

Lakeshore Drive Redevelopment Committee  
January 16, 2020

Present: Bob Mahaney and Michelle Thomas of Veridea Group.  
Committee Members: Eric Waara, John Sullivan, Bruce Rundman, Tom Merz, Elise Nelson, Philip Foltz, and Alan Kiley.

The group discussed:

Goals:

- Revisited general goals outlined in the RFQ
- Discussed community goals based on comments and outreach
- Accessibility for businesses

Uses – Veridea updated the group on their vision for uses:

- Hotel, conference center and meeting rooms
- Office space
- Residential (either condos or rentals)
- Co-working spaces
- Room for start-up businesses and/or tech-related
- Retail
- Restaurant

Objectives of the project (Overarching Goals):

- Waterfront access and amenities for the community
- Greenspace preservation, possible creation
- Preserve or improve views of the canal on street sitelines
- Connectivity of Shelden Avenue and waterfront for pedestrians
- Year-round vibrancy
- Create uses to draw people in winter months

Everyone has an interest in:

- Complementing downtown and the waterfront
- Drawing people downtown and to the waterfront
- Providing sufficient parking
- Providing access to door-level from the north side of businesses fronting Shelden Avenue
- Revenue for the City
- Successful development for the developer

## Challenges:

- Parking
  - Bob Mahaney said it is hard to incorporate the existing deck because of the height of the deck. To build on top of it, the commercial development starts off too high. If the existing deck is removed, they may be able to start the new parking structure lower underground to lower the overall height of the project and provide more covered/enclosed parking.
  - A discussion was held about the elevated rear access for the businesses. Alan Kiley, owner of Joey's Seafood and Grill said if the back door does not lead to convenient parking it does him no good. The biggest concern for the business owners is how close the parking is going to be from their back doors. It was noted that many of the "good" spaces are regularly taken up by employee parking during the day.
  - John Sullivan said the deck has been in place for 45 years so any change will be significant. He likes the idea of keeping Lakeshore Drive open with bridge connections to the back doors of businesses. Philip Foltz suggested having loading docks on Lakeshore Drive.
  - Alan Kiley suggested building the parking deck where Lakeshore Drive is so that it is between the new development and the existing buildings.
  - Bob Mahaney said opening up Lakeshore Drive will help the back sides of the buildings that front Shelden Avenue. It may increase their value as it opens up new uses for these buildings.

## Discussions:

- Parking study of downtown - The general consensus was that splitting the study cost would be fair as both parties would benefit; Veridea in understanding Houghton's parking dynamics and gaining information to be used to help inform their project vision; and the City in getting fresh information on downtown parking resources, needs, and best practices that could be used to improve parking opportunities throughout downtown.
- Assessment of parking deck – most current knowledge points to the deck system being close to the end of its useful life. This should be verified by having an independent structural engineer review the original design, past repair work, and current conditions to ascertain whether further maintenance will meaningfully extend service life; could/should it be integrated into a development; and costs vs. benefits.
- MEDC has interest in this project and is following it. This project could present a leveraging opportunity for MEDC in its mission. Once a revised concept is in place it could be then discussed with MEDC to look at where their assistance may be applicable.

## Next Steps:

- Start a downtown parking study. Michele will provide the cost of the study to the City by January 20<sup>th</sup> if possible so that Eric can ask the Council on January 22<sup>nd</sup> to approve the expenditure to cover half of the cost.

- Conduct a structural analysis of the present parking deck. Michele will provide the cost of this analysis to the City by January 20<sup>th</sup> if possible so that Eric can ask the Council on January 22<sup>nd</sup> to approve the expenditure to cover half of the cost.
- Determine appropriate points for obtaining other inputs to the overall plan.
- Veridea Team prepare a revised general site plan with assumptions.
- Formalize an agreement between the City and Veridea.