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To: Summit Downtown, Inc. Stakeholders
From: Tony Melchionna
Date: April 30, 2015
Re: Summit Downtown, Inc. Stakeholders
April 30, 2015

The meeting began with introductions. Persons present at the front of the room included Tony Melchionna, Chairman of the Summit Downtown, Inc. Board of Trustees, Chris Cotter, City of Summit Administrator, and Aaron Schrager, City of Summit Engineer.

Tony began by asking residents, business owners, and property owners to raise their hands in turn. There were approximately equal amounts of residents and business owners with fewer property owners. At the start of the meeting, there were approximately 80 people present.

Aaron Schrager then went through a power point presentation about the proposed Downtown Improvement Project. His presentation detailed the scope of the project, including renderings of proposed improvements, project limits, and the cost of each aspect of the project. The presentation can be found on the City of Summit website: <http://ow.ly/MyuDD>.

General Questions

At the conclusion of Aaron's presentation, general questions were answered.

Q: What are the sources of the funds that will be used to pay for the Project?

A (Chris Cotter): The project will use funds from four sources. ¹The City of Summit will use funds allocated to the City's Capital Improvement Plan from the City and 15-year bonds. ²The City of Summit Parking Authority, which is a self-liquidating department, will contribute to the project. ³Property owners could be assessed to pay for the repair of deficient sidewalks in front of their property. ⁴Summit Downtown, Inc. will also contribute through a 15-year bond.

Q: A grant was mentioned. Can you tell us more about that?

A (Mayor Dickson): The grant was applied for through Union County. There's a total of about \$1 million available for capital improvement projects throughout the entire county. We can't expect to receive very much from that grant.

Q: Have you considered removing the street parking meters in favor of the kiosk system on Railroad Avenue?

A (Cotter): There's a Parking Advisory Committee that has been studying the meters downtown. The benefit of that system is the ease of administration. It isn't necessarily easier for the customer.

Q: Will the alleyways be included in this project?

A (Cotter): It's more disruptive to do all the alleyways at the same time and can bog down the project. The alleyways were part of the Downtown Improvement Study, and they will be done in the future.

Q: Has the city looked at parking best practices? The attendee suggested investigating mobile applications other than Park Mobile, such as the system used in Ireland.

A (Cotter): Offered to talk to the gentleman after the meeting to hear more about his suggestions.

Q: Can you identify all items that will definitely be completed versus those still up for discussion?

A (Cotter): Utilities work, sewer work, curbing, roads, and sidewalk work will definitely be done.

Q: Gil Owren asked if all items in the “City Cost” column of the “Base Bid” chart will be completed regardless.

A (Cotter): Yes, that’s correct.

Aaron pointed out that all the costs are just estimates at this point.

Beth Welsh voiced her concerns with adding more flower beds. She believes that the tree wells currently in the downtown aren’t sufficiently maintained, so adding more plantings wouldn’t be advisable. Plus, she feels that adding planters takes away from the already scarce sidewalk space.

Someone mentioned, that in his experience, adding bump-outs encourages large vehicles to park close to the corner (such as delivery trucks). Then it’s difficult to see around the truck.

Q: Will the decorative pavement be actual cobbles or stamping?

A (Schrager): While the decorative pavement will look like cobbles, it will just be a very thin layer applied to the pavement. It has sand in it for traction and will be flat since it is only a very thin coating.

Someone expressed concern that similar crosswalks were installed in Madison, and the faux brick wore off very quickly. There were tire marks on it after only one month. Robert Steelman agreed with the concern, saying the decorative crosswalks we have now were damaged in less than a year. He implored the City to look into decorative striping. It’s a creative new field with many possible applications for our town. Striping is cheaper to use and maintain than decorative paving of any kind. If the stripes wear down, the only upkeep cost is paint.

Q: Will there be additional signage, such as yield signs, added to the crosswalks?

A (Cotter): Signs in the actual crosswalks will be added as deemed necessary. The new pavement and striping will make the crosswalks safer in and of themselves.

Q: Do you know what’s going on with the Morris Avenue Bridge yet?

