

Lexington Technology Park Meeting Notes

11/02/2017 – 6-8pm, Construction Junction

- Concerns were raised as to what type of contamination was at the site. Residents asked for more information.
- Questions were raised about the Act 2 process and how it affects this site.
- There is a deed restriction on the site that prohibits residential use – any use change must go through the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).
- Report summary of environmental history will be included in the RFP. Residents requested the opportunity to review the information prior to the release to the RFP, and wanted a link to the DEP website.
- There was a question about underground lakes, water quality, and mine subsidence in the Dallas Avenue area and if maps will be provided.
- Question as to whether one or two RFPs would be released. Staff clarified there would be one RFP for the entire site. Potential redevelopers will be able to respond to a portion or all of the site in their responses.
- Will North Homewood site be checked for contamination before the RFP is released? The URA commissioned Hatch Chester Engineering to do a summary of environmental history at the site. The site will be conveyed in an “as-is” condition. Any remediation required by the DEP will be the responsibility of the Redeveloper.
- Will commercial and residential co-exist on the same site? – Unknown at this time.
- Have any developers reached out to the URA? We have not formally issued an RFP for the site yet, but various developers have inquired about the site and mentioned ideas including technology and medical uses for the site.
- Will community meetings be held as part of the RFP Process? – Yes
- Who will be on the Review Committee? – Review Committee will be staffed by the URA and include representatives from the Point Breeze North Development Corporation, Homewood-Brushton Business Association, Mayor’s Office, City Planning, and other stakeholders as needed.
- How many people will be on the Review Committee? Typically 8-10 people.
- Will community input be incorporated in the RFP? – Yes, the comments received at the meeting as well as the planning studies to date will be incorporated into the RFP.
- Are the contaminants carcinogenic? – The DEP permits some carcinogens if not in direct contact with people. If contaminated areas are to be disturbed during construction, the DEP will dictate how impacted soils should be addressed.
- Are you going to leave the green space intact at Thomas Blvd? We will take this under consideration.
- Complaints about smoking area – too close to residences. Residents requested to move the smoking area.
- Will North Point Breeze be given its own planning grant? It was not indicated at this time.
- Mixed-use housing and affordable housing are a need.
- Community requested better transit services. Need better maintenance (trash removal) at the Homewood Station. The URA has raised funds to make improvements under the busway.

- Recently 100 families were recently displaced from the East End. What's being done to keep the integrity and diversity of the existing neighborhood?
- Does URA have an environmental impact study, traffic study, etc? The URA has done significant planning to date with the Bridging the Busway and the Homewood TOD Study. Further studies will be the responsibility of the selected Redeveloper. The URA will begin to pilot and implement Mayor Peduto's P4 checklist in 2018.
- What is the process for access to see all proposals? Will all be presented to the community? The URA will pre-screen the proposals to make sure they meet the criteria and to evaluate the confidential financial statements. Summaries of all the responses received will be prepared. The review committee will have access to all of the full proposals. The Review Committee will make a short list of proposals. A public meeting will be held for all short-listed developers to present to the community. The Review Committee will make a recommendation to the URA Board of Directors. Final decision will be made by the URA Board of Directors.
- It is requested that housing and mixed-use proposals should mirror the existing diversity of the community.
- Do you have any idea of the types of jobs that will be created? Transportation is key. Unknown – but this is important to consider.
- How many from Point Breeze North will serve on the Review Committee? This is a diverse community. There should be more than one person on the Review Committee to accurately represent the community. The URA will take this under consideration.
- Can a website be created for this project? Can technology be incorporated into this process? The URA will take this under consideration.
- Community does not want outside development to outprice the current residents.
- Current tenants in Lexington Technology Park want rent to stay affordable like it is now.
- The site around Construction Junction is inaccessible. Would like small strategic things done to help small businesses. This was discussed and recommended in the Homewood TOD Study.
- Can Superfund funding be used to remove contaminants?
- Will barbed wire fence come down and greenspace be kept? Unknown at this point.
- Resident stated that they do not want high density housing.
- The community is expecting to be included in the RFP Process.
- The community does not want to see a "Bakery Square-type" development.
- Community wants to see proposals and ideas in writing.
- Will future meetings be held in North Homewood? The URA will work to coordinate meetings in both neighborhoods.
- Can Homewood be included in the Review Committee? Yes – the URA intends to include representatives from the Homewood-Brushton Business Association on the Review Committee.
- Will remediation be a top priority? Unknown and will depend on reuse.
- The community would like a meeting every other month with Point Breeze North and Homewood – a dialog is necessary. The Bridging the Busway Plan was a combined planning process for Homewood and Point Breeze North that will be included as a supplementary document in the RFP.
- Who makes the final decision on the RFP that is chosen? The conveyance of property to a Redeveloper is a decision made by the URA Board of Directors.

