



REGENT SQUARE CIVIC ASSOCIATION SUMMARY – BRADDOCK/HUTCHINSON DESIGN WORKSHOP

Mon., 17 Oct. 2011, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

WSSC, 7604 Charleston Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15218

Introduction

Residents of Regent Square and members of the RSCA Board met to discuss the future of the Braddock/Hutchinson corner site, most recently a Sunoco Station. This document summarizes their vision for this very visible site in the small Regent Square business district and provides a list of recommendations for potential developers and Edgewood officials to consider. It is the participants' hope that, as a result of their efforts, the site's redevelopment will benefit both the residential and business communities as well as have a positive impact on Edgewood Borough (in which the property sits), and the adjacent or very nearby municipalities of Swissvale, Wilkinsburg and the City of Pittsburgh.

Purpose of the Workshop

- Develop a vision and wish list of features for the Braddock/Hutchinson site (current Sunoco station)
- Provide a forum for community members to express their opinions and concerns about the site's development.
- Develop a document to communicate the community's wishes to the involved municipalities and prospective developers.
- Cultivate a spirit of collaboration among residents, municipalities and prospective developers.

Existing Conditions – 1043 S. Braddock

Location:

- In the 1-1/2 block long Regent Square commercial district consisting of small independently owned businesses (restaurants, coffee shop, bars, Laundromat, realtor, insurance, beer distributor, etc.)
- At intersection of S. Braddock Ave. and Hutchinson

Involved municipalities:

- Edgewood Borough: location of site
- Swissvale Borough: Across Braddock Ave. from site
- Wilkinsburg Borough: Less than half a block north on Braddock Ave. from site
- City of Pittsburgh: 1-1/2 blocks north on Braddock Ave. from site

Size: 12,000 sq. ft. – smaller than nearby GetGos in Squirrel Hill, Wilkinsburg & Bloomfield

Services:

- 8 gas pumps, no diesel
- air pump
- minimal sales of candy bars, sodas and cigarettes

Hours of Operation:

- Monday - Saturday, 6:30 a.m. -9:45 p.m.; Sunday, 9:00 a.m. - 5:45 p.m.

Adjacent Properties (Edg = Edgewood; Sws = Swissvale):

- On North (Edg): Mixed use (1st floor commercial, 2nd floor residential)
- On Northeast (Edg): Residential (single family detached)
- On East (Edg): Residential (single family detached)
- On Southeast (Edg): Residential (multi-unit)
- On South (Edg): Commercial (convenience store)
- On Southwest (Sws): Commercial (restaurant)
- On West (Sws): Mixed use (1st floor commercial, 2nd floor residential) & Residential
- On Northwest (Sws): Residential (multi-unit)

Maintenance:

- Well-kept; clean and litter free; seasonal flower gardens and containers

Traffic & Parking:

- Congestion and back-ups during rush hours and on Saturdays along S. Braddock and Hutchinson; steady traffic during rest of day; additional congestion on S. Braddock during summer (Kennywood)
- Difficulties turning left from westbound on Hutchinson to southbound onto S. Braddock
- Difficult pedestrian crossing at S. Braddock and Hutchinson
- Difficulties for buses turning right from northbound on S. Braddock to eastbound on Hutchinson
- Shortage of parking spaces

Community Vision for Future of Site

- Maintain the existing character of the general Regent Square community
- Respect and enhance the aesthetics of the existing business district and residential community
- Maintain the small-scale commercial quality of the existing business district
- Be compatible with architectural feel of the neighborhood
- Have a positive impact on nearby property values (including those across S. Braddock in Swissvale)
- Reconcile car & pedestrian traffic on Braddock and Hutchinson
- Avoid negative impact to existing traffic load on side streets
- Maintain existing on-street parking options
- Be bike and pedestrian friendly
- Be environmentally responsible
- Maintain public safety
- Be an example of inter-municipal collaboration

Desired Features & Aesthetics

Neighborhood & Business District Character

- Maintain a small scale, “neighborhood commercial” (vs. highway commercial”) quality to all features
- Maintain a small town quality (vs. suburban approach)
- Work with community to assure features that will be well-received
- Maintain neighborhood-compatible hours of operation

Traffic & Parking

- Require a traffic study to address identified issues
- Consider impact of southbound cars turning left from Braddock into site
- Reconcile car & pedestrian traffic, including bikes (consider busy weekday rush hours and Saturday hours - restaurants, movies, etc.)
- Eliminate curb-cuts/entrances closest to intersection on both S. Braddock and Hutchinson
- Work with all four municipalities to address phasing and timing of lights and location of pedestrian crossings along S. Braddock from Forbes to beyond Edgewood Towne Center (as per ETC traffic study recommendations) to facilitate movement of traffic.
- Be attentive to the safety of elementary school students at Braddock/ Henrietta intersection (e.g., pedestrian, school bus and car pool activity)
- Maintain any existing parking on both sides of Braddock for residents, movie-goers, restaurant patrons, etc.
- Encourage bike traffic by providing additional bike racks and air for bikes
- Keep station diesel-free to keep out large trucks
- Work with municipalities to control resulting additional traffic on side streets (e.g., East End Ave., Savannah, Milton,...) and alley behind station

Building/Site/Landscape Design

- Use high quality materials (brick vs. split face block, etc.)