A (Cotter): The bid for the project has been approved and the governor’s veto period has expired. The City will be meeting with NJ Transit in the next few weeks to discuss the project. At this point, the City feels confident that the project will go through.

At this point, Tony began going through the cost summary, accepting questions and comments on specific line items.

Lyric Park Improvements

In addition to earlier comments, Christopher Welsh suggested having a pull out service/fire lane in front of Lyric Park instead of the addition of planters since the area is already used for deliveries.

Removable Bollards

Tony explained that these would be used for road closures for downtown events. They would be more decorative as opposed to the sawhorses currently used. He asked Aaron to further explain.

Aaron explained that the estimate included bollards for the following the intersections at Beechwood Road and Springfield Avenue, Beechwood Road and Bank Street, and Beechwood Road and Union Place, but that additional locations could be discussed. There would be a collar on the road at all times. The bollards would be stored in a safe location to be locked into the collars for the events. The City, the Police Department, the Fire Department, and SDI would all have keys for the bollards. Aaron showed pictures of the collars and bollards.

Wayfinding Signs

Tony let everyone know that SDI has paid a designer to create the signs. He also pointed out that parking is the first destination listed on all the signs.

An attendee commented that signs, in generals, should be less fussy and have bigger print.

Q: Which ADA regulations is the City was following for the signs?

A (Schrager): The City is following the most current ADA regulations.

Q: Are the signs reflective?

A (Schrager): Yes.

Q: Would you be willing to take bids from downtown businesses? A business could donate toward a sign and have their name put on the sign

A (Cotter): I'll take that into consideration.

Chris Cotter reminded everyone that the signs need to be in the right places with the right destinations to benefit people who are unfamiliar with Summit since they are the people who really rely on the signs.

A resident mentioned that she constantly has to explain how and where to park to people in her waiting room. She said that the local businesses need to be made more aware of parking procedures. Tony and Chris thanked her for helping people understand the parking.

Q: How will the bonding work?

A (Cotter and Beth Kinney, Director, Dept. Community Services): The bonding will work the same as it did for the 2001 project. SDI pays debt service to the city. The bond for the whole project has been approved by council for up to \$2.5 million.

Q: Summit's tree wells are embarrassing, especially when compared to other communities such as Madison. Should we farm the tree wells out to an outside company to maintain?

A (Melchionna): The city keeps the tree wells free of trash and waters them. SDI has a budget for plants for the tree wells which a landscaper is contracted to plant.

Q: Robert Steelman asked if the City is open to other ideas for how to modify or change the current tree wells and proposed planters? Also, will the trees ever get too big for the tree wells as they are now?

A (Cotter): Our Superintendent of Public Works, Paul Cascais, is also an expert in forestry.

A (Cascais): The trees used were meant for streetscapes, so they won't grow like giant elms. They are growing very vibrantly, though, so we do trim them back. The average lifespan for trees like those in downtowns is seven years, but we believe we will get close to twenty years out of them.

Q: Can businesses adopt a tree well?

A (Melchionna): We've tried that program before without much success.

A resident commented that the bicycle locks are excellent and in the right locations, but we could use more. Tony answered that there are plans in the works to install more bicycle racks. SDI is just waiting for final approval from NJ Transit since many of the racks will be on NJ Transit land around the train station.

A resident mentioned that Millburn and Westfield have different parking systems. Park Mobile is great for Summit people. But anyone from out of town would likely have to download the app and figure out how to use it, making it an inconvenience.

Decorative Pavement

Tony explained that the base bid includes decorative pavement for the Beechwood Road-Bank Street crosswalk square and for the roundabout in front of the train station.

Q: Can you explain the decorative pavement again? Will it break down like the current decorative pavement has?

A (Schrager): Since it will only be a thin layer applied to the pavement, there will be no grout lines to break down.

Q: Annette Dwyer asked for clarification on the tax aspect of funding the project. Will there be any new taxes or tax increases for resident? Or will the City be able to fund the project with taxes the way they are now?

A (Cotter): That is a complex issue. Residents will not see an increase in taxes. The tax revenue to be used will be part of the normal taxes collected. As for property owners, one of two things will happen. There could be an assessment for sidewalks, which property owners will pay for, though it will be separate from taxes. Or, SDI could pay for all the sidewalks. Then it would be up to SDI whether or not it would increase the SID tax it collects.

