

**City of Columbus
Planning Commission
Mixed Use District High Density Special Meeting**

The 08.05.19 Special Meeting was called to order at 7:20 p.m. by Planning Commission Chair Ron Hanegraaf at the City Hall. Present were Commission members: Kris King, Pam Wolowski, Barb Bobick and Jody Krebs; City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko; City Planning Technician Ben Gutknecht. The meeting was called to address the new High-Density Mixed-Use District for the NE Quad in the City of Columbus.

Also in attendance were: Mayor Jesse Preiner; City Council Member Janet Hegland and Shelly Logren.

INTRODUCTION:

Elizabeth Mursko, the City Administrator, began the special meeting by setting the picture with explaining the NE Quad's current site conditions and the land use.

The property currently known as the North East (NE) Quad Development or "Columbus Crossings" is a 20-acre property located off of I-35 W. The property is designated for multiple commercial lots and will have public right of way (ROW), Storm Ponds, and Utilities. Hornsby St N will be the only public ROW with all other drives being private. The initial and first contract is with a Hy-Vee coffee shop and liquor store. This development will be located in the southeast corner of the NE Quad.

There are 2 out lots for stormwater ponds. One in the NE section of the site and one next to the Freeway, the lot Hy-Vee is situated on will have a stormwater pond as well. The last one is on the border with Columbus and Forest Lake, there will be a total of four storm water management ponds.

Mursko then introduced the background to the Mixed-Use district. The City of Columbus submitted a revised Comprehensive Plan containing the new mixed-use district after the first submitted plan was sent back with instructions from the Metropolitan Council in January of 2019 to add said district. Which is partially why there is a special meeting, to discuss the various district standards.

For this workshop, the Planning Commission will not be focusing on the entire Mixed-Use districts, rather just the High-Density NE Quad location. This is due to the interest by a developer to construct a multi-unit apartment building on the site.

To begin, Mursko addressed an article that was sent prior to the meeting. The article is called "Form-Based Codes: Inducing High-Value Development Across the Country". The purpose of this article was to get everybody thinking about our vision for the property, how we want it to look, feel, and what amenities we want it to provide to the residents. We also want to consider how we could make this area represent what the City of Columbus means. After securing our vision, we will discuss Uses, Renewable energy, Landscaping, Retaining walls, Fencing, Site lighting, Signage, and Design Standards.

Worksheet (Homework):

Step One:

- a. Examining City of Columbus moto “Rural Nature, Urban Access” with three considerations- Naming, Walkability, and Amenities linking to Best of Urban and Best of Rural.**

Naming- Mursko opened by saying the importance of this consideration is that the name should be something that when people hear it, they can visualize the area. The name should also mean something to and about Columbus. She first asked if everyone like “Columbus Crossings”?

Hanegraaf wanted to think about how the history of Columbus and address the history someone within the name, citing Lamprey Pass or having the word “Pass” within the name.

We could also play on the fact that we are the gateway to the Northshore, like one of the last stops and where I-35 East and West merges and splits.

Bobick stated she did like “Village Green”, she just felt that it encompassed what Columbus feels like, we are a collection of people where people come together who gather for social and economic reasons.

Krebs offered two names she had come up with- “Columbus North Country Corner” and “Columbus North Country Side Square”

Mursko responded with the name “Columbus NE Gateway” or something similar, it encompasses the sense of place with “Columbus” and “NE” and it gives the actual location another name as well, “Gateway”. The Planning Commission unanimously agreed that they preferred the name.

Consensus- Columbus NE Gateway (however, this may already be a moto for another area)

Another option is Columbus NE Village

Walkability- Next Mursko addressed the second consideration, walkability. Stating that this addressed how the individuals would move around the site, touched on why would people move to the site (should it be a major destination/commercial convenient location) and how others would be connected to amenities within and outside of the NE Quad.

Krebs stated that with people living on the site the focus should really be on safety, as this is proposed to be a heavy traffic area. She also stated that it should definitely be connected to the new bridge as well.

This brought up the discussion of pedestrian flow from the proposed apartment buildings to the Hy-Vee and begged the question if there was a proposed crosswalk on North Hornsby Street, to which Mursko said she would ask the City Engineer.

This also brought up the discussion of crossing safety. The Planning Commission felt that it was important that different avenues of pedestrian crossing safety be explored such as, crosswalk, crossing sign, illuminated crossing sign (operated by a button), lowered speed limits, pedestrian islands, painted trails, etc. There was also a question as to where are there currently proposed sidewalks, and do we need to add more?

Best of Urban Best of Rural- Mursko stated that this consideration addresses the questions “how do we make this area feel like that we have the best of urban and rural” the City Council felt it was important to bring the nature in, and also have attractive lighting with banners.

The Planning Commission agreed with the City Council’s vision, they liked the idea of having attractive native landscaping that felt green and brought a sense of rural to a modern urban center.

Wolowski did state that she liked benches and planters and that it would be beneficial and aesthetically pleasing to them both in with walkability.

This brought up the question as to who would manage these amenities, to which Mursko responded the City of Columbus would if it was along a public ROW.

3. Permitted Uses

Mursko then moved the meeting toward the Permitted Uses discussion, because the Planning Commission agreed with the City Council regarding the vision, meaning they also agreed with the Purpose and Intent.

