Date: 08.14.2018

Community: Eaton Rapids

Meeting Notes

The focus of the meeting was on the five major issues that rose to the top during the focus group meetings. This meeting focused on Horner Mill, M-50 and M-99 circulation, housing, and downtown.

Formation of the Steering Committee
1. Governor’s meeting was held in April 2018
2. In June three focus group meetings were held to discuss specific issues
3. A Steering Committee was formed from focus group members to meet regularly and oversee the PRT projects
4. It was mentioned that the Historical Commission should be represented on the Steering Committee because it has cause bumps in the past when they were not involved. The idea was to include them once the community is deeper in the process.

Three Programs
1. Eaton Rapids is a member of Michigan Main Street and is applying for select level status, the “most serious status” with a focus on downtown only
2. Project Rising Tide is a shorter-term program that looks at the entire city and the state (MEDC) provides technical assistance
3. Redevelopment Ready Communities is an MEDC program where communities follow best practices to signal to developers that they are ready for development. It is also necessary to engage in the process to be eligible for MEDC funding. Could take 2-3 years to become certified.

Horner Mill
1. This issue comes up every time and nothing happens
2. Phase 1 environmental has been done
3. Property is in the 100-year floodplain, what is safe to build there?
4. Entrance into Eaton Rapids from M-99 is unsightly (near where the property sits)
5. Housing development is impacted by this property and the poor circulation at the intersection
6. What can the city do in the meantime?
   a. Incentivize the seller (seller is from Utah)
      i. City has sent a list of violations to be fixed to prevent further deterioration
   b. Ordinance violations
c. Contact real estate agent to make information available about the property
   i. Mayor does not think it’s the City’s role to be marketing this property
d. City could purchase the property to create an industrial park
   i. Training center with housing
7. There is one interested developer

M-50 & M-99

1. Intersection in front of Horner Mill is poorly designed – dangerous
2. Should the property (Horner Mill) redevelop, we should consider “major surgery” for that intersection

M-50

3. 22,000 cars run along M-50 per day through Eaton Rapids and don’t stop
4. There are two farmer’s markets: Hospital and Hamlin Square
5. Need traffic calming on M-50 downtown, maybe a median; pedestrian refuge
6. Boulevards to replace left run lanes (there’s no place to turn anyway!) would help (i.e. Saline)
7. Interest in angled parking
8. Significant streetscape opportunity—hook in with Michigan Main Street; couple with wayfinding because amenities on Main Street are not easy to locate
   a. Maybe even include a directory of businesses
9. Always miss the long-term planning for the short-term projects (example that if we successfully slow down traffic to attract more visitors, we need to plan in the long-term for more parking)
10. A parking study was conducted and programs to encourage proper parking usage
11. Building near the entrances of the city need to be fixed—MSHDA homeowner funds?
12. Trucks were planned to be rerouted around island, this idea was discussed years ago and is in an MDOT 50-year bridge building plan and has not been implemented

Housing

1. 6-8 buildings had upper floors (2nd and 3rd floors) were rehabilitated downtown to be rentals. Was a very successful program
2. Would like to focus on maintenance of existing housing and code enforcement
3. Rental inspection program- have been talking about it for years
4. Housing diversity is really constrained by space—there is a demand for condos but no space to build them
   a. Retirees cannot find a place to downsize within the community
   b. One property available but is right next to the school

Downtown
1. Vacancy analysis is needed for the Michigan Main Street application in December
2. Could be helpful to use Project Rising Tide to help assemble a package of information on vacant properties in the downtown for developers