

Working Groups Kick Off Meeting Transcript

Tuesday, April 12, 2022

5:30pm – 7pm

Participants

Shawn Balon, Storefront for Community Design

Chanel Bea

Jack Berry, Richmond Region Tourism

Joshua Bilder, Sterling Bilder Development

Carlton Boisseau, Club 533

Ralph Dickerson

Oldson Duclos, CHAT

Brittany Thomas King

Brandon King, City of Richmond

David Lambert, Eye Que Optical

Robert Lester, Club 533

Danielle Lake, LRK

Deborah Morton, City of Richmond

Maritza Mercado Pechin, City of Richmond

Commissioner Charlene Pitchford

Yessenia Revilla, City of Richmond

Doyle Sapp, Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site

Ralph Stuckey

T. Knight Womack, Greater Mount Moriah

Desi Wynter

Pