

MURRAY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
Special Meeting – Joint Meeting with Millcreek City
Meeting Minutes

Monday August 21, 2023

Murray City Hall, 10 East 4800 South, Council Chambers, Murray, Utah 84107

Attendance:

Council Members and others:

Garry Hrechkosy – Chair	District #5
Rosalba Dominguez – Vice Chair	District #3
David Rodgers	District #1
Pam Cotter	District #2
Diane Turner	District #4

Brett Hales	Murray City Mayor	Jennifer Kennedy	City Council Executive Director
Doug Hill	Chief Administrative Officer	Pattie Johnson	Council Administration
Tammy Kikuchi	Chief Communications Officer	Phil Markham	CED Director
G.L. Critchfield	City Attorney	Elvon Farrell	CED
Jacob Richards	Millcreek City Council	Robert May	Millcreek City planner
Brenda Moore	Finance Director	Kristy Chambers	Millcreek Community Council
Christine Richman	GSBS	Tim Sullivan	GSBS Township and Range
Jason Claunch	Catalyst	Mike Winder	Millcreek City Manager
Bev Uipi	Millcreek City Council	Shawn Lamar	Millcreek City Planning Commission
Jeff Silvestrini	Millcreek City Mayor	Cheri Jackson	Millcreek City Council
Silvia Catten	Millcreek City Council	Tim Sullivan	Township and Range
Jason Claunch	Catalyst	Thom DeSirant	Millcreek City Council
Zach Smallwood	Murray City planner	Residents	

Welcome and Introductions:

Mr. Hrechkosy began the meeting at 5:00 p.m. and noted Millcreek City Mayor Jeff Silvestrini and the Millcreek City Council were present for the joint meeting. He explained that GSBS Architects would present the Murray North Station Area Plan that intends to revitalize the TRAX station area. Collaboration between Murray and Millcreek was important because the station includes land in both cities.

Discussion Item:

- Preliminary Concepts/Directions and Implementation Steps for the Murray North Station Area Plan.

GSBS representative Christine Richman introduced her team and explained how GSBS hopes to bring change to a very challenging area and progressively make the Murray North Station fully functional over time. She said the project started several months ago and that so far they have completed an Existing Conditions Analysis and the first phase of public input. GSBS spent time discussing the proposal with Murray's planning staff and a number of other stakeholders. The purpose of the meeting was to review the work that GSBS completed, discuss the proposed plan to eventually implement strategies and enter the next phase of work. Recently a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis was conducted that involves alternatives and focuses on various aspects of the station area.

Ms. Richman displayed a map to point out the station platform in relationship to the Murray/Millcreek City boundary. She noted Fireclay Avenue as the main access to the UTA (Utah Transit Authority) Park and Ride lot and Main Street as a vital street. Barriers that run through the area include 4500 South,

State Street, 300 West, Interstate 15, and the Front Runner rail tracks.

She said according to new State requirements for all TRAX stations, plans for revitalizing station areas need to be centered around a TOD (Transit-oriented Development) zone and transit hub, and encompass a one-half mile distance from the station platform. The purpose of the plan is to determine a shared vision that is formed by existing uses and how the community perceives its future; the results of the plan identify opportunities and constraints within the station area; identifies opportunities for affordable housing and recognizes a described vision for the future of the area. Areas not considered feasible for connectivity to the station area were noted. Lastly the plan suggests strategic recommendations for implementation.

She shared the plan schedule to explain what they know right now, like existing conditions, economics, community engagement, and the SWOT results. What is needed is more housing, services and amenities, connectivity, and safety and security; and she spoke about what steps are needed next to implement the plan. That involves completing a future land use map for the area, identifying design of streets and buildings, and finding funding for the projects. GSBS hopes to present a final draft of the plan to both cities for their consideration in late fall.

