lighting should be provided in pedestrian areas along public sidewalks and within public gathering areas. Pedestrian light fixtures should be installed at regular intervals and frequent enough and of such illumination levels to provide safe levels of light on public sidewalks and plazas, without negatively impacting adjacent residential uses.
- » **Signage and Wayfinding:** Provide a high quality, comprehensive, and attractive signage and graphic design system to provide district identity, information and understandable wayfinding in the HUB. Signage lighting, typography, color and materials should reflect the character of the use, the identity and character of the district. The public signage system should provide information and wayfinding for all users (vehicles, transit, bicycles and pedestrians).

Precedent Examples