- Will there be rezoning with this project? It depends on the proposal that is submitted. Redeveloper will be responsible for obtaining all appropriate zoning approvals.

Lexington Technology Park Community Meeting Comment Card Summaries 11/2/17

***Please note that some comments have been modified or removed that were not related to the Lexington Technology Park.**

	Comment	Type/Category
1	Any new development must attend to: noise, air pollution, affordable housing, environmental remediation of the site, local employment, support for current businesses, traffic on Penn Avenue	E, H, B, I
2	Expand community garden into some of the green space	N
3	Restaurants, cafes, retail - increase neighborhood quality of life	B,N
4	No low-end, low-quality housing - should last 100 years	H
5	Keep green space. Don't need more high-end housing. Respect current businesses and encourage sustainable employment. Remediate brownfield.	N, H, B, E
6	Take boarded up houses already not being used in the neighborhood. Need trash can on the sidewalk.	N, I
7	Maintain the neighborhood as an economically and radically diverse place. Affordable and low-income housing. Small, local businesses. No Bakery Square-type development.	N, H, B
8	I would like to explore the possibility of expanding Grow Pittsburgh's Shiloh Farm site to include a piece of the green space there. Maybe this could include some public space.	N
9	Focus on smaller development that supports existing local, small businesses and artists and allows for growth of those businesses and artists.	B
10	Sustainable job training and employment. Wholistic Community	B, N
11	The idea of having only one community member on the committee to review the proposals is insulting.	G, N
12	Do we know the building risks? Do we know how to judge mitigation efforts? Can we encapsulate the contaminant and build on top for safe residential? Can we review the RFP sections on environmental risk assessment and control? What environmental experts are also reviewing?	E
13	Make sure Port Authority, PWSA, and Norfolk Southern are included in the RFP and development process.	G
14	Put in the RFP that all new construction must adhere to LEED Platinum green building standards.	E
16	I strongly support the resident who requested preservation of existing green space on the Homewood parcel. Green space should be expanded - tripled or quadrupled at least.	N
18	Please be creative with how you think about parking. We do not want or need to be subsidizing parking garages when we are building right next to our city's best transit amenity.	I
19	Consider affordable, mixed income housing (1/3, 1/3, 1/3) Finish P4 assessment for social and community economic impacts Our community is mixed income, race, etc. We need more than one person on the review board for these proposals to accurately represent voices in this community.	H
20	Strongly consider the East End Food Coop, which is a not-for-profit, as an anchor retail business. It is a major community asset.	B, N