Ms. Richman said to help GSBS understand current conditions in the area, an on-line survey was created involving a series of interactive maps related to land use, transportation, crime, safety, environmental issues, housing, economic opportunities, and community assets. As a result they learned that new households in this area have no amenities or services nearby so services like gathering places, grocery stores, parking, and other amenities will be needed. Ms. Dominguez asked if a community center could be slated in the plan. Ms. Richman said it would be considered a gathering place which would help social cohesion and reduce crime that is a problem in this neighborhood.

Website information was shared that informs people about the planning process and the online survey for collecting data. GSBS will continue to gather ideas, learn community priorities, and identify problems in the area. Ms. Richman said one community outreach event occurred, and the next one is set for September 12, 2023 at Brickhill Park from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. She discussed the stakeholder interview process; described all land uses in the radius, reviewed historical, existing, and future housing plans for the area and confirmed that environmental issues exist on many properties in the area.

A heat map was displayed to confirm prominent crime in the station area and Ms. Richman said not only property crimes, trespassing and ordinance violations occur, but most concerning is violent crimes like rape, assault, and murder. A conversation followed about the full range of frequent crime and there was consensus that violent crime was concerning. Ms. Richman felt crime overall could be mitigated by improving urban design, creating social cohesion, and addressing existing commercial vacancy spaces.

Tim Sullivan said connectivity was important to the TOD and reviewed connection barriers that were discovered in the area. He said with sidewalk gaps, lack of crossing areas and the Front Runner track line, improvements to walking, biking, and pedestrian access could be made by creating smaller city

blocks and more direct routes despite car traffic. Typically parking areas are not needed in a TOD with available transit opportunities, but people in Utah still prominently drive cars. What resulted from a parking count they conducted was the conclusion that a smarter parking plan is needed. He reported building managers in Fireclay are struggling because renters are leaving due to lack of parking and car towings from illegal parking in fire lanes. He felt parking issues were unique to that area because newer developments have done better by making parking stalls optional with rental agreements.

Mayor Silvestrini said one way Millcreek addressed on-street parking issues, was by requiring developers to assign a parking stall with each rental unit. Ms. Dominguez thought the concept for living in Fireclay was to encourage the use of public transit. Mr. Sullivan agreed but parking issues are often related to low-income and affordability. He said a shared parking program could be implemented that was never tried, but a better strategy is needed because more parking is definitely needed in the Fireclay area. It was noted that walking from the UTA parking lot was not an option, because it is dangerous at night.

Ms. Richman explained a strategy called Internal Capture. This would change the environment, so that people who drive to get a loaf of bread would instead walk around the corner for groceries. Ms. Dominguez addressed the low-income community that exists in Fireclay and asked how large multi-families living in one- and two-bedroom units, with varying needs would transition to that kind of environment. Ms. Richman agreed there is a high concentration of affordable housing in the area and the only way to bring businesses to the area, is to ensure there is buying power to support the needed retail, which requires diversifying socioeconomics.

Jason Claunch discussed the demand for market needs and lack of services in the area. He thought national brands would require a certain amount of parking for convenience before they would even consider moving to the area. From a planning perspective he said there is at least 170,000 square feet of additional capacity to harness in the study area, and another 5,000 square feet of retail that could be absorbed within the core of the radius.

He outlined opportunities and considerations that would meet marketing needs and boost stability in the future. Ms. Dominguez stressed that both cities need mixed incomes to sustain markets in the area and asked how that would be improved. Mr. Claunch said finding a good balance in the equitable distribution of housing would help throughout the entire area for all income ranges.

Ms. Richman pointed out the lack of greenspace and crosswalks that need to be added, especially at State Street because the nearest crosswalk is at 4500 South.

She presented three final concepts for improving the Murray North Station Area. Option Plans A, B and C were all discussed thoroughly. She provided conceptual drawings, maps and illustrations for each option and explained that one option was not better than the other and all three ideas could be accomplished over time. Option A reflected a smaller area of development around the station with little commercial; Option B focuses on Main Street to 4500 South with a greater pedestrian environment, a larger extension of housing developments including retail, green space, and active uses. Option C was the largest vision and very busy expanding the TOD regional hub further north and

west, with clear key gateway streets, an active retail market, recreation, increased busing and more open space with Fireclay Avenue as main station area. She said Option C would be a major investment to push Fireclay Avenue to the west beyond the Front Runner track line.

