

**Southwest Chaska Growth & Development Plan
Stakeholder Listening Session – June 26, 2012
Summary of Comments**

A stakeholder listening session was held for the Southwest Chaska Growth & Development Plan project on Tuesday, June 26, 2012 at the Chaska Community Center. The meeting sign-in sheet shows 45 people attended the meeting, including City Staff and HKGi consultants. Following an overview presentation of the project's purpose, process, timeline and team, the consultants facilitated a group discussion based on some big picture questions. Therefore, the following summary of comments is organized around these high level questions:

- What are your preferences for developing land in the SW Chaska Growth Area?
- What have been some of the challenges with pursuing development in the SW Chaska Growth Area?
- How do you feel about the 2003 planning process that resulted in the Heights of Chaska Concept?
- What do you see as the most critical roles and responsibilities of the public sector in achieving successful development in the SW Chaska Growth Area?

This summary also includes comments from a follow-up meeting with a property owner who was not able to attend the listening session on June 26th.

1. Land use & development preferences

- What types and sizes of parks will be considered for SW Chaska? The current Heights of Chaska concept shows a community park, which could be 30 or more acres in size. The City's 2030 Comprehensive Plan identifies the potential need for two neighborhood parks, which could be 3-15 acres in size. The Chaska Greenbelt comes into play in SW Chaska as much of the land west of Hwy 212 is currently designated as part of the Greenbelt. The SW Chaska Growth & Development Plan will consider ways to connect the Chaska Greenbelt east of Hwy 212.
- What has worked in other cities with similar conditions? This project's market analysis will attempt to identify comparable places to the SW Chaska growth area.
- Suggestion that density could be tiered with higher density development around the proposed TH 212/CR 140 interchange and lower density development further away from the interchange. This interchange could become a regional center, including regional commercial.
- Recognition that the proposed 212/140 interchange significantly affects future land use decisions.
- How will design and construction of the proposed 212/140 be funded?
- Suggestion for low impact development in SW Chaska.
- Suggestion for mix of housing that supports concept of lifecycle housing.
- The Creek Road should not be removed or eliminated. It is critical for providing access into the SW Chaska development area.

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2. Challenges with pursuing development in the SW Chaska growth area

- Little has happened – what has caused the lack of development so far? Economy? Need for infrastructure? The current plan?
- A highway interchange at 212/140 is critical to catalyzing development in SW Chaska.
- Why was the proposed 212/140 interchange project stopped a couple of years ago? In 2010, the City submitted an application to the State for a grant to fund the interchange but the grant was not awarded to the City.
- How does the SW Chaska growth area plan affect the balance of the City? For example, in terms of affordable housing?
- How will public infrastructure be phased? Most likely they will need to be tied to the timing of the development market. Public improvements may need to be phased to the ultimate size needed for full development of SW Chaska.
- Cost of the proposed 212/140 interchange is a challenge, that's why a partial interchange (approx. \$7 million) is being considered as an option to a full interchange (approx.. \$15 million).
- Concerns about the Heights of Chaska plan going too far by being too prescriptive; the plan needs to have more flexibility.
- How will the team deal with the 1,000 pound gorilla in this plan, which is the need for the 212/140 interchange?
- Any changes, big and small, have impacts on potential development.
- Suggestion to develop evaluation criteria for the project to improve land use decision making.
- There was developer interest after the 2003 plan was completed; however, they ran into challenges. What were these challenges?
 - Timing of public infrastructure didn't match with development needs
 - Heights of Chaska concept plan was intended for a small number of developers
 - Multiple property owners and potential developers
 - Heights of Chaska concept plan is too detailed
- Economics were not a strong enough component of the Heights of Chaska plan. They should be strongly considered with the current SW Chaska Growth and Development planning effort.
- City goals and developer goals are not in alignment with the Heights of Chaska plan. The City has promoted the Heights of Chaska plan while the development community felt the plan was not feasible.
- Suggestion that amenities, such as the greenbelt, parks and open spaces are a burden on development.

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3. Feelings about 2003 planning process that resulted in Heights of Chaska Concept Plan

- The community was very engaged in the process in 2003. Positive comments about the 2003 planning process.
- The current plan is a community-based plan with a shared vision. It is not a typical suburban development plan.
- There is a lack of trust between land owners and the City due to past dealings on the Heights of Chaska Plan.

4. Most critical roles/responsibilities of the public sector in achieving successful development in the SW Chaska Growth Area

- Public financing
- Bonding
- Facilitating public/private ventures
- The proposed highway interchange at CR 140 and TH 212 is a critical component of any development in SW Chaska, but there is a concern regarding how the interchange is paid for. The City should play a more active role in financing the interchange design and construction. The City should either pay for the bridge construction or play an active role in seeking public financing of the interchange construction.

5. Other Concerns

- What is the Metropolitan Council review/approval process and timeframe? Could be up to a six-month process; however, the City will work with neighboring cities to expedite the process as much as possible.
- Concern regarding the costs of a traffic signal for the intersection of CR 140 and Old 212 (61) that were pushed onto the land owners as a result of the Heights of Chaska plan; however, the traffic signal has not been installed yet. The traffic signal will be needed for the anticipated traffic increases due to future development in the area.
- The establishment of the “greenbelt” area, width and location was too random. In addition, the establishment of the “big woods” boundary was also too random. Does the establishment of these areas and the restriction on development in these areas constitute a “land takings”?