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21	It might be a good idea to have a monthly meeting and maybe the location could alternate between Construction Junction and a community space at the new senior housing apartment on N. Homewood.	G
22	This site needs to be opened up - no gates at Meade Street entrance, etc.	I
23	<p>I am a retired housing professional and affordable housing advocate. I have lived in Point Breeze for thirty years and during that time have used the Homewood Avenue Busway station, for 27 years as a commuter and now as a retired resident. I am excited about the possible redevelopment of this site and have several suggestions to make this site a great asset to the neighborhood and the city: First, a portion of the property should be developed as moderate density, mixed income housing. I define mixed income as 1/3 deeply subsidized through housing choice vouchers or other rent subsidies for residents under 30% of the Area Median Income, 1/3 of moderate income affordable to residents at or below 60% of the Area Median Income, and 1/3 market rate. This is mix that has had proven success at several developments in the City. It is essential to provide affordable housing near transit stops so that the people who need transit the most have access to it. As neighborhoods like East Liberty have gentrified, more and more low-income people are being pushed out and forced to live in relative transit deserts like Penn Hills. Second, the capital and operating budgets for the development <u>must</u> include funds for improvement of the Homewood Avenue Busway Station, and just as importantly, its ongoing maintenance and cleaning. Improvements should be determined by neighborhood dialogue, but should include better lighting, bigger canopies to shelter riders from the elements, additional seating, and more trash receptacles. Regular maintenance needs to include frequent cleaning, which does not occur at present. There should also be a well-lit and well-maintained connection between the station and the Lexington Technology Park site to help ensure the creation of a truly transit-oriented development. Third, plans for the site should incorporate the principles that were agreed to in the URA/Pittsburgh Community Development Group Study of the Busway, which include neighborhood participation in planning. and creation of a strong and durable community which welcomes residents. Neighborhood participation (including residents of both Homewood and North Point Breeze) should start with review of the Development RFP, continue with input into the selection of the development team, and conclude with a close working relationship between Homewood/North Point Breeze residents and the developers. Finally, the RFP should include a requirement that the development team include a firm with experience in the development of affordable rental housing. The absence of such a firm on the development team would take the option of affordable housing off the table at the outset, which is unacceptable. The Lexington Technology Park represents a great opportunity and I hope that we will seize it to create a new development that is inclusive and transit-oriented.</p>	H, I, N

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 B - Business
 E - Environment
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	Which of the following best describes you?	Comment	Type/Category
1	I am a current homeowner in the neighborhood	Investigate moving the Homewood East Busway stop to the site.	I, N
2	Board member at the East End Food Co-op	<p>I would like to echo what Mike (owner of Construction Junction) said during the meeting: we already have tremendous local businesses in the neighborhood, like Construction Junction and the East End Food Co-op. I think these local businesses should be taken into consideration when the new development is planned. It would be great to see an overflow parking lot we could have access to.</p> <p>As a frequent visitor of the neighborhood, my main concern is that a new Bakery Square not be built. We don't need luxury living and shops in this neighborhood. We need affordable businesses, houses, and storefronts. I think it would be great to have some sort of grant funding program to invite local, mom-and-pop businesses to open in new storefronts.</p>	B, H, N
3	I am a current homeowner in the neighborhood	We would love to see some small businesses and restaurants open in the space to give us a business district. We would also love to give priority to the wants and needs of both the East End Food Co-op and Construction Junction.	B
4	I frequently visit the neighborhood	<p>I worry that in the zeal to do something new, the hundreds of people who currently work there are going to be forced out.</p> <p>I would love to see the East End Food Coop move over there. And instead of a big business incubator or high tech site, how about if you do a tech shop type of thing, but with commercial kitchens, so that food trucks or small food vendors or bakers could buy a membership, like at a co-working space, and build their own businesses like La Dorita has in Sharpsburg.</p> <p>It would also be nice to open up the road that is right next to the busway to give better access from there.</p>	B, I