Dr. Rubino, Common Council President, reminded everyone that the city budgets money from the tax levy to finance ongoing capital projects.

Gil Owren, retired SDI Trustee, implored everyone not to think SDI has extra money since their bond payments have decreased from the last project. Since SDI's bond payments have decreased, that money has been put to use on other projects. SDI has been able to complete projects and provide services that it previously could not with the burden of the bond payments. With an increase in bond payments again, there will either be an increase in the SID tax or a decrease in services that SDI can provide.

Q: Chris Welsh asked if property owners will be able to opt out and do their own sidewalk repairs. Also, who's liable for the sidewalks if they're replaced by the city versus replaced by the property owner? The sidewalk outside of Starbucks had problems the last time the City replaced sidewalks.

A (Schrager): There will be an assessment process and an open house where property owners can attend to learn more. After being assessed, property owners will know what repairs they will be responsible for and how much it will cost to have the City complete that work. They will then have the option of completing the work on their own. There is a cost benefit of having the City complete the work for you. They get bulk discounts on the materials and are able to absorb some of the soft

costs associated with the sidewalks. Sidewalks done by the city are covered by a two-year maintenance bond.

Dr. Rubino reminded everyone that the City must take the lowest bid presented to them, unless the bidder has previous infractions.

Items in the “Alternative Bids” Section

Replacing All Sidewalks in Downtown

Tony explained that the benefit would be a consistent overall look and feel for the downtown. The downside would be the huge disruption.

No comments or questions.

Electrical Outlets in Tree Wells on Union Place

Tony said that it seems a little excessive to him. He’s been with SDI for many years and he has never encountered a need for this. He’s also concerned that children will use the outlets to charge their phones and other devices. They might even sit in/next to the tree wells.

One resident said she agreed with Tony’s concern that children would use the outlets and crowd the sidewalks.

Decorative Pavement on All of Beechwood Road (From Union Place to DeForest Avenue)

Common Council member Sandy Lizza encouraged everyone to think of the overall aesthetics for the town. Decorative paving for Beechwood Road was proposed to make a focal point for the town. The decorative pavement guides people from the train station into town.

Tony Melchionna mentioned that he’s had people express concern that the decorative pavement might be visually confusing or distracting for drivers.

An attendee pointed out that crosswalk safety is mostly education. Perhaps you should reach out to the schools.

Chris Cotter mentioned that one of Common Council’s goals for this year is pedestrian safety, so that will definitely be taken into consideration.

Wi-Fi Hotspot and Fiber Extension

Tony said that Wi-Fi could be a great marketing technique. The streets will already be ripped up, so if we’re going to do it, now’s the time. But, he’s not sure if it will be worth it.

Donna Puzella expressed concern that having Wi-Fi downtown may not be worth the cost.

Tony invited Kathryn Best, an SDI employee, to share her views on the subject, saying that she’s less than 30 years old. Kathryn implored everyone to think about the benefits of adding Wi-Fi, which are explained on the handout available. The younger generation relies on internet for basic communication due to the popularity of internet-based applications. We want to send the message that Summit values its customers and is willing to work to make our downtown a welcoming destination by providing this service. Wi-Fi will also be hugely beneficial from a marketing

standpoint. For example, any time a person tweets, posts, Instagrams, or otherwise shares a photo of their delicious meal, s/he is doing free marketing for both the restaurant s/he's posting about and for downtown Summit.

A resident asked if the roads would be ripped up every time there's an upgrade. Beth Welsh clarified, saying that once the conduit is installed, we would just need to access it from specific locations to do upgrades. Beth Kinney agreed with Beth Welsh.

Beth Kinney said that putting in the conduit would allow us to leverage upcoming technology. It would also allow the city to install more cameras, which is another goal of the City's.

An attendee said he would like to express his support for installing the conduits. He feels it's important to offer services that appeal to a younger crowd. Something like this could draw families.

Q: A business owner said that it's prohibitively expensive to bring Verizon FiOS to businesses. Would this be a way to subsidize that cost for businesses?

