RE: Notes from the 61st Street Master Plan Third Community Meeting held on September 20, 2018

TO: 61st Street Streetscape Master Plan Team
FROM: O-H Community Partners
DATE: October 4, 2018
RE: Notes from the 61st Street Master Plan Third Community Meeting held on September 20, 2018

61st Street Streetscape Master Plan
Third Community Meeting (9.20.18)
Summary Report

This memorandum contains a summary of the issues and concerns heard from the public at the third community meeting for the 61st Street Streetscape Master Plan held on September 20, 2018 at the Woodlawn Resource Center (6144 S. Cottage Grove Ave) from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm. The primary focus of this third community meeting was to solicit community feedback on the streetscape recommendations proposed for the Master Plan.

This memorandum contains two sections.

- Section 1: Summary of Master Plan Recommendations features key elements of the proposed Master Plan that were organized according to the seven discussion themes that were presented to attendees at the first two community meetings (i.e., Infrastructure Elements, Pedestrian Accessibility, Bicycle Accommodations, Transit Accommodations, Aesthetics / Landscape, Community Identity / Placemaking, and Other).
- Section 2: Summary of Community Feedback, features the community’s comments and concerns in response to the Master Plan recommendations presented at the third community meeting.

The feedback from the community will be used to create an updated Master Plan, which will be presented at the fourth and final community meeting in winter 2019. The third community meeting was attended by 33 community members. Six (6) project team members from the Chicago Department of Transportation, Burns & McDonnell, Site Design Group, and O-H Community Partners were also in attendance.

Prepared by: O-H Community Partners
Section 1: Summary of Master Plan Recommendations

At the third community meeting, the project team made recommendations for the 61st St. Streetscape Master Plan based on the community feedback received at the first two public meetings. The Master Plan project limits are 61st Street from Blackstone Ave to Prairie Ave. The project team clarified that the Master Plan is a document that outlines the proposed right of way improvements based on community input, including cost estimates, and potential funding sources. The project team also mentioned that no changes will be made to the 61st St. Streetscape until funding is secured and that there are no capital dollars tied to this project (as of September 20, 2018). The presentation created for the third community meeting features more details about the 61st St. Streetscape Master Plan recommendations.

1. **Infrastructure Elements – Widen the sidewalks and improve street lighting**
   - Widen the sidewalk by 3 feet on both sides of the street when going west from Cottage Grove to Prairie
   - Widen the sidewalk by 6 feet on the South side of the street only when going east from Cottage Grove to Blackstone
   - Add new LED street lighting along the 61st Street corridor

2. **Pedestrian Accessibility – Increase the visibility and safety of pedestrian crosswalks across 61st Street**
   - Enhance the visibility and safety of three intersections with high foot traffic across 61st Street (St. Lawrence Ave, Ellis Ave, and Woodlawn Ave)
   - Incorporate bump outs and reduce the speed limit to slow down the flow of traffic

3. **Bicycle Accommodations – Introduce traffic calming elements to make biking safer and add bike racks**
   - No bike lanes are recommended for the 61st St. corridor
   - Add new bike racks to 61st St. corridor, potentially with community identifiers
   - The addition of elements that slow and control the flow of traffic will benefit both bike riders and pedestrians
4. **Transit Accommodations** – Modify bus stop locations and review transit location needs on a case by case basis
   - Benches and other transit-related infrastructure will be added to bus stops where possible on a case by case basis

5. **Aesthetics / Landscape** – Add colorful and natural elements to improve the aesthetic of the 61st Street corridor
   - Recommended natural elements include an infill of street trees, widened parkways, and landscaped bump outs
   - Decorative trash cans could be installed to help keep 61st Street clean without detracting from the aesthetic

6. **Community Identity / Placemaking** – Install light pole identifiers, historic kiosks, and sidewalk medallions to enhance a sense of community identity
   - Identify potential locations for artwork, and then allow the community to decide the art pieces and community identifiers for each location
   - The community expressed a strong preference to take ownership of the creation of artwork and community identifiers in the first two public meetings
   - Local artists could be recruited to create artwork for the identified locations

7. **Other** – Account for other key community concerns as the Master Plan is developed and implemented
   - Consider traffic patterns for future developments
   - Consider public safety after hours
Section 2: Summary of Community Feedback

(numbered for ease of reference; not in priority order)

1. Concern about loss of parking due to streetscape changes and planned developments

   Comments from the public:
   - Don’t want to lose any more parking
   - Do not add bike lanes because they will reduce parking
   - The plans to convert two big parking lots into developments will reduce the amount of available parking

2. Concern that planned developments may increase the traffic volume on 61st

   Comments from the public:
   - The following developments are anticipated to increase the amount of traffic on 61st Street:
     - A hotel on 60th and Dorchester (University of Chicago is in talks with a developer)
     - New dorm between University and Woodlawn
     - New development between Cottage Grove and Langley
     - Obama Presidential Center – people may use 61st as a cut through when construction begins on the Obama Presidential Center

3. Concern about the addition of bump outs

   Comments from the public:
   - Assumption is that bump outs tend to slow the flow of traffic. Since people don’t like to drive slowly, they may use other streets and not drive down 61st. If bump outs reduce traffic volume, that might affect businesses along the 61st St. corridor negatively
   - Opposed to bump outs because in the winter time, snow covers the bump outs and it becomes a driving hazard
   - Instead of bump outs for pedestrian safety, include raised pedestrian walkways and visible concrete pillars at intersections

4. Concern about outreach to the Washington Park Community

   Comments from the public:
   - Washington Park seems to be left out of the feedback process, although a portion of the corridor (61st and King Drive going West) is in Washington Park
   - Woodlawn was included, but Washington Park was left out of this process
   - Stop the development at King Drive to give the Washington Park Community the chance to make their own plans
5. Concern about how the new developments and streetscape changes will affect the Carnegie School at the Blackstone end of the 61st Street corridor

Comments from the public:

- 700 kids go there, and many are walkers
- In the morning and evening, there is a bottleneck of traffic due to pick-up and drop-offs
- Continue discussing Dorchester through Blackstone with Principal Pollard from Carnegie

6. Desire for more security measures to increase public safety

Comments from the public:

- Place more emergency call buttons throughout the corridor
- A representative from the University of Chicago mentioned that the University is open to discussing increased safety measures

7. Other feedback

- Some community members expressed a desire to see more business development in the area
- Adding a new signal light at 61st and Ellis received mixed reviews
- Some community members expressed a desire to know what happens next to make the 61st Street Master Plan a reality
- Some community members expressed gratitude for the project team’s work on the 61st Street Master Plan