

Resident Listening Session Event Summary

9/11/2018

Overview

On September 5, 2018, residents of Hillside Manor and Park were invited to a listening session in the Hillside Fellowship room as part of the Hillside Master Plan for Housing Opportunity. The purpose of the event was to raise awareness of the master plan project; build trust and encourage continued participation among Hillside residents; and gather feedback to inform the project community engagement plan.

Approximately 42 people attended the two-hour event, which was held between 5 and 7 p.m. A majority of those attending live in Hillside Manor, while fewer than ten said they live in Hillside Park. Food, childcare and simultaneous translation in Russian and Spanish were provided. Two Russian-speaking community members participated in the listening session; no Spanish speakers attended.

Attendees received a brief introduction to the master plan project and the concurrent Health Impact Assessment (HIA) effort from project staff before engaging in small group discussions for the majority of the program. Each small group was guided by a staff discussion leader, and all tables discussed the following questions:

Part 1: How do you want to be involved?

- How much do you know about the master plan project? How have you been informed so far?
- How do you want to stay up to date on this project?
- In what ways do you want to participate in this project?
- What kinds of events would you like to attend?



Photo: *EnviroIssues*

Part 2: What are your goals for this process?

- What do you like about living at Hillside and what would make it better?
- What is your vision for the Hillside community and site?
- What questions or concerns do you have about this project?
- Anything else we should know?

At the conclusion of the event, each table group reported their top takeaways from Part 1 and Part 2 to the wider group. Residents also had the opportunity to provide written feedback on comment forms and to complete a voluntary HIA questionnaire (the results of these questionnaires will be summarized separately).

This document summarizes the key themes and ideas raised through the small group discussions at the listening session. Key takeaways shared during the report out portion of the

Hillside Master Plan: Resident Listening Session Summary

event are listed first in each section. The summary concludes with a review of key recommendations for future outreach and engagement planning.

Part 1: Resident involvement and engagement preferences

Awareness of the master planning effort

- Many attendees were aware of the master plan effort, but some said they had not heard about the project before.
- Many attendees confused the Hillside Master Plan for Housing Opportunity and the Hillside Manor renovation project. Several were aware that funding has not been secured for the Manor renovation work and believed this impacted the master planning process.
- Several said they have heard that buildings will be demolished and residents will need to be relocated. There was confusion around which residents would be relocated (Manor, Park or both) and when. This was related to the confusion between the two planning processes.
- Some said they were aware denser forms of housing may be possible on site (e.g. four-plexes and apartments).
- A few said they were aware relocation counselors and moving assistance would be provided, and some were aware that relocated residents would have the right to return. In general, awareness of the specifics around relocation plans was low.



Photo: EnviroIssues

Existing information sources

- Several attendees noted news travels fast among neighbors, but information can often turn into rumors and be misconstrued. Much of the misinformation or rumors circulated thus far concern the timeline of the project (i.e. when construction and relocation could begin) and which structures and areas will be affected (i.e. impact on the Manor; whether additional towers will be built; the future of the park space behind the Manor). A few said property management staff are seen as “fact checkers” and key sources of information.
- Several mentioned learning about the project at previous resident meetings hosted by the Housing Authority of Clackamas County (HACC).
- Several mentioned hearing about this listening session in a recent resident letter. Some said mailed and written correspondence can be confusing if it is not clear who the invitation is for (Manor residents, Park residents, or both) and if information is buried within other updates. A few said they were confused about the style of this event and whether it was a “drop-in” format.

Preferred information sharing methods

- The most frequently endorsed information-sharing method was informative flyers advertising events either attached to resident doors or mailed to residents.

