

Project Community Park Worthington – City Council Presentation

Presentation Transcript – Monday, Sept 7, 2019

Good Evening Members of Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to address you the elected representatives of the public, and the residents of Worthington via live stream. We appreciate your time.

My name is Kacey Brankamp and I'm here with Andy Hutter and Scott Taylor. We are the co-chairs of a community group called "Project Community Park Worthington."

We're here this evening to share with you the work of our group and the strong support for our vision as you'll see in the packets each of you received.

Over a year ago at a neighborhood gathering, questions arose about the status and future of the UMCH site. A general consensus emerged, not only about outcomes for this important property but about the process for its redevelopment. Given the absence of public dialog about the property—none since the Lifestyle Communities presentation in 2015—and all the questions surrounding the issue, the group felt there should be more meaningful public conversation now, so as to not simply be passive.

Our small group formed a Mission: to inform, engage, and inspire the public with an alternative vision for this one of a kind site.

We hoped to offer a vision, a concept for the land and what it could do for our community, that we believe is most faithful to the neighborly, family-friendly, historic character of our city.

This small group of citizens, all whom care deeply about our community, united around a common basic vision for the UMCH site:

preservation of a significant amount of community-oriented green-space in the core of the property with commercial and retail development along High St. and modest residential along the northern edge of the property. But it is the community green-space that is at the heart of our proposal (as opposed to high-density residential)

and that choice between public green-space or high-density apartments—forms what we believe is the defining issue we will make as a community.

We weren't interested in just talking among ourselves—we wanted to find out if there were other members of the community that shared our basic vision. So we held gatherings at our neighbors' homes.

One of your members, David Robinson, in his capacity as private citizen, lead discussion about our city, how UMCH will impact its future, and how the growing number of supporters for our basic vision could make an actual difference shaping the outcome of this issue.

Though our group name includes the word “park,” and we do envision a large community green-space at the core of this property, it is crucial to point out, for a clear understanding of what we are proposing, that we advocating for robust commercial development along High St.

[PLEASE REFERENCE THE CONCEPT RENDERING]

This design includes substantially more commercial — and associated revenue for the city — than was contained in the 2015 Lifestyle Communities proposal.

We're also calling for the inclusion of residential—senior or otherwise—but in style and degree, harmonious and compatible with surrounding neighborhoods.

We believe a multi-use development, defined by a greenspace core, High St. commercial, and modest residential is balanced.

It also acknowledges the many demands upon our city—including financial demands—while keeping front and center the principle that the outcome at this property should serve the residents of Worthington, first and foremost.

When it became clear to us that there was widespread support for our vision in our city, we decided to transform the verbal support into tangible evidence.

We drafted a statement of support—a petition to sign — that we promoted through door hangers distributed throughout the city by volunteers this recent summer.

[PLEASE SEE THE PETITION STATEMENT]

We started a website—projectcommunityparkworthington.com—where residents can sign the petition online, and most recently we tabled at the Village Green during the Farmers Market.

The purpose of this petition effort was to further the dialog in our city, and to present to you a testimony from members of your community.

We know there are divergent voices on this issue. And we do not claim an irrefutable mandate or anything of the sort, but what we do assert is that these many voices ought to be acknowledged and heard, and, one day, responded to with more than verbal claims about there being equal numbers on all sides of the issue.

To date, this volunteer-led effort, largely comprised of a door hanger and word of mouth, has resulted in over 1,000 petition signatures, from over 750 Worthington households.

[PLEASE REFERENCE THE PIN-DROP MAP]

To those familiar with petition campaigns, and average response rates to cold-call literature, this number of 1,000 in a city of 5,000 households is striking and an indicator of a broader public sentiment that would emerge if prompted with the necessity of a choice.

In closing, we understand this is a complex issue with lots of moving parts.

We know that time is limited tonight — though we welcome the opportunity to have a further discussion in the future if you so choose.

We have come here to simply share with you what amounts to a statement from the community, endorsing our mission, a message which comes from all parts and quarters of this community.

We believe that each of you, over the last few years, has indicated in your own way your desire to listen to the public, and to serve the interests of the residents.

We urge you to review these materials and to read the testimonies and comments from the petition signers to better understand this recurring and persistent voice of your neighbors.

We thank you for your time and your consideration, and for this opportunity to speak to you directly.

We hope that we may do so again, to further the dialog on behalf of the residents of Worthington.

Multi-Use Design Concept

This design is not in any way formal, but is instead a basic concept that reflects core elements of our mission, designed to stimulate our imaginations and foster dialog.



Petition Language

*We the undersigned Worthington residents,
in order to
enhance our shared community life,
promote our city's economic vitality, and
preserve our natural environment for the enjoyment of all,
do hereby urge our city to acquire the UMCH property at 1033 High St.
for the primary purpose of creating a multi-use public greenspace
for the benefit of the entire community in perpetuity.*

We request that City Council:

- 1) Acquire the property in order to gain creative control over the site's development, thereby enabling a truly resident-centered outcome.
- 2) Finance acquisition and development, without new taxes on residents, through a) cash on-hand, b) increased revenue from High St. commercial development, c) sale or lease of on-site commercial/residential parcels, c) state & federal grants, and e) private fundraising.
- 3) Partition the property to provide for a contiguous greenspace core of \approx 28 acres (currently zoned Special-1), \approx 10 acres of commercial adjacent High Street, and \approx 3 acres of residential adjacent Longfellow/Larrimer Ave.
- 4) Develop the public greenspace, over time, to feature community amenities such as multi-use event facility, outdoor amphitheater, walking trails, athletic field, community garden, and a natural preserve along Tucker Creek suitable for educational purposes.

Signature _____ Date _____

Name (printed) _____

Street Address _____

Worthington, OH 43085

Phone (optional) _____

Email (optional) _____

Map of Unique Households with 1+ Petition Signers

