



REGIONAL COUNCIL OF MAYORS
March 9, 2009

DISCUSSION

What if It Was Easier to Redevelop?

“It’s so darn hard to do redevelopment,” said John Shardlow, principal at Bonestroo and president of ULI Minnesota. But, he said, it’s “never been more important to do redevelopment” in order to help reduce greenhouse gases.

In January, ULI Minnesota put together a program to explore just what makes redevelopment so hard and what could be done to make it easier. Two teams were asked to define the problem and come up with possible solutions. There was no real “winner,” Bonestroo said, because both teams came to many of the same conclusions.

In short, the problems were:

The state controls many of the tools for redevelopment that cities can use, “but doesn’t understand the issues.”

Redevelopment has no constituency; “Every city and state project fends for itself.”

Cities and counties have to pay for redevelopment on their own, whereas many big development projects may have state and/or federal funding.

In particular, Bonestroo said, changes in the law for TIF and eminent domain have made it difficult to begin a redevelopment project. He said projects like Centennial Lake in Edina, Excelsior and Grand in St. Louis Park and the Apache Plaza redevelopment in St. Anthony would not be possible today.

Opportunities for redevelopment are best along existing and planned major transit corridors and at aging strip centers, he said.

A Power Point presentation with the results of the January 22 special program are available at www.minnesota.uli.org/past events

Building Sensible Communities

Jim Erkel of the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy <http://www.mncenter.org/> Said the Building Sensible Communities Act <http://www.tlcmnnesota.org/pdf/Building%20Sensible%20Communities%20Summary%20with%20SF%20and%20HF.pdf> introduced this year at the Minnesota Legislature by Sen.Scott Dibble and Rep. Frank Hornstein, both of Minneapolis, creates incentives for Minnesota communities to implement land use planning practices that will help reduce global warming. “It’s basically adopting a vehicle miles traveled standard,” he said. The legislation is running into some opposition, he said, including

from the League of Minnesota Cities. Several mayors asked whether the legislators putting together the bill had considered how it would impact businesses and individuals.

RCM BUSINESS

Economic Recovery Funding

Mayor Elizabeth Kautz of Burnsville and Mayor R.T. Rybak of Minneapolis were both part of a group of mayors who met with five cabinet members at the White House to discuss the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act <http://appropriations.house.gov/pdf/PressSummary01-15-09.pdf>. Kautz said the meeting offered lots of give-and-take between the mayors and the cabinet members. She said it was made very clear that the stimulus money must be used for what it's intended. The mayors responded: "We, the mayors of the nation, are not afraid to be accountable." Kautz, co-chair of the Regional Council of Mayors, said she also has been asked by Vice President Joe Biden to be part of an advisory group on the stimulus funding.

Ryback said it's important to think about how projects using stimulus funding can be done as a region, rather than solely as individual community projects. "We're ideally situated to be a leading region to show them how to do this," he said. As an example, he said that Minneapolis has been awarded \$7 million for foreclosure prevention. "That's great, because we have a really good system," he said. "But what does that mean for Richfield? How can we take it to scale?"

Minneapolis has put together a team from multiple departments to work on the stimulus package, but Rybak suggested that it would be good to put together "an all-star team from our communities."

[The League of Minnesota Cities has information about the stimulus package and its impact on Minnesota at <http://www.lmnc.org>.]

Transportation Project Recommendations

Mayor Jim Hovland of Edina, co-chair of the Regional Council of Mayors, said the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) <http://www.metrocouncil.org/services/tab.htm> was trying to narrow a list of highway projects that are eligible for funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in order to make recommendations to the Minnesota Department of Transportation. He said that an extension of Hwy. 610 is essentially a given, but the question is whether to then fund a new interchange of Hwys. 169 and 494 or to fund several smaller projects.

During discussion, several of the mayors made it clear that they thought it was better to do the larger project, 169 and 494, rather than smaller projects. "Getting a big project done and off the books gives a better chance of getting other things done in three or four years," said Mayor Terry Schneider of Minnetonka. Mayor Tom Furlong of Chanhassen agreed: "When you have the opportunity to get the big ones done, get 'em done." Several, including Hovland, said the 169 and 494 interchange impacts more than the metro region; it's a significant factor in the efficiency of commercial transportation from southern Minnesota into the Twin Cities and beyond. Mayor Stan Harpstead of Arden Hills pointed out that both of the big highway projects are in the western part of the metro area and questioned whether there ought to be more geographic consideration.

TAB was to meet the next week to decide on its recommendations.

Moving Forward on Economic Development Strategies

Mayor Stan Harpstead of Arden Hills has organized a group of mayors who will meet March 31 to discuss how to more proactively identify economic clusters that can lead the state's economy—and warrant investment and attention. He said the initial activities of the group will be:

- Applying for funding.
- Networking with existing groups concerned with economic development.
- Encouraging meetings between city development groups.
- Identifying benchmarks for economic activity and development.
- Supporting legislation to establish the North Star Rising Commission for Economic Development, with emphasis on science and technology initiatives.

For more information on the economic development initiative, go to [\[can we put Harpstead's Power Point on the ULI website and do the link here\]](#).

REPORTS

Lake Elmo: The city will be one of 50 cities (one for each state) recognized by Business Week magazine for its business environment.

Minneapolis: The city will launch a long-discussed bike-share program this spring.

Wayzata: The economic slowdown has put the city's biggest development on hold for at least a year. Mayor Ken Willcox said that means the city's revenue will take a hit because fees that would have been collected this year will not be.

COMING UP

RCM April meeting

The next RCM meeting will be Monday, April 13, 11:30am-1:30pm, Dorsey & Whitney, 50 S. 6th St., Minneapolis, 15th floor-Seattle Room.

ATTENDEES

Mayors

Terry Schneider, Minnetonka; Stan Harpstead, Arden Hills; Jim Hovland, Edina; Dean Johnston, Lake Elmo; Elizabeth Kautz, Burnsville; Steve Lampi, Brooklyn Park; Sandy Martin, Shoreview; Randy Gilbert, Long Lake; Tom Furlong, Chanhassen; Ken Willcox, Wayzata; Steve Larson, New Brighton; R.T. Rybak, Minneapolis; John Sweeney, Maple Plain; Bill Hargis, Woodbury; Holly Dahl, Lakeville; Gene Winstead, Bloomington

Staff

Caren Dewar, executive director, ULI Minnesota; Pat Arnst, ULI Minnesota coordinator; Linda Picone, publications coordinator; ULI Minnesota

Advisors and guests

Cathy Bennett, Bennett Community Consulting; John Shardlow, Bonestroo/ULI Minnesota; Bob Close, Close Landscape Architects; Burke Murphy, DEED; Jay Lindgren, Dorsey & Whitney;

Elizabeth Ryan, Family Housing Fund; Andriana Abariotes, LISC; Jim Erkel, MCEA; Lee Sheehy, McKnight Foundation; Eric Muschler, McKnight Foundation; Steve Berg, MinnPost.com; Mike Conlan, St. Thomas Law School; Erika Carter, Target; Lea Schuster, Transit for Livable Communities; Jenna Fletcher, Trust for Public Land/Embrace Open Space; John Breitinger, United Properties; John S. Adams, University of Minnesota.