A (Schrager): The City is working on setting up a meeting with Verizon to get more information.

An attendee said that no matter what enhancements we decide on, none of it will matter if the downtown businesses are closed. Applause followed.

An attendee mentioned that even if Wi-Fi doesn't seem important to us, we have to think about this with respect to our children. This is very important to the younger generation.

Q: Would this mean free Wi-Fi for everyone? Would Starbucks be able to eliminate their internet?

A (Beth Kinney): There would be a certain amount of bandwidth. It would not be enough for merchants to run their businesses on. It would be up to merchants whether or not they wanted to keep their hotspots for customers. A place like a coffee shop might still want to have its own Wi-Fi since patrons go there expecting to work on their laptops.

Q: Would we be able to add additional bandwidth in the future if it was needed?

A (Kinney): Probably.

Q: Would there be a landing page for downtown Summit's Wi-Fi?

A (Cotter): Yes there would be. Wi-Fi would be a way to differentiate Summit from other downtowns.

Overall Impressions

Tony asked a resident what her overall opinions about the project were. She said it sounds like it will take a long time to complete. She's in favor of the decorative streets. She's concerned that any additional plantings wouldn't be maintained properly and would detract from the downtown.

Tony asked Bruce Theuerkauf, a property owner, what his overall opinions about the project were. He had some additional questions about the conduit.

Q: Will the Wi-Fi be used for the cameras, or will those be hardwired?

A (Kinney): Cameras have the capability to run on Wi-Fi, but in our experience, due to the amount of buildings and trees downtown, they function better when they're hardwired.

Q: Will the Wi-Fi cover the whole downtown?

A (Kinney): Yes.

Q: Once the conduit is installed, if someone wanted to extend the wires into their business, would that mean digging up more sidewalks? If so, we need to plan in advance for that.

A: We'll talk to Verizon about that in our meeting.

Kevin Smallwood, SDI Trustee, reminded everyone that the conduit doesn't mean instant free Wi-Fi. We would just be installing the conduit required.

A resident said that she walks through town and passes a lot of closed businesses. She doesn't want the downtown to have an empty, seedy, creepy feeling.

Tony said that Summit has a 92% occupancy rate for first floor businesses. Six years ago there were sixteen vacancies. Since this is a small, mom and pop shop town, people get nervous when the bigger spaces are empty. It's important to weigh the marketing and branding efforts SDI has been able to do against the cost of this project. We have to decide how much money to put into marketing and how much money to put into the project.

Chris Cotter said that it's important to remember that the Special Improvement District was created to provide businesses with these additional services.

Tony introduced Trustee Kathryn Werlein, who has been gracious enough to lend her marketing genius to SDI.

Kathryn explained that we're in a new era of shopping in a downtown. We have to think of downtown Summit as a shopping destination. The experience is what separates us from mall shopping and online shopping. We want to create an atmosphere that people will like and want to spend time in. The decorative aspects of the downtown are an important part of this. As far as the empty spaces are considered, she encouraged people to think of this as a time of transition. Businesses are cyclical. She knows from her outreach that medium size chains love our town. Chains like Lululemon and bluemercury are very successful. SDI has done focus groups, so we have an idea what sorts of businesses and restaurants people around here want to see. We need to stay on top of trends and not be reactive. Wi-Fi would have huge marketing benefits and would draw a younger crowd. We have a very unique town. We've done our branding. Now we have to live up to it. One of our goals is to work more closely with property owners. We have a retail resource person now, so we will be reaching out to you. She introduced Jessica Hobson, Summit resident, as SDI's new retail resource consultant.

Beth Welsh said the best thing for people to do is to tell people what you've found in Summit! Go into the stores and meet the merchants. Don't be afraid to hint at what sorts of products you would like to see.

Q: What are the next steps from here?

A (Melchionna): Tony thanked everyone for coming and giving their input. The SDI Board of Trustees, which has been elected by its stakeholders will digest all of the comments made tonight and have a special board meeting in the coming weeks.

Beth Kinney announced that the presentation given by Aaron would be available on the City's website.

The next SDI Board of Trustees meeting is April 29, 2015.