

This document contains only the pages of the draft report relevant to the issue of height at the McMobil site.

53rd Street Vision

Workshop Report

Saturday, December 8, 2007

Canter Middle School

DRAFT



Introduction

Close to 200 Hyde Park and South Side residents packed the gymnasium of Canter Middle School on December 8, 2007 for a half-day workshop to discuss future development of 53rd Street, the community's primary commercial business corridor and the development of a vibrant shopping hub for the mid-south side of Chicago.

The 53rd Vision Workshop was sponsored by 4th Ward Alderman Toni Preckwinkle, City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), and a coalition of local institutional and community organizations including, the 53rd Street TIF Advisory Council, the University of Chicago, the Hyde Park Chamber of Commerce, Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference, Interfaith Open Communities, and the South East Chicago Commission (SECC).

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) provided technical assistance and worked with a local committee to plan the workshop. In addition, CMAP facilitated the workshop and introduced the community to the use of electronic hand held key pad devices that allowed participants to see the group's responses in "real time".

The objectives of the workshop were to:

1. *Seek input from the community to help guide future development on 53rd Street.*
2. *Develop a set of priorities to share with the 53rd Street TIF Council, local elected officials and the Department of Planning & Development to utilize as they develop the RFP for Harper Court, make decisions regarding use of TIF resources and consider development proposals for the TIF district.*
3. *Understand the types of places and activities the community wants in the 53rd Street business district.*

most of the workshop focused on Harper Court

This document summarizes the responses that individuals noted on worksheets. Please note that not everyone completed every worksheet or answered every question.

The information gleaned from the worksheets is discussed below and generally serves to reinforce and affirm the above themes.



What should the buildings look like?

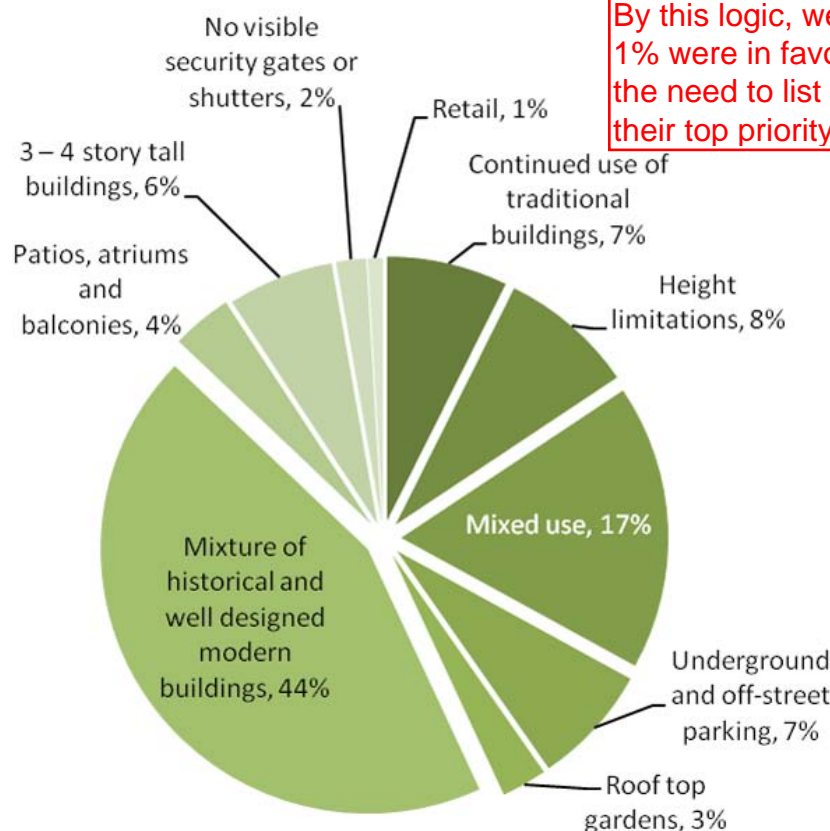
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People stressed that buildings should be of good quality, design and well maintained, and had a **strong desire for all buildings to be compatible with the neighborhood character and scale**. In this context people specifically mentioned the use of brick and limestone, and a mix of styles, both old and new, was important.

Building heights – The comments on this topic indicated that participants were split, with about half preferring buildings under five stories and the other half preferring buildings over five stories. Some qualified their remarks by suggesting locating taller buildings closer to Lake Park Avenue and transit.

When given an option to rank responses to the question about the building's appearance, only 6% indicated that buildings should be three to four stories and only 8% voted in support of height limitations.

This is worse than disingenuous. These were not voted on separately, these are the TOP choices from each respondent. By this logic, we could conclude that only 1% were in favor of retail. That 14% felt the need to list some height restriction as their top priority is instructive.



Meeting facilitators provided definitions for low-rise and mid-rise and then asked participants to indicate whether they would accept a mid-rise building **somewhere** in the 53rd St. TIF district. Approximately 63% said yes, 26% said no and 11% said unsure.

As noted in the letter of the Herald (Dec, 12, 2007), this was a transparent attempt to get approval for a tall building at McMobil ("somewhere" in the district) by lumping it together with the Harper Court parcel near the train tracks. It was clear that if separate votes had been taken on the two parcels, there would have been an overwhelming vote against height at McMobil. But, of course, the organizers refused to clarify the question by separating into two separate votes.