Hillside Master Plan: Resident Listening Session Summary

- Flyers should be clear, easy to understand, and communicate who the information is intended for.
- Some attendees suggested a consistent paper color be used for these pieces of communication.
- Russian-speaking participants noted Google translate is not sufficient for these kinds of materials because Google translate can make information more confusing.
- Several also suggested regular updates be presented in the resident “catch all” newsletter, though a few stated this may be too slow to circulate timely information.
- Some suggested identifying key people per street or area who receive updates and can share them with neighbors to reduce the spread of rumors and misinformation.
- Attendees advocated for a mix of traditional and digital information sharing tools to engage residents of different ages and technological comfort levels. Suggestions included:
 - *Traditional methods:* Flyers, mail, meetings, information posted on bulletin boards in laundry rooms, newsletters, presentations or updates at resident events and committee meetings, phone call reminders
 - *Digital/electronic methods:* Project website, email, text message updates; while this option was important to some residents, others said online tools like email are not easily accessible to them
- Attendees provided mixed feedback on the preferred frequency of communication. Some advocated for frequent updates (monthly or more), while others felt quarterly would be more appropriate to reduce stress. There was general agreement that the latest information should be easily accessible to those who want it (e.g. online, with the property manager, on a bulletin board, etc.).
- Attendees said it is important to communicate how previous input was used to help residents feel heard, better understand the process and encourage continued involvement. Some residents feel they give the same input at each meeting and don't understand a sense of progress on the master plan process.

Engagement preferences and future events

- Attendees were very interested in attending future resident events at key project milestones, particularly to discuss design in more detail.
- Some noted they liked having events with both Manor and Park residents and would also like to invite residents of neighboring areas to hear what they have to say.
- Several noted the relatively low turn-out among Park residents at the event and said this should be addressed for future workshops.
 - Several said more direct door-to-door outreach will be needed to engage these residents, as well as more reminders prior to the event.
 - Several said it needs to be clearer which residents are invited to which events.
 - Some Park residents mentioned feeling unwelcome in the Manor. This is a barrier that must be addressed if future events are held in the Hillside Fellowship Room.
- Some said they liked the small group discussion format, though some said more space was needed to be able to spread out and hear other participants.

Hillside Master Plan: Resident Listening Session Summary

- Many said it is important to emphasize the importance of attending these events in notification materials. Some said they value being asked for their perspective and ideas, while others said they are worried their comments will not be considered. Many said it is important to explain how feedback will be used and what the next steps in the process are.
- Accessibility of events was a key theme. At future events, the project team must consider cross-cultural barriers, wheelchair access and mobility, accommodations for vision impaired residents and ways to make all residents feel comfortable sharing opinions. A few said materials should emphasize that interpreters are available to increase attendance of non-English speaking residents.
- Some suggested holding events or providing information in conjunction with existing resident programs, such as food basket day or the Christmas party.
- A few said events should be held at multiple times (i.e. during the day and in the evening) to accommodate people's work schedules.

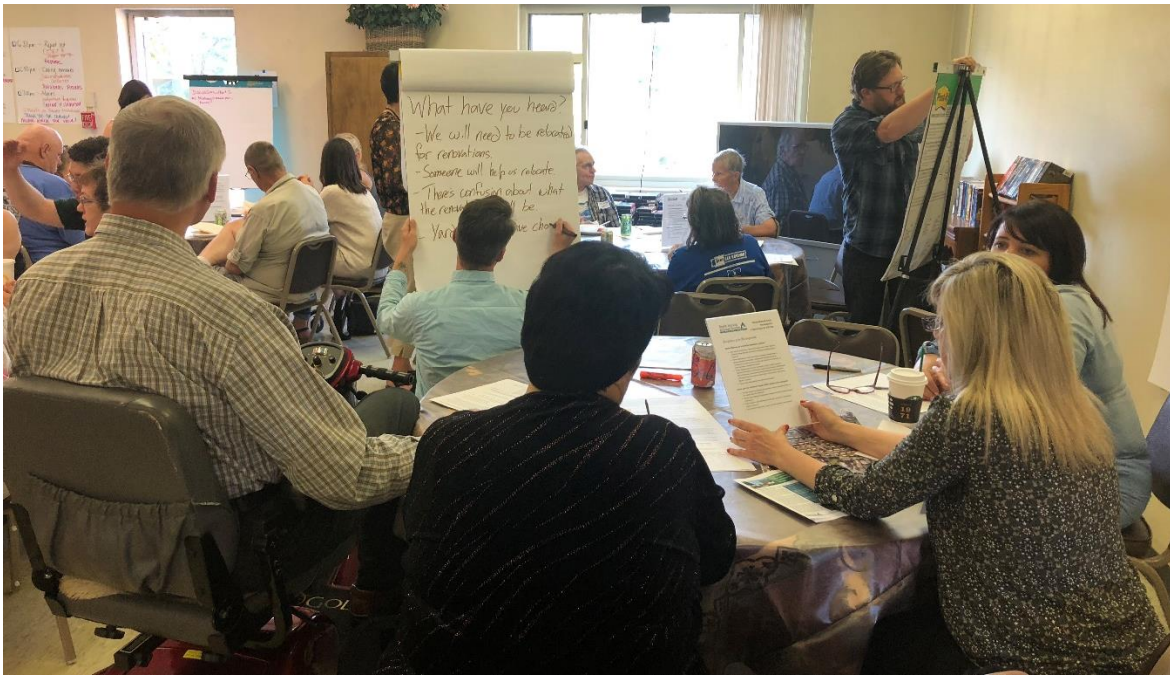


Photo: EnviroIssues

Part 2: Vision for Hillside

What residents value about Hillside

When asked what they like about living at Hillside, attendees mentioned the following features:

- Neighborhood feel – green space, gardens, flowers, individual structures plus dense tower
- The people – neighbors, activities for residents
- Affordability – low cost of housing (30% of income and below), utilities paid for
- Greenery – trees, gardens, open space, walking area and berry patches behind the Manor
- Feeling of independence – ability to have a garden, access transit, and live independently
- Programming – existing activities, market on Sunday

Hillside Master Plan: Resident Listening Session Summary

- The food basket program provided by the Oregon Food Bank
- Bus access
- Access to Providence across the street

Vision for the future: What residents would like to see

Comments about desired improvements and potential future amenities, services and design covered the following themes:

- **Increased safety:** Several attendees discussed feeling unsafe at times and advocated for improved security cameras, addressing trespassing concerns along the railroad line, residents letting unattended guests into the Manor, improved rule enforcement by management, potential increased police presence and ways to reduce instances of crime and illegal substance use. Some noted parts of the site have better fire access than others. A few said the lighting should be improved to increase safety.
- **Increased accessibility of key services:** Several attendees said they would like to see more social services (e.g. physical, behavioral and mental health support, economic assistance and job training, support for recently homeless, etc.) located on-site.
- **Improved access to food:** Many attendees discussed a desire for better access to fresh and healthy food in closer proximity to Hillside (e.g. by increasing the food basket program, adding a grocery on site, etc.)
- **Continued affordability and meeting housing need:** Several said it is important to maintain or increase the ability of this site to provide low-cost housing, particularly as more people are experiencing homelessness.
- **Preserving neighborhood feel while feeling less isolated:** Several said they want to preserve the “neighborhood feel” of Hillside by preserving open space, keeping gardens and having some lower-density homes while improving connectivity and aesthetics so the site feels less isolated. Some said they’d like it to feel more “cheery.” A few noted they need to live in detached housing for health reasons.
- **Varied density:** Related to desires for preserving neighborhood feel, several said they would like to see a mixture of density, including the preservation of some less dense areas. Several said they do not want to see other towers.
- **Different housing types:** Some said they would like to see a mixture of small and larger (3+ bedroom) housing types as well as senior housing to encourage a more diverse community of ages and family sizes.
- **Mixed-use integration with housing:** Some said they like the idea of mixing commercial, retail and residential, particularly if it increases accessibility to key services. While some



Photo: EnviroIssues

Hillside Master Plan: Resident Listening Session Summary

liked the idea of some housing above retail, there was concern about whether this type of housing would work for people with mobility challenges.

