

# TCAAP AUAR, Master Plan, and Regulations & Policies

## SUMMARY OF TCAAP ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES JANUARY - MARCH 2014

This document provides a summary of the following engagement activities:

- Joint Development Authority meeting - January 6
- Planning Commission work session - January 8
- Public open house - January 22
- Five Cities meeting – March 10
- Developer interviews - January 30, February 20, and March 12

### Joint Development Authority – January 6, 2014

The draft Master Plan was presented to the JDA for input, a summary of which is below:

- Good balance between housing and business
- Water feature is good, but concerns about maintenance and visual aspects – don't want a swamp
- General agreement that a roundabout needs more study – can it handle traffic, is it marketable?
- Make sure the ability of the school district to accommodate increase in enrollment is addressed
- Connectivity within the site is good, but need to address connectivity to the rest of the city
- Questions about the size of the central park facility and the footprint of a potential band shelter/amphitheater

Commissioner Ortega also reported that the Ramsey County Board was very pleased with the plan.

### Planning Commission – January 8, 2014

At this TCAAP work session, the Planning Commission was asked to provide feedback on a list of issues raised by the City Council relative to the Master Plan (wetlands, central water feature, and surface water management; roundabout and connection to CR H; residential densities and mix of housing types; green space and active recreation areas; and flex space development).

Overall comments from the Planning Commission on the Master Plan were positive. Specific comments included: good mix of life cycle housing, need for work force housing, like the roundabout, and don't just give the keys to developers. No specific comments were provided on density.

### Open House #2 – January 22, 2014

The second open house for the TCAAP Master Plan was held on January 22, 2014 at the Ramsey County Public Works facility. The purpose of this open house was to provide information about the master plan process, and solicit input on the Draft Master Plan. Over 90 people were in attendance. 34 identified as Arden Hills residents.

*The following display boards were available for viewing:*

- Where are you from?
- Trails and Transit
- How should TCAAP be like/different from Arden Hills?
- Analysis and Design Principles
- Design Process
- Opportunities and Constraints
- Design Process – A Systems Approach
- Illustrative Master Plan
- Land Use Plan
- Neighborhood Housing
- Open Space and Parks
- The Town Center and Economic Development
- TCAAP will be like/different from Arden Hills because...

*Other media included:*

- Handout giving an overview of the project, schedule, and contact information
- Brief presentation covering the Master Plan development process looped continuously on TVs in the room

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- An interactive roundabout exercise
- Illustrative Plan exercise included large maps set up on tables. Participants placed post-it notes on areas where they had a comment or suggestion. Staff facilitators were present at each table and wrote questions and comments on a flip chart.
- Invitation to write on a board posing the question “How should TCAAP be similar/different from Arden Hills?”
- Comment cards

*Common themes from these exercises include the following:*

- Prioritize small/independent businesses
- Good mix of uses and housing types
- Good trail system
- Need good connectivity to CR I
- Add regional amenities (pool, library, green space, etc.)
- Like the walkable town center
- Disagreement whether the amount of green space is adequate or if there should be more

*All exercise comments:*

- Traffic on 35W
- No big box retail
- Keep lighting to a minimum
- Where is low-income housing x2
- Add transit to alleviate traffic
- Add trail crossing at US 10
- Like the buffer between residential and highway
- Want a better wetland meander
- Good neighborhoods and parks x2
- Include small retail and restaurants in town center x5
- Trail connections x4
- Good variety of housing and uses x 3
- Good walkable town center x3
- Like the central park amphitheater component
- Access to AHATS
- Like wetland feature x2
- Need more connectivity to CR I x4
- Include more infiltration to limit rising VOCs
- Note that basement sealing is for Radon and VOCs
- Add regional amenities x2
- Pools? Library? X3
- Good park elements x2
- Concern with roundabout safety x2
- Concern with low density nature of flex business district
- Like high-density residential
- Potential for canoe route on Rice Creek
- Add sustainable energy features
- Make town center 1 to 2 stories
- More senior living

*Eighteen (18) comment sheets were also submitted. Common themes in written comments included:*

- Be sure to adequately incorporate safe bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- More parks and open space
- The plan includes a good amount of parks and open space
- No “big box” retail
- Be sure to promote small and independent retailers and restaurants

*All comments submitted via comment sheets:*

- Add bike and pedestrian facilities X4
- Make bike and pedestrian improvements safe X2
  - Bike/ped underpasses for access to the site
- More parks
- More open space X4
- No roundabout
- No “big box” retail X4
- Make TCAAP a regional attraction

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- Engage surrounding municipalities to make sure there is sufficient access to the site
- How will the infrastructure be paid for? Will City/County taxpayers be reimbursed?
- Parks are appropriate size and in good location X2
- Incorporate a transit hub
- Use sustainable features and design standards
- Will AHATS be cleaned as well?
- Add schools
- Good parking layout
- Good lifecycle housing
- Concerns about not enough access
- AH needs more independent retailers and restaurants X3
- No large townhome developments
- Like mixed-use space
- Athletic facility
- Civic center

### Five Cities Meeting – March 10, 2014

- The Mayor of Mounds View noted that trails and connections to existing trails are an important feature for the entire area. He expressed concerns about surface water being directed to Rice Creek and Mounds View.
- The Mayor of Roseville, based on that city's experience with the Twin Lakes project, advised that the City not be too restrictive in the definition of uses allowed in the business park.
- The Mayor of Shoreview emphasized the importance of improving transit service to the area.
- The Shoreview City Manager thought that the central surface water feature, if done well, could be a big asset for the development. He compared the plan to the Centennial Lakes development in Edina which created an amenity out of stormwater infrastructure. He also compared the draft master plan to the West End development in St. Louis Park which mixes a fitness club, restaurants, and theaters with office. The mix of uses support shared parking facilities.
- The Shoreview City Manager expressed concerns with the thumb connection to County Road I. Specifically, he was concerned that the new road would be used as a bypass for I-35W from County Road J to County Road H. The City of Shoreview is also opposed to changes to the County Road I interchange which would eliminate access points.
- General comments included very positive feedback on the draft master plan and advice that the City should adhere to the plan as development occurs. There was strong support for the roundabout. Attendees had questions regarding density and comments about lot sizes for single-family homes and the type of residential development that can work with smaller lots.

### DEVELOPER INTERVIEWS – January - March 2014

City of Arden Hills staff, Ramsey County staff, and consultants interviewed representatives from Opus, Lennar (residential), Mattamy Homes, Ryan Companies, and United Properties during the months of January, February, and March.

#### *Key Takeaways:*

- Site is planned effectively – uses are in balance and the locations are appropriate
- Residential will drive retail
- Let market conditions dictate exact boundaries of different users (retail/office)
- Mixed use/town center will be challenging and should be developed last

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- Retail component can have regional appeal and should also cater to all-day (residential) and daytime (office) users of the site
- Amenities are a differentiator - the planned water and open space is attractive
- It's OK to send the message that you want to do something different here – but recognize initial users may not be “brave” (especially retail) – but later, there may be more opportunities for innovation
- Key to success – making people feel like they're part of something smaller, not just one big development
- Keep the process as flexible as possible

## *Common themes by category:*

### Land Uses

- Office
  - The Thumb is a compelling site – wait for the right user
  - Western edge of site is attractive, good for visibility
  - Currently market not there for speculative office, but some users out there for build-to-suit
  - Consider consumer/professional services office (dentist, chiropractic, banks, financial planners, insurance, etc.)
- Flex Business
  - Industrial market has been active lately
  - Location is desirable to potential labor force
  - Access and site configuration doesn't lend to heavy truck distributors
  - Substantial flex space may need phased infrastructure
- Residential (primarily comments from Lennar and Mattamy Homes)
  - Plan of three distinct neighborhoods is attractive, appeals to varied users
  - People buy communities, not homes
  - Density can be achieved by mix of single- and multi-family
  - Mix of lot sizes in single family neighborhoods - typical lots tend to be 65' or 75' (50' or 60' product)
  - Use smaller lots/alley loaded homes and multifamily to transition between single-family and town center, maybe single row townhomes
  - Lot depths could be reduced by implementing smaller front setbacks, emphasis on porch, etc.
  - Sees Creek Neighborhood as entirely single-family
  - A second entrance into Creek Neighborhood would be preferable
  - Residential developers will want fewer roads adjacent to parks so that costs can be absorbed by housing on both sides of road
  - Buyers will be concerned about the image at the entrance points to neighborhoods
  - Could see a mix of multifamily types – garden apartments, large complexes, senior housing
  - Rental market seems to be expanding, and amenities are desired – “it's OK to rent”
  - Walkable spaces are important
- Retail
  - Retail node near CR H is a great spot
  - Opportunity for regional appeal – implement a good mix of uses/options so people will come to spend their time
  - Larger format regional/smaller format neighborhood = appealing
  - Get residential in and retail will follow
  - Will need an anchor – grocery, smaller-format big box
  - Restaurants, dry cleaning, health club would be attractive for corporate users as well as residents
  - Consider neighborhood retail along 96

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- Think about shared parking opportunities – entertainment (movie theater), health clubs are good for sharing with office, retail
- Retail is becoming more about the experience rather than simply buying goods
- Mixed Use
  - Vertical mixed use/town center can be difficult/expensive
  - This should be the last piece to develop; leave open for options including horizontal mixed use
  - Challenging but also exciting/unique if market is strong

## Site Access/Infrastructure

- CR H improvements are critical to retail development
- Connections to County Road I are important
- If spine road and utilities are in – huge benefit
- No particularly strong feelings on roundabouts

## Site Amenities

- Regional stormwater - very efficient way to look at land, saves developers from going through approval process and implementing on-site ponding; also unique amenity for site users
- People are buying experiences vs things – connectivity, trails, etc.

## Development Process

- Questions about how someone can quote or gain control of the land
- Will JDA have ability to provide incentives - “what will you give us to come here?”
- Think about what developers or their attorney would need to see
- Flexibility = easier process
- Assuring land bases will be competitive will be an advantage for the site