- Incorporate architectural features that are compatible with 1920s - 30s character of the neighborhood Maintain large, open storefront windows (as in existing and business district commercial buildings); avoid blank walls
- Minimize canopy height (equal to or lower than existing)
- Screen on-site parking from the street with plantings and/or fencing
- Use subdued colors for building, canopy and signage
- Incorporate greenery and fencing along Braddock and Hutchinson
- Provide a tall landscape buffer along alley
- Plant trees along sidewalks (Tie-in to other tree initiatives in area)
- Provide a marked pedestrian path from public sidewalk to building entrance

Signage

- Minimize signage on site, on canopy, and in windows (equal to or less than existing)
- Use subdued colors (similar to Baum Blvd. GetGo)
- Abide by (or better) Edgewood Borough's signage ordinances (currently, one sign per establishment; 1 sq. ft per linear ft. of front wall and less than 100 sq. ft. in total)
- Incorporate a Regent Square marker at corner of property (similar to Baum Blvd. GetGo station)

Lighting

- Use recessed lighting and incorporate Dark-Sky fixtures to minimize brightness.
- Avoid glare (direct or reflected) reaching adjacent residential properties
- Abide by (or better) Edgewood Borough's glare ordinances (equal to or less bright than current)

Noise & Vibrations

- Avoid early morning or late night deliveries
- Provide sound isolation for condensers and compressors
- Abide by (or better) Edgewood Borough's noise ordinances

Air Quality

- Abide by (or better) Edgewood Borough's ordinances, the Air Pollution Control Act and the Allegheny County Health Department (re. fumes, vapors, gases, emissions, etc.)

Other Environmental Issues

- Incorporate "green" features into building and site (possibly LEED certified)
- Abide by (or better) Edgewood Borough's stormwater management ordinances
- Use Nine Mile Run Watershed Association (NMRWA) as consultants to address water run-off and chemical infiltration issues
- Minimize expanse of impermeable pavement; increase landscaped areas
- Consider a green roof and/or solar panels
- Report status of DEP Environmental Impact Study to the community
- Participate in community and industry recycling programs

Public Safety

- Work with municipalities to improve pedestrian crosswalks
- Work with all four police departments to prevent and address disruptive behavior, petty thefts and traffic violations
- Avoid storage of propane & kerosene tanks
- Require all staff to be trained in safety and emergency preparedness (fire prevention, hazardous materials, spill management, etc)
- Post 24 hour emergency contact number/s

Maintenance/Cleanliness

- Provide sufficient trash cans near building & along sidewalk (cans to match Regent Square ones)
- Keep building well painted at all times (adjust maintenance schedule as needed)
- Keep site litter-free at all times (adjust routine cleaning schedule as needed)
- Keep landscaping, sidewalks and all property grounds well maintained.
- Post store manager information and Suggestions Box

Community Involvement

- Participate in business district improvement initiatives (e.g., tree planting, holiday lighting...)
- Assign a company representative as main contact between owner, business community & RSCA

Next Steps

- Clarify proposed hours of operation
- Contact Swissvale re. traffic coordination/timing of lights as per original Edgewood Town Center traffic study recommendations
- Study & determine status of Edgewood Town Center Property across from Applebee's (Parcel D) as an alternative location for a GetGo
- Investigate reversing Braddock/Hutchinson crosswalk timing for improved pedestrian safety as per RSCA's Regent Square Business District Traffic Study
- Contact Wilksburg and City of Pittsburgh re. the potential issues and impact on their residents & streets
- Communicate to Giant Eagle re. list of concerns and a "wish list"
- Review Edgewood Zoning ordinances re. permitted used, required off-street parking, lighting, screening, etc. vis-a-vis site's redevelopment
- Review Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan for Edgewood, Rankin, & Swissvale re. site redevelopment's impact on properties on Swissvale side of S. Braddock
- Consult with RSCA Board re. follow-up Board actions & community involvement
- Share this document with community via RSCA newsletter and website

Participants

Special thanks go out to the community members who attended the workshop and helped in creating this vision and wish list for a very visible corner in our neighborhood:

Casey Brown, env. field tech./ bldg. concierge & 24-yr. resident

Nancy Drew, interior designer & 9-yr. business/ property owner

Neal Harrison, manufacturing vice-president & 5-yr. resident

Barbara Hicks, founding member of RSCA and Environmental Charter School (ret.)
& 48-yr. resident

Lee Hicks, church executive/fund-raising consultant (ret.) & 21-yr. resident

Alina Keebler, architectural designer & 33-yr. resident

Ken Kuligowski, architect & 18-yr. resident

William McCloskey, writer/editor & 34-yr. resident

Thomas Montgomery, mortgage manager & 21-yr. resident

Arch Pelley, architect & 22-yr. resident

Josie Ulrich, human services director (ret.) & 9-yr. resident

References

- (1) *Code of the Borough of Edgewood* (Dec. 2010)
- (2) *Partnerships – Edgewood, Rankin & Swissvale, multi-municipal comprehensive plan* (Aug. 2009)
- (3) *Regent Square Business District: A Strategic Improvement Study* (2002)