

4401 Liberty Ave (ShurSave Site)
Development Activities Meeting
November 1st, 2021
Notes taken by Morgan Rothacker

Presenter(s):

BDC Staff: Christina Howell, Sam Spearing, Morgan Rothacker
Echo Realty: Phil Bishop, Kevin McCeegan, Phillip Wilkinson

Christina Howell, facilitator

Attendees: 169 Zoom registrants 612 views on Facebook as of 11/4/21

-Attendees are joining as muted, only the host can unmute

Section II: Presentation from Development Team

Philip Bishop VP of Echo Realty

-Able to go to EchoRealty.com to learn more about the organization

-Echo focuses on developing grocery anchored centers

-Echo holds properties for longer and aim to be a part of the community at large

-Bloomfield Square

- Bloomfield as the “amenity”
- Community goals
 - Community & culture
 - Beautification & Gateway Identity
 - Connectivity & Accessibility
 - Gateway buildings & Public Space
 - Architectural Character
- Key Community Goals
 - Create a welcoming and safe neighborhood celebrating local culture & history
 - Elevate the public realm in a safe, pedestrian oriented gateway; to Bloomfield and extend the Liberty Avenue urban corridor
 - Create an inspired design reflecting the character of the neighborhood
 - Develop more open public space to support community life– a space to come together and celebrate
 - Activate and open the ground floor
 - Locate parking behind, below, or within buildings
- Key Development Goals
 - Maximize the site’s potential while designing within the site’s zoning requirements
 - Deliver a project design that will be supported by the Bloomfield community
 - Navigate the City’s review process smoothly
 - Reduce the mixed-use projects complexity, construction costs, and construction duration
 - Add value to the community for longer term support and financial viability
- Brought on the community market that currently exists in the lot after former operator ceased operations in July 2020
- Echo wants to keep the property focused on the community
 - Site is 5 separate paracels, primary purpose is the market
- Zoning

- Current is LNC (Local Neighborhood Commercial District)
- One portion of the parcel is zoned differently which is what Echo Reality wants to change to streamline development processes
 - Maintain the small scale and rich diversity of neighborhood serving commercial districts
 - Promote and enhance quality of life in adjacent residential areas
 - Reduce the adverse impacts that are sometimes associated with commercial uses in order to promote compatibility with residential development
- Took the BDC guidelines into consideration during planning
 - Pedestrian accessibility, vehicular accessibility, architectural relevance to the community,
 - Mixed use first floor
 - Grocery store- Giant Eagle is partnering and will be the anchor tenant of the development
 - Other commercial tenants TBD
 - Restaurants, hair salons, etc
 - 190 residential units with 10% being affordable housing
 - Underground parking garage included in the design
 - A proposed 3-4 story development, will attempt to level out to approximate height of neighboring buildings along Liberty Ave
 - Adding trees along the perimeter of the property
 - Future meetings with BDC & elected officials would discuss the appearance of the development
 - Contextual residential and commercial facades
- 20,000 sq feet Giant Eagle on corner of Liberty and Howley
- Additional commercial spaces on Liberty & Ella St
- Garage access off Ella St and Howley St
- Access off Holly St rather than Liberty Ave to avoid additional traffic
 - Multiple points of pedestrian access
- Rezoning would allow access to the garage and avoid congestion on narrow, one-way streets

Kevin McCeegan

- Not purchasing neighboring houses– do not want to force sales of neighboring homes
- Current zoning does not allow driveways that serve properties that are not the same as the primary use
 - In order to move forward with certain design points, there needs to be more certainty with the zoning which would be more efficient with consistent zoning throughout the entire parcel
- Most likely to be in front of planning commission in January of 2022
 - 2 meetings: Briefing then Hearing & Action two weeks later
- Traffic
 - Meetings have been held with DOMI and studies are being conducted at the surrounding intersections so that information is not yet available. It is being considered in the development plan

Phillip Wilkinson-AE7 Architects

- Early on, AE7 used BDC guidelines when approaching the layout of the site
 - Connectivity & Pedestrian accessibility
 - Traffic/Motor effectiveness by having East & West side parking access
- They are preserving the bus stop at Ella & Liberty

- 61 parking spaces for the commercial spaces in the underground garage
 - No exposed parking planned
- Minimizing stairs in the development and using ramps instead
 - Aims to be as accessible as possible

Section III: Q & A

Q: Will this be senior citizen apartments or condos?

A: Market rate components will apply and 10% of 190 units will be affordable housing. They are not sure what their future residential partner will want so they are unsure whether there will be a senior component to the building.

Q: What is affordable housing?

