

Date of meeting: January 4, 2017
Location: MMM Office
Purpose: Meeting with SORG to discuss PE process

Project: Winnipeg Transit Garage Expansion
Project Number: 5516057
Author: Brock Feenstra
Revised: January 10, 2017

Attendees:

Bev Pike, South Osborne Residents' Group (SORG)
David Grant, South Osborne Residents' Group (SORG)
Kevin Sim, Colliers Project Leaders
Tim Vandekerkhove, Transit
Scott Payne, Transit
Brett Andronak, Office of Public Engagement (OPE)
Dave Jopling, MMM Group
Brock Feenstra, MMM Group

Distribution: All Attendees and the following

Morgan Vespa, Office of Public Engagement (OPE)

Details

The Project Team and two members of the South Osborne Residents' Group (SORG) met to discuss the Public Engagement Process for the Winnipeg Transit Garage Expansion Project.

The meeting began with introductions followed by a brief outline of the proposed public engagement process and an open discussion on public engagement.

SORG was generally supportive of the proposed public engagement activities, however, they outlined a number of concerns related to their experience of public engagement overall at the City, with this project, and in past projects in the neighbourhood.

SORG handed out a copy of the 'March 2016 brief to Winnipeg Transit on Community Needs' and a copy of the IAP2 core values.

A more detailed discussion about the issues will occur in a stakeholder meeting with SORG members next week.

The following points were brought forward by SORG:

- Construction has been disturbing Fort Rouge since 2009.
- Half the neighbourhood is rental – old neighbourhood.
- The political will of the existing residents will be weakened because the new development will bring in new residents that will outnumber the existing residents in voting power.
- SORG is made up of residents and homeowners that live in the neighbourhood.

Any omissions or errors in these notes should be forwarded to the author immediately.

Details

- Resident groups in the City increasingly think that the public engagement processes in the City have been “less than open and transparent”.
- SORG felt that this project is already flawed because SORG has not been part of the decision making process to date.
 - The project team responded that the public engagement process is very early in the process and that we want to hear from SORG about their comments and concerns about the project and issues in the neighbourhood. There are a number of decisions that need to be made on this project. The project is still uncertain of proceeding and is subject to funding from the other levels of government.
- Transit is treating Lord Roberts like an extension of their industrial park.
 - SORG asked how many more expansions will there be?
- The new parking lot will not solve the parking problem, there have been problems created by the past projects that need to be addressed first.
- How can SORG give hope to their residents?
- SORG has an issue with the process – you didn’t talk to people before deciding to expand here. The decision to expand the building has already been made so it is too late for meaningful engagement. The City can do better.
- David Jopling went through each IAP2 core value to discuss how the process that was proposed could involve the public in the process of planning for the building expansion and mitigating any potential impacts.
- David also indicated expanding on an existing site is different than setting up a new transit garage site in an established neighbourhood. There are certain land use provisions that are required depending on the project and these may be different from place to place.
- In the end, we want to better understand what the impacts are, record them, and provide these to the City staff and designers to find ways to mitigate the impacts as much as possible. It is still early in the process to affect the design of the project.
- When the issues are addressed, we will explain how. If questions or concerns are not addressed we will also explain why.
- SORG would like to see a feasibility study that shows factors that were considered for the expansion, how many more expansions there will be, how big will it be, etc.?
- SORG have not been getting accurate information in regards to the number of employees Transit has and how many staff park in the neighbourhood? SORG estimates 600 people park on the streets a day.
- What’s missing in Winnipeg is what other City’s do, and that is to collaborate with neighbourhood associations.
- SORG proposed that Transit should post verbatim feedback from their public engagement events on their web page.
 - The project website will post a document of the input received from the public, including the summary from the stakeholder meetings.
- This process is good, but there is damage done from the past expansion that needs to be repaired. Be prepared to be honest about future expansion plans.
 - How will you fix what you have done?
 - What is planned in the future for this site?

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Details

- After the storage facility at the end of Brandon Ave. was built, people were able and successful in getting their property taxes reduced because they argued that the transit garage lowers their property values.
- The process in the past first seemed wonderful because the proposed options for the new storage facility at the end of Brandon Ave. were shown to be far from the homes, but then something changed and those plans were not followed through and the barns were constructed closer to the homes than originally shown.
- Daly Street experiences a traffic issue during shift change.
- Residents feel blindsided by these projects because they are not involved in the decision making from the outset - it is nice you are asking us to participate early, but it may not be early enough.
- People will ask for a feasibility study for the garage expansion and detailed studies on noise, traffic, light, etc.
- It would be nice if SORG and the City could co-present a neighbourhood project together.
- What measures will you have? People are leery of being manipulated.
 - After considering the input from the first round of public engagement, an explanation of why decisions were made or were not made will be presented to the public during the second round of public engagement.
- Presenting alternatives with honest reasons why something was done and why something was not, would be helpful.
- When doing an exit survey, send it to us to add questions to, in order to make sure that the information collected is useful and valuable.
 - A link to the survey was provided to SORG for their input.
- People want to feel good about these types of projects and not have to object to them, but be part of the process.
- Bikes are an interest of some people in the neighbourhood and to help sell the project you could consider highlighting how cycling will be improved (i.e. size of the garage is being expanded to add more bike racks on buses).
- FYI, there is a class at Churchill school that will deliver flyers the neighbourhood for a nominal fee.

Points that were brought forward in advance of the meeting via email included:

- Can you describe the methods that you use to ensure that these consultations are (a) meaningful (b) honest (c) publicly accountable?
- Can you provide details of the exact measures you would take to accomplish these goals?
- Can you describe Transit's policy to ameliorate local resident's ongoing concerns from the 2012 expansion?

At the conclusion of the meeting, SORG was given a copy of the presentation boards, which also included a link to the online survey and project website.