Ms. Cotter felt grocery stores in the area would attract more people to live there. Ms. Richman confirmed commercial space was included in Option B. The GSBS team agreed creating the context in the area first would help move more commercial business into the area. Ms. Cotter asked about an empty lot owned by Salt Lake County. Ms. Richman discussed the proposal with the County who indicated they would consider any proposed changes affecting their lot. Ms. Cotter asked about attaining the Deseret Industries property from the LDS church as depicted in the proposal. Ms. Richman explained conceptual plans were only identifying a vision for communities after properties transition in the future. She said nothing in the plan would force anyone to transition their property before they are ready. The current proposal only indicates the preferred use until the transition actually occurs.

Further discussion occurred about each option regarding future housing, pedestrian connectivity, vibrant communities, green space, walking paths, and streetscapes. Enhancing Main Street is the goal to make the area more vibrant no matter which plan is decided on. Ms. Richman clarified Option C is a larger TOD that would become a sub-regional hub. Ms. Dominguez asked what a sub-regional hub looks like within a city. Mr. Sullivan said Sugarhouse is a good example. Ms. Richman explained a sub-regional hub would be located between the TRAX line and the Front Runner tracks similar to the Granary District in Salt Lake City. That includes employment, entertainment recreation and housing. Mr. Sullivan agreed Fireclay would become active like Sugarhouse which is what GSBS is exploring.

Mayor Silvestrini said Millcreek's planning efforts have been to revitalize Main Street as a bikeway, instead of using State Street. Main Street has the potential to connect communities from South Salt Lake to Murray which would be of value. He agreed greenspace and open space are needed as an antidote because the area would become a very densely built-up community of two million people.

Ms. Richman said given the regional projections for population, having more centers that can accommodate growth would be a critical consideration to livability valley wide. Mayor Silvestrini noted every TRAX station along the spine of Salt Lake County has impediments and barriers due to Union Pacific railroad, Front Runner, TRAX, and Interstate 15. Ms. Richman agreed it is a challenge at every TOD station area south of Salt Lake City but in 20 years they hope the plan would be completed at all station areas. A lengthy discussion occurred about under passes and over passes and the Union Pacific, as well as the challenge of crossing 4500 South to the south.

Ms. Turner asked if the plan was realistic and felt there was not enough greenspace. Ms. Richman said the planning horizon is 20 years from now. Ms. Turner asked how this plan fits with Murray City's current GP (General Plan). Mr. Smallwood said the Murray GP calls for revitalizing TRAX station areas, so it goes hand in hand with Murray's plan. The GSBS plan must be considered with Council feedback, so it will be adopted and be the only vision going forward, so now is the Council's opportunity to form how Murray will develop this area going forward. Mr. Claunch said each city block would have greenspace not reflected on the displayed maps.

Ms. Richman discussed the implementation of each plan in terms of land use, design approach and various funding mechanisms. She said in the final plan there would be a matrix of funding opportunities and clearly the ones that would be the most straight forward include the existing tax increment producing areas and existing impact fees. There are also new grants that are part of the transportation and connectivity initiatives coming out of Washington D.C. that would offer funding. State and private funding is also there improving park and trail service levels and increasing household densities. She noted that the HTRZ (Housing and Transit Reinvestment Zone) mechanism would pay for TOD projects through tax increments. She thought if an HTRZ was logical for funding the plan, a joint HTRZ between Murray and Millcreek might be possible which has never been done before.

Ms. Richman concluded the GSBS team is focused on how to continue making the Murray North Station area an exciting place and ensure it is a fully livable TOD community.

Adjournment: Mr. Hrechkosy adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Pattie Johnson
Council Office Administrator III