

From: Eileen L. Collins <eileenlcollins@sbcglobal.net>
To: Marcoux, Rocky
Sent: Sun Nov 09 21:49:12 2008
Subject: Nov 3, 2008, Final Draft of NE Side Plan

Dear Commissioner Marcoux

Congratulations to the authors and managers of the Nov 3, 2008, Final Draft of the NE Side Plan
<http://www.mkedcd.org/planning/plans/Northeast/pdfs/plan/NESDraft110308.pdf>

All in all, the final draft does a remarkable job of integrating multiple concerns and suggested solutions from the community, including those from the Prospect Avenue neighborhood. Very welcome are the draft's calls for historic preservation, context-sensitive development, pedestrian-friendly amenities, green space, well-landscaped streetscape, high-quality architectural design, green building standards, pedestrian safety including safety of people with disabilities, resolution of traffic issues, more streamlined and efficient transit, and consideration of how continuing development impacts traffic and the area's quality of life.

Just how all this will be handled in practice is not entirely clear from the report. Once the plan is approved by the city, I hope the city will create "an overlay district for Prospect Avenue" which will allow the Prospect Avenue Association to work with the city and other stakeholders to pin down more details.

I am very pleased that the document recognizes the important role of social networks, cooperation, and participation in successful implementation of the plan and stresses the need for the city to actively seek neighborhood input in both the design and development stages of general and project plan development.

I am glad that the plan calls for "context-sensitive" "high-quality" development (such as "taller more slender towers that allow more light and air, rooftop gardens"). A couple of questions: (1) Would a second "principal façade" facing the Oak Leaf Trail for new condo towers and possibly "hillside units that terrace down to the Oak Leaf Trail" turn the Oak Leaf Trail into half city and half park? What measures would be taken to ensure that the Oak Leaf Trail does not turn into half city? (2) Would "a more massive base with a taller more slender tower" on a condo high-rise amount to fortress-like walls towering over the Oak Leaf Trail and running along the sidewalk on Prospect Ave? It seems to me that assuring light and view for pedestrians, bikers, and hikers would require a new condo tower to be slender at bottom and top (while allowing it to go taller if the builder wishes).

I hope the various issues associated with the construction of condo towers can be handled in a balanced way when an overlay district for Prospect Avenue is written.

Before closing, I want to mention that there are residents of Prospect Avenue who are concerned that the draft does not address the issue of retaining affordable housing in the neighborhood and residents whose experience tells them that two-way traffic on Prospect would be detrimental both to pedestrians and traffic.

Finally, the Glossary of Urban Planning Terms is great!

Thank you.
Eileen L Collins, PhD, Recorder
Prospect Avenue Association
Eileen.Collins1660@sbcglobal.net
<http://www.ProspectAveAssn.org/>