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5	I am a current homeowner in the neighborhood	<p>Based on the growth in the East End, a need exist for additional office space and incubator space that supports small businesses. Point Breeze North is a growing community that needs to keep its own identity, separate from its neighbors.</p> <p>Therefore I feel a mixed use (residential with majority at market, and commercial/ light industrial) would be appropriate.</p> <p>Additionally, space dedicated to community support such as trade schools or college outreach would also benefit the neighborhood and fit well into the current growth occurring in the East End.</p> <p>The site has a large green space that should be preserved. This space should be opened to the neighborhood to encourage residents to consider the space to be part of the neighborhood, and not just a walled off complex.</p>	
6	I am a current tenant in the neighborhood	<p>Before you issue the RFP, the Point Breeze Community group should be given the opportunity to discuss what should be in the RFP. We need a parking and traffic study. A housing affordability study. We need money to hire our own consultants. All parcels must be developed AS ONE</p>	
7	I am a current homeowner in the neighborhood	<p>I live adjacent to the strip of green space along North Homewood Ave. Some of the neighbors near me and I would like to see that green space remain behind our houses if possible. Also Grow Pittsburgh uses a plot of land on my property for their Shiloh Garden and they hold a weekly Farm Stand during the growing season that benefits the community. We were wondering if a section of the green space adjacent to the Shiloh Garden could be made available to expand the garden or if a portion of that land could be made available for sale to add to the garden?</p> <p>My second comment is that I would like to see the Lexington Technology Park developed in a sustainable way with solar, electric vehicle chargers, and possibly net zero or LEED certified buildings similar to the vision and way that the Almono Site is being developed.</p> <p>My final comment is that there is a retaining wall along the sidewalk at the North Homewood border of the property. Part of that retaining wall is ready to collapse which will send rather large chunks of stone/masonry onto the sidewalk.</p> <p>Thanks for the opportunity to comment.</p>	E, N

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8	I am a current tenant in the neighborhood	My primary concern for the site redevelopment is that it be considerate of and suitable for the existing area and surrounding neighborhoods. Mainly, I think it's extremely important that it not greatly gentrify the area, drive out current residents, or exacerbate Pgh's already existing lack of affordable housing. The potential effects on the current businesses like the EEFC and Construction Junction need to be considered; they serve unique, invaluable roles and services for the city. The focus on promoting TOD is great; I think it's an absolutely necessary component of what, overall, needs to be an ethical, environmentally-responsible, community-driven plan. Details like safe bike infrastructure, electric vehicle charging, stormwater management, recreational and green space, etc. should be prioritized as vital components of where we need to be going forward. What is built or redeveloped here will stay for decades, if not centuries, and it needs to be of benefit to the neighborhoods and citizens as well as the ecosystem. Thank you.	
9	I work in the neighborhood	I would like to see designated greenspace on the site. It would like to see if the Shiloh Farm could expand into the lawn space behind it. I would also want to make sure there is affordable housing. Mix-income housing would also be good.	
10	I am a current homeowner in the neighborhood	I am deeply concerned about the intention to increase density along Homewood Ave. Already there is too much traffic on Thomas Blvd. and Homewood Avenue. I would like to see that parking lot (the "Homewood parcel") developed with single family homes in the character of the neighborhood. No more vinyl siding! Even if it doesn't face the street the two multi-family buildings at the corner of Land and Thomas are an eyesore. Maintaining the existing greenspace on the Homewood parcel is imperative, and the greenspace should be increased. I would like to see it doubled at least. The two houses on that parcel should remain. Do not replace architectural interest with boring structures like the ones at Thomas and Lang.	H,I,N
11	I am a current homeowner in the neighborhood	Removing the contaminants on the Lexington Technology Park site should be your highest priority.	E
12	I am a current homeowner in the neighborhood	I was disappointed to learn that "bridging the busway" didn't mean building a bridge over the busway. We need a bridge over the busway, not a metaphor for development to increase the tax burden of residents and homeowners. There is an existing bridge at Lang Ave. that is in a terrible state of disrepair. Rebuilding that bridge should be accomplished before you mislead people with the term "bridging the busway." It makes you look dishonest.	I