- **Improved health:** Several mentioned a desire to improve health conditions at Hillside, including reducing smoking and drug use, encouraging exercise and healthy eating, and making access to health services easier for residents.
- **Improved mobility access:** Several expressed a vision for enhanced wheelchair and mobility access to units and common spaces. Some connected bathroom amenities to mobility and said residents should be able to choose units with walk-in showers.
- **Gathering spaces:** Some said they would like to see spaces for community events and social gathering, such as libraries and coffee shops. Others said a computer lab and increase access to technology would be useful.
- **Improved laundry facilities:** Several said they felt the current laundry facilities are inadequate and said they would like to see more laundry or in-unit laundry in future designs.
- **Improved cleanliness and resources to discourage dumping:** Several noted concerns about the cleanliness of communal spaces, cigarette smoke, bed bugs in units, and issues with illegal dumping. Some suggested a re-use center or donation station could help encourage people to re-use discarded materials and clean up common areas.
- **Enhanced recreation opportunities:** Several said the playground should be improved and different recreation areas should be developed for different age groups. A few said there may be an opportunity for non-profits like the Boys and Girls Club to provide programming for youth onsite. Others mentioned a desire for space for yoga, Tai Chi and other activities.
- **Diversity and culturally-responsive support:** Some advocated for community diversity training and increased support and inclusion of residents who speak other languages or come from other cultures.
- **Sustainability and energy efficiency:** Some mentioned a desire for more sustainable structures and better insulation.
- **Improved parking facilities:** A few noted parking challenges on site for residents and caregivers and said they would like to see improvements to the parking options.
- **Pet amenities:** A few said a veterinarian office, dog park, and other pet facilities would be beneficial for pet owners in the community.

Questions and concerns about the master planning process

Attendees raised the following concerns and questions about the master planning process:

- **Anxiety around instability:** Several mentioned many things feel out of their control, which causes stress and anxiety.
- **Mobility issues:** Several expressed concern about whether new designs would accommodate people with mobility challenges and enhance their experiences.
- **Impact of increased density:** Some mentioned concerns about the impacts of more people at Hillside on traffic, parking and quality of life.
- **Confusion around project timescale:** Several stated they had heard conflicting messages around when construction could begin and how this project is related to other planning efforts at Hillside.

Hillside Master Plan: Resident Listening Session Summary

- **Impact on rent:** Some asked questions about how relocation and redevelopment at Hillside could impact their rent in the future, specifically if the development is converted into Section 8 housing. A few asked about the impact on renter's insurance.
- **Displacement and confusion about the relocation process:** Several asked questions and expressed concerns over whether they would have to relocate, when this might occur, what types of housing they might be moved into, and whether they would be able to stay near key services and amenities.
- **Getting Park residents to participate:** Some expressed concern about the underrepresentation of Park residents at this listening session and noted the importance of concerted outreach to these residents going forward.

Management questions, concerns and feedback

In addition to providing feedback on the discussion questions, several attendees shared comments about management issues at Hillside. These comments touched on the following themes (specific comments have been passed on the HACC management team).

- Consistent enforcement of rules at Hillside and notification when rules change
- Cleanliness
- Trust
- Safety concerns
- Trespassing
- Comments about watering garden areas
- Maintenance and responsiveness to maintenance needs



Photo: EnviroIssues

Conclusions

The feedback provided at the listening session will be used in the following ways:

- To develop key messages and answers to frequently asked questions for the project.
- To select information sharing tactics, feedback mechanisms and engagement events for the community engagement plan.
- To inform the project schedule.

Key conclusions from the event include the following:

- Direct, focused outreach to Park residents is needed to boost their participation.
- A range of traditional and electronic information sharing tactics should be used to spread the word to residents.
- Consistent, relevant information should be readily accessible via the property management office and project website; resident-wide communication should be frequent enough to reduce confusion and keep people informed, but not too frequent to cause anxiety.

Hillside Master Plan: Resident Listening Session Summary

- Accessibility should be thoroughly considered for all future engagement opportunities (e.g. vision, mobility and language needs).
- Steps should be taken to make Hillside events inclusive and ensure everyone feels welcome.
- Residents look forward to future opportunities to share their perspective and ideas.
- The project team should develop materials and resources to address key questions and concerns related to project timescale, scope, relocation and rent impacts.