Mursko reminded the Planning Commission that the uses that they choose for this district should reflect how the foresee this district looking and feeling.

Wolowski stated that she likes the idea of having convenient amenities such as grocery stores and liquor stores, but she did also want to narrow the permitted uses down to a more harmonious list.

Planning Commission agreed with the uses that City Council suggested and began narrowing down what kind of destination hook should the City of Columbus look for. They decided they wanted it to be something that was friendly for all ages, that would bring people from neighboring communities, and would also serve those in the proposed apartment building.

They also stated that they would not want any carwashes or fixit places in the NE Quad either.

Bobick mentioned that it may be beneficial to start thinking more towards vertical mixed-use buildings as well.

Mursko then brought up that the City of Columbus has so far be reactive to offers, and this may be a good opportunity to be proactive and find strong contenders that would match the vision for the NE Quad.

They decided that strong places could be bakery, ice cream store (not a franchise and feels local), a bank, pizza place (Punch Pizza), Chipotle, Culvers, Buffalo Wild Wings, etc. The Planning Commission also stated that it would be nice to bring in a local restaurant, or a dining/drinking establishment that has a more local feeling and background and that wasn't part of a national chain. It could also be something that brings people from Forest Lake, Lino Lakes, and other nearby communities here because they do not have it there.

Work Sheet Two

Mursko then moved the meeting on to seven categories that Planning Commission needed to provide answers for due to demand by the developers. The answers impact the design of the overall development and the proposed apartment building and bring clarity to staff and developers.

The Planning Commission began to look at the second worksheet, which consisted of table that compared four other communities mixed-use district standards to the City of Columbus's commercial standards. They were specially looking at the below seven categories.

1. Renewable energy
2. Landscaping
3. Retaining walls
4. Fencing
5. Site lighting
6. Signage
7. Design Standards

These categories were highlighted because the site in which the proposed apartment is being planned for will most likely need fencing, retaining walls, landscaping, and site lighting, among the other attributes.

Design materials- This discussion was facilitated by a handout that Commissioner Kris King provided regarding a City of Minneapolis Code Amendment, which was also discussion design materials for their Mixed-Use district. The City of Minneapolis broke down their material into a class system and then assigned them to various districts by a percentage.

The Planning Commission felt this was an efficient way to conduct our material standards as well and requested one be made after the discussion (Attached Below)

Proposed Design Standards:

The following design standards for apply for the High-Density Mixed-Use District NE Quad.

Building Materials

Material Classification:

Class I	Class II	Class III
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brick Masonry• Stone Masonry• Cast Stone Masonry• Composite Metal Panels• Prefinished Cement Panel ($\geq 5/8$" thickness or ≥ 1.75 g/cm³ density)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Precast Concrete with a specific pigment color (not painted)• Concrete, Architectural Finish• Wood Composite Siding• Glass Wall System• Single Skin Metal Panels	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anodized Aluminum• EFIS or Stucco

Prohibited Materials are as follows:

1. Unfinished metals
2. Painted concrete or siding panels

Application:

When designing building elevations, developers must follow this application system to ensure that distribution on building elevations are equally designed and distributed. (this does not include windows and door areas).

Class I- 60-100%

Class II 0-40%

Class III* 0-20%

**Class III materials cannot constitute more than 20% of any building elevation.*

Alternative Compliance: The zoning code should allow the zoning administrator or City Planning Commission the authority to grant alternative materials for any site plan. As long as the alternative meets the intent of the design standards and is proven to be durable, aesthetically pleasing, and does not rapidly weather.

Renewable Energy- would we allow turbines or solar panels such as on a light post?

No, Planning Commission doesn't think it looks that attractive.

Landscaping- we have a very general land scaping standard, and we've always allowed the businesses to pick their own plantings as long as they followed the standards for coverings.

But with this development to be more about harmony, we may want to create a higher standard. Planning Commission agree that we may need to create a **Plantings List- for planters, storm ponds and trees**

<https://extension.umn.edu/tree-selection-and-care/recommended-trees-minnesota>

Retaining Walls-these will be pertinent to the storm pond.

We have to look up a harmonious material for retaining wall. What was proposed was Mosaic standard wall block for the retaining wall- Planning Commission agree that we should have the walls be similar to the bridge color and natural looking made from the Mosaic Standard Wall Block.

Fencing- We have been suggested using Black Montage Majestic Fencing for the fencing around the storm pond. The Planning Commission agree this is a good look.

Lighting- Due to our lighting standards being very loose, our freeway district currently has a little bit of everything. These lights will be for the parking lot areas and we want them to match the area and be harmonious to each other.

Elizabeth and Ben will find a number of lighting fixtures that we will propose the developers use. It would also be beneficial to create a sheet that shows all of the examples and include one of the light posts that has a flag pole from which to hang a Columbus Flag. Planning Commission also asked how will the lighting on the site be comparable to the lighting on Hornsby street?

Signage- The developers asked what will be allow for business signs, and we can look at our current code and see if it applies. But they also want an additional sign, they want a sign or identifier that physically draws the eye when people are driving on the freeway. Right now, they are looking at 60 feet sign/flag pole. For reference holiday has 72' pole with a variance but they are topologically challenged. Ben and Elizabeth will look at the code and draft something.

Meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Ben Gutknecht, City Planning Technician