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13	I am a current homeowner in the neighborhood	Safeguards must be enacted to assure neighborhood residents and homeowners that our property values will not go down because of close proximity to construction that resembles the travesty at Bakery Square.	N
14	I am a current homeowner in the neighborhood	<p>I have been a resident of North Point Breeze for 20 years. I've seen the neighborhood go from being an racially and economically mixed community with lower income families living in market rate but affordable apartments or small houses to one that is increasingly white with home prices and rental rates pricing out most lower income people.</p> <p>I think the Lexington Industrial Park site offers a major opportunity to create a model, equitable part of North Point Breeze to balance the tide of gentrification spreading from East Liberty through the East End.</p> <p>This model should include rental housing that has an equitable mixed of rental prices along the lines of many Low Income Housing Tax Credit financed developments where 1/3 of the units are affordable for people with incomes at 30% or below of the area median income, 1/3 pegged at 50-60% of area median income, and 1/3 set at market rate.</p> <p>In addition to this housing component of the development, I would like to see the development include locally-sourced construction and, later, living wage employment opportunities; seeking locally-owned and operated retail, restaurant and service businesses with an emphasis on training and employing young adults, ex-offenders and the underemployed from the local area (using the Section 3 program and entrepreneurial enterprises), and incorporating sustainable development principles and features throughout the development site from installing solar on all structures, newly developed and old, creating a space for a community garden that would be oversee by residents of the new housing and partnering with Grow Pittsburgh's Shiloh Farm now occupying a full lot on the corner of Thomas Blvd and Homewood, adjacent to the southwest corner of the Lexington site, and other sustainable development features.</p> <p>In addition, the overall URA development plan for the Lexington site include upgrading access to, improve lighting and other features of the Homewood Busway stop to increase the potential of this being a model Transit Oriented Development and a destination for a racially and economically diverse customer and user base for the new 'Lexington Park'.</p> <p>Finally, it is essential that the Point Breeze North and Homewood communities (which will be impacted by this overall development and can benefit from the economic development features) to (1) review the Draft RFP prior to its release and (2) have 3 representatives from each community on the developer selection committee formed by the URA for the Lexington site.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the shape and future of this important corner of my beloved North Point Breeze neighborhood.</p>	H,B,I,N

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18	I am a current tenant in the neighborhood	Looking down at the site map makes it obvious that the area bounded in yellow, and the blocks immediately to the south, are severely lacking in greenery. RFP should specify a minimum number of trees to be planted, and a minimum number of acres of green space, if this development is to be consistent with the character of the neighborhood, as you promised at the November 2 meeting.	N,E
20	I am a current tenant in the neighborhood	I hope this project will result in increasing the tree cover in the neighborhood. Tree Pittsburgh is located within the neighborhood, and could serve as a valuable and important resource.	E,N
21	I am a current tenant in the neighborhood	RFP needs to put restrictions on access to the site. We don't want traffic spilling out into the neighborhood. The traffic from the tenants in the current buildings are already a problem. If the traffic can be reduced that would be a good thing. Perhaps limit access to the site to an entrance through the Braddock Ave. end of Thomas Blvd.? Thank you.	I,N
22	I am a current homeowner in the neighborhood	In your presentation you noted the location of the Rosedale Urban Farm. An expanded urban farm would be an excellent use of the Lexington Technology Park site. This of course would require cleanup of the contamination on the site, another great benefit to the community. Thank you.	E,N
23	I am a current homeowner in the neighborhood	Your proposal shows a new office building on the Homewood parcel. That is inappropriate to the site, which should be reserved for single family homes in order to be consistent with the existing neighborhood. Thank you.	B,H,N
24	I am a current homeowner in the neighborhood	I cannot support your proposed "mix of commercial, residential, office and entertainment centered around or located near" the Homewood busway station. "Dense, walkable, mixed-use development" in that location will destroy our neighborhood.	B,N
25	I am a current homeowner in the neighborhood	I stand with my neighbors who oppose your proposed destruction of the green space behind the houses on the 7200 block of Thomas Blvd.	E,N
26	I am a current homeowner in the neighborhood	I'm pleased to see the opportunity for community feedback to proposals for the Hunt Armory. I look forward to the same level of input to be provided for proposals for the Lexington Technology site.	G

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