

## Swinney – Phase II Meeting

Thursday, September 15, 2011  
 All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church  
 5:30-7:30pm  
 14 attendees

The following is a summary of the discussion/feedback from the Phase II meeting for the Swinney school site:

### **RECAP OF SITE TOUR FEEDBACK**

During the site tour, the district received great feedback about community needs and reuses that could address community needs. Key things that the district has noted from the site tour discussion:

- *While most of the kids weren't from the area, the neighborhood had been excited about new principal – new interaction between the school and neighbors; school was where the neighborhood association met*
- *Site has a lot of positives: proximity to Plaza, redevelopment/reinvestment in the neighborhood, business area doesn't have empty storefronts, range of housing types & values*
- *Concern that maintenance of building and grounds have deteriorated since school closing*
- *Area loses young families due to lack of good public education options*
- *Variety of reuses discussed including: school, senior housing/senior services, condos, small business incubator, arts or multi-purpose center, public use*
- *Traffic/parking concerns with any proposal (one of the nearby condo buildings is already underparked)*

Participants confirmed that this was a good summary of the site tour feedback.

### **REUSE FEEDBACK**

Based on the technical assessment and feedback from the site tour, several types of reuse have been identified as viable options for Swinney. The following provides a summary of the community feedback in discussing reuse options:

#### Community feedback on **Residential Use:**

- Participants expressed that condos (home ownership) are more desirable than rentals. One participant noted there are already lots of rentals in the area. At a subsequent meeting with the West Plaza Neighborhood Association on 9/20/11, participants stressed that maintenance of the facility was important, and it was felt that condo owners typically maintain their facilities better than renters, and thus better curb appeal. In addition, home owners typically are more invested in the neighborhood and participate in activities such as the neighborhood association
- Participants were mixed over use of the facility for senior housing. Some distinguished between senior housing (non-assisted living) and nursing homes (a nursing home considered less desirable); others made no distinction and had no issues with use of the

- facility for senior housing. Concerns that were expressed: young families might not be attracted to the area (senior facility perceived as depressing); increased noise from ambulance/emergency vehicles
- Some participants said they are not interested in subsidized housing because they worry about the impact on home values
    - A developer who participated in the discussion indicated that he felt that the ground is too expensive for affordable housing
    - Some residents said they prefer market rate housing, but also noted a development that allocated a small percentage of units to be affordable, while the majority remain market rate, would be acceptable.
  - In regards to the possibility of new construction of townhomes, etc on the site (in addition to renovation of the existing structure):
    - Participants generally were supportive of new residential construction on the site, but expressed the desire for more information about the potential development. A participant voiced concern over the height of recently constructed residential structures in the area and that any proposal should outline height of any new structure(s)
    - A participant noted they would like the district to get the maximum value for the site
    - At the 9/20/11 West Plaza Neighborhood Association meeting, there was strong support/interest in a project that would include additional residential units along the western boundary. One participant indicated that such a development would improve the streetscape
  - Participants indicated that while there was a feeling that the site could adequately handle parking, it should be addressed in any development proposal
  - At the 9/20/11 West Plaza Neighborhood Association meeting, residents/property owners indicated that they

Community feedback on **Mixed Use (Residential + Other – Office, Community Center, Etc)/ Commercial Use:**

- In the case of a mixed- use scenario involving a community center component, some participants expressed multiple concerns. Participants questioned who would be coming into the neighborhood to access a community center and the hours of operation. Some noted that a people may not want to live in a building housing a community center due to noise, traffic, and diminished privacy. Due to these factors, some participants said they could not see a mixed-use residential and community center working. -
- Another participant suggested people might not want to live next to other uses besides residential and some participants said they prefer residential by itself without an office component
- At the 9/20/11 West Plaza Neighborhood Association meeting, participants were open to mixed use/commercial use proposals; however, they did indicate that they would want to understand the operating hours of the facility (note: concerns were expressed about any use requiring a liquor license); what would be done with the existing playground area as they didn't want it all to be converted to parking; parking would need to be effectively accommodated off-street

Community feedback on **Educational Reuse:**

- Participants expressed strong support to return the site to educational use if possible
  - One resident noted that young families might not want to send their kids to a KCMSD school, but would consider a charter or private school
  - If there was an educational reuse, one resident said they preferred elementary age children
  - Another participant said there could be a daycare at the site
  - At the 9/20/11 West Plaza Neighborhood Association meeting, participants strongly supported reuse of the site as a school. They cited the issue of young families moving out of the area due to the feeling that there is a lack of good public school options. Residents who live adjacent to the site did indicate that because so many of the children who attended Swinney in the recent past were not from the neighborhood, there was significant bus traffic, and this was something that would be desirable to address if the site returned to school use

**SOLICITATION PROCESS**

The district has a few options available to it when it disposes of surplus property:

- Choose to sell or lease
- Use one of three methods to sell/lease (as required by state statute):
  - Market a property through a broker
  - Formal bidding process (award to highest bidder)
  - Negotiate directly with a community group/governmental agency

During the meeting, participants were asked to provide their feedback on the solicitation process. The following summarizes their feedback/comments.

**Community Feedback on the Solicitation Process/Evaluation Criteria:**

- Participants expressed varying opinions on whether they had a preference for the district to sell or lease the site; however, they were in agreement that the most critical thing was for the district to focus on finding the best use for the site
- Some participants expressed concern that the district had sold schools in the past and then they remained vacant
- Participants also expressed varying opinions on the process the district uses to solicit proposals; however, they stressed a desire for the neighborhood to be involved in the process with the developer or in negotiations. They indicated that this was done during the West Edge project and was a positive experience. The desire to be involved was affirmed during the West Plaza Neighborhood Association meeting

**INTERIM REUSES/ACTIONS**

In the event the district doesn't receive viable proposals for Swinney, or if it takes several years, the district solicited feedback from the community on interim actions/activities.

Community feedback on **Interim Uses:**

- The district should take responsibly and maintain property as well as they can
- Possible community center or arts center/artist studios in the interim
- Playground could be used for neighborhood kids
- Lease of parking spots to address parking need in the area