

Thacher Site Tour

Tuesday, June 28, 2011

5:30pm-7:30pm

9 attendees

BREAKOUT SESSION (DB & FB)

Site Significance

- Don Bosco senior attendees, who live nearby, want the school to be repurposed quickly. Want to see something done with the building
- Neighborhood may be gaining population. Many people left South of Truman road due to financial hardships and moves northeast
- Density is increasing

Strengths

- Increase in population
- Independence Avenue has high visibility
- Good public transportation
- Historical sight
- Visibility being a strength for multiple usages
- Made out of brick
- Complimentary to school next door
- Smaller size allows for multi-usage
- Field can be used for something healthy
- (Potential for) good parking
- Diverse community – United Nations of the Midwest
- Diverse businesses along Independence Avenue
- High number of Somali, Vietnamese, immigrant population
- Small size makes less of a challenge to redevelop

Challenges

- Hole in roof/fire (physical condition)
- Reputation for crime in area
- Windows were knocked out within a week of closing
- High school students and public safety
- Building is public safety hazard
- People coming in and out of building (drawing people to it)
- Language barriers
- Building lacks curb appeal; landscaping. Looks cold and industrial
- Mixed reputation due to crime in area

Community Needs

- Youth need place to be engaged
- Public safety: first priority
- Series of socio-economic needs in community
- Education
- Job training and placement
- Health
- Diversity education: create more sense of community
- Help to communicate with all community members
- Place for seniors, day service and those with a disability
- Resource for those without jobs
- Resources for those who are not seniors or kids
- Entertainment: arts, music
- Fresh produce source (existing grocery stores don't provide good produce – some people are going out of the area to do their shopping)
- Singles need a place to meet
- Coffee shop with wifi
- Need meeting space that does not close at 8pm (issue with library)
- Diverse population that needs to be engaged and learn how to work together
- Social services in a variety of languages
- Don Bosco Senior Center is at capacity. Serving 150-170 individuals a day
- Looking to establish a CID

Reuse Options (that could address community needs)

- Community Resource Center: for all ages and cultures, can learn Spanish, block watch training, citizens patrol, healthy eating initiatives
- There is currently strong momentum/success in community, but lack of space to meet
- Military Recruitment/ROTC office space for active teens (was active at NE High)
- Recreation center: group emphasized that this was not a major need in area. The new Northeast community center would incorporate this type of reuse
- Northeast HELP center could be expanded to this school site
- One stop social service center for all cultures in community
- Could be small business incubator
- **Housing:** not opposed, but not see the need on busy street for housing. “We have a lot of repairable housing and apartment buildings in community”. “If building is demolished and rebuilt for residents it could force up prices.”
 - Chouteau apartments are going away
 - Active solar roofs as a option
- Community garden

- Studios: incubators for artist, Artist space. First Friday's type of model
- Demolishing
 - Demolishing building would not gain anything
 - Historical building
 - Building was constructed to last over 500 years
 - If necessary, could be field for high school
- Commercial
 - Some commercial activities could be compatible with neighborhood
 - Type of commercial business would be a factor for betterment of neighborhood
 - Local businesses shouldn't be excluded because someone has to pay the utilities
 - No commercial businesses that is a quick cash, rent a center, liquor store
 - Residents are being preyed upon with gouging prices
 - Won't shop at Price Chopper/Apple market because the lack of quality. Produce provided are the leftovers because majority of population can't drive to another location.
 - Prices are higher. Lack of customer service

Parking Lot

- How many rooms are in Thacher? 12 can't be the correct number
- Does NE High still have ROTC program