



MEMORANDUM

To: Montpelier City Council
Bill Fraser

From: Stephanie Clarke

Date: October 7, 2022

Re: Montpelier Elks Property
Public Process Overview and Revised Fall Outreach Plan

We are looking forward to meeting with you next week. Based on the feedback from the September 7 Council meeting, we understand the timeliness to further explain the full public process overview through Spring 2023 and have updated the Fall 2022 Outreach Plan.

Full Process Overview

Spring – Summer 2022: The process that the City began in the spring resulted in wide ranging feedback, including suggested uses, creative legacy planning, and thoughts about best practices. Next, the City issued an RFP and hired our consulting team over the summer to launch this fall.

Fall 2022: We are now launching into this first phase of work which includes an extension of the public process to gather more feedback and hear priorities. Concurrently, this fall's focus is on site analysis and property due diligence. To get to the next stage of planning, we must understand what are the existing conditions and development limits of the property.

Winter 2023: With the community input and site data in hand, the team will be in a position to have a more comprehensive community conversation. Using an opportunities and constraints plans, we will highlight the development challenges, identify areas best suited for development, suggest possible uses for nodes of the site, and identify high level cost comparisons for the public components for consideration. The intent is to hold a series of public workshops to discuss, identify pros & cons, and identify to any further

research that might be needed. The City will do extensive education and outreach to provide opportunities for access and source input in a variety of ways. This may result in a few iterative subphases depending on additional research needed or depending on the specific feedback. We cannot presume to predict how residents' ideas might impact the trajectory of the planning at this time. Ultimately, though, the City Council will need to provide direction to the team to develop 2-3 concept plans.

Spring 2023: Based on the above, the team will bring forward 2-3 scenarios for the public to consider as development pathways. These will include more specific cost comparisons (not to be considered a final estimate or budget, but order of magnitude estimates for the purposes of comparison). The City will conduct similar outreach to the two previous phases in hosting live sessions, online options, stations in the community, and widespread communication. The intent is for the team and City Council to hear all feedback so Council can make an informed decision to select a vision for the Master Plan. The team will use that direction to develop an Actionable Master Plan that includes the findings of the process, concept plans, and next steps.



The Fall 2022 Questions – For the Public

As can be seen in the document on the City's website consolidating the feedback up to September 2022, there are a wide range of suggested uses and priorities for the site. The City took this item to the voters based on future development of housing and recreation. The feedback since then has included many different types of housing and recreation, plus environmental conservation, agriculture, retail, and education. There have been some diametrically opposed perspectives and also significant overlapping interests.

Here in Fall 2022, we will continue to ask for people’s ideas for uses, but we also want to get more depth on the input. Knowing that the property is a finite space and hearing what others have said, what are your priorities? Do any rise to the top as the most significant?

The Fall 2022 Questions – For the Council

The team also has an important question for the City Council in thinking through the future phases and expectations as to how the input will inform the process. How will Council make a decision following the opportunities and constraints planning sessions this winter? We intend to hold up the community input side-by-side with the site characteristics. But what is Council’s expectation of prioritizing uses and design direction within this public process? These will be critical questions we need answered over the coming months as we synthesize the public input on uses and bring together the site data.

Fall 2022 Outreach

To gather answers to the public questions above, the team has revised the Fall Outreach Plan to include:

- 3 live input sessions, including an on-site walk & talk
- Virtual session recording to be posted on website
- Open input period to submit comments and ideas directly to Josh Jerome
- Small stakeholder meetings
- Education and outreach – both targeted and widespread
- Consistent and clear communication

We will be explaining this in more depth at next week’s meeting.

Another question for Council: where else can we be visible to educate and gather input for priorities at this phase? Any other ideas for ways to inclusively communicate?

We heard two points loudly and clearly over the past month:

- The public needs to have multiple opportunities for influence on this process and decision-making, and
- The City needs to be diligent in keeping this conversation top of mind with the community.

The next month of meetings and input gathering will be another opportunity to provide feedback, but there will be more opportunities to engage with this site when more is known about the property. We will continue to keep the Council and the public informed through a variety of channels. (Please note: the holiday season aligns conveniently with a “quiet phase” of the work where our team will be digging into the research and drawings, which will tee us up to dig into the winter’s substantive conversation described above.)

We look forward to meeting with you next week, seeing you at the various meetings and in community outreach efforts, and again next month as we navigate this phase of the process.