A: Developer needs to have a certain number of affordable housing based on income of applicants and rent is then lowered for those applicants.

Q: Apartments being rented or sold?

A: Rented units only.

Q: 139 parking spots for the 190 apartments, some of which are 2 bedroom apartments, is going to create issues with parking throughout the neighborhood. Are there ways to increase parking?

A: DOMI advocates less parking to avoid traffic, but the studies will tell what the capacity the streets have for vehicle access and parking. Garages are expensive and bike parking allows the developer to cut down on the number of required spots per unit. Things are not finalized yet and conversations are able to be had pending results of the traffic studies.

Q: Affordable commercial options?

A: Echo has professionals that know the needs of the market and community that will help to determine what commercial options would fit in the site. Commercial tenants are drawn to sites such as these because of tenants like Giant Eagle.

Q: Are you able to break up those larger commercial spaces into smaller store fronts to allow for more variety?

A: Those spaces are likely to be broken up into smaller spaces as more commercial partners are joining the site; 5-6 shops ranging in size.

Q: I'm concerned about the time of demolition. What precautions will you be taking to cut down on debris? Concerned about Children's, local community.

A: Echo plans to bring in contractors to plan things like accessibility and safety when it comes to demolition. They cannot guarantee no noise/debris, but contractors allow them to minimize those things to some degree. There is more construction planned than demolition.

Q: Will there be interim grocery options between the community market and giant eagle? How long will it take to get the giant eagle open after demo of the community market?

A: 18 month process demo to open. Giant Eagle is discussing making deliveries during the closure, pop up grocery locations in the interim, getting those shoppers to other locations to get

their groceries. Echo is working with GE to create those alternatives for Bloomfield residents.

Q: Safety at the Bloomfield/Liberty/Howley/Main intersection?

A: Must satisfy DOMI and planning commission that the traffic they are generating are not having adverse effects on current infrastructure or pedestrians. DOMI will let Echo know their requirements pending the ongoing traffic study.

Q: Majority of Bloomfield residents do not drive to work. Are we able to trade less parking for more affordable units?

A: Echo is trying to determine what amount of parking is appropriated and would have to get appropriate variances if they were to create less parking. There is a mix of concern for too much parking and not enough parking.

Q: Is there a mechanism that you may consider to get more affordable units in general?

A: This early, and without a residential partner, they are unable to say whether or not they would be able to provide more affordable housing.

Q: Housing choice vouchers— are you asking that your potential housing partners accept them?

A: They have not, but they may.

Q: Will there be windows in the Giant Eagle?

A: There are requirements in the code that a certain percentage of store fronts must have windows.

Q: Will tenants have to pay for parking or will it be optional?

A: It depends on the residential partner. They want to keep residential and commercial parking separate.

Q: When will the traffic study be complete and when will the community have access to it?

A: Not required to be submitted until the next steps— likely next Spring before going in front of the planning commission. They would bring the study to a meeting similar to this one.

Q: I am a Bloomfield/Friendship resident. What assurances can you make that you will keep the community informed during demo, construction, and development? Concerns about water issues, construction hours, pedestrian accessibility, etc. Contact for 24/7 questions/concerns?

A: Construction management plan that contractors must submit before starting a project that would outline timelines, relevant information, etc. Contractors will be brought on to be prime point of contact for construction process whose contact information will be made available if/when issues arise. (Christina: "BDC will not be the construction liaison as we do not have the resources.")

Section IV: Community Discussion

Resident:

- I don't like the branding of "Bloomfield Square."
- Is there a way to incorporate senior housing into the plan?

Christina:

- Possibly. It all depends on Echo's residential partner. 20% of Bloomfield residents are 60 or older. Accessible, affordable, senior housing is something that we need more of however they cannot reserve units for seniors. We (the BDC) are able to get in touch with seniors before units become available, assist seniors with applications for units, etc.

Resident:

- I live right around the corner from this site. I'm concerned about the effect on pedestrian accessibility in the area.
- What about safety for pedestrians near the intersection? Are we able to leverage the reworking of this intersection with Echo?

Christina:

- Bloomfield Bridge and Liberty Ave are city owned. It is BDC's responsibility to advocate for funds to bring attention to safety issues; could we have a traffic study done of our own to try to initiate change at this intersection? Could potentially ask ECHO to participate in safety efforts for the intersection. There is precedent for asking developers to pitch into these efforts and BDC is currently looking into that.

Resident: I am very much for the development. Maybe we should consider allowing ECHO to go taller (6-7 stories). Could offer more affordable units, lots of people want to live here, could cut local housing costs.

Meeting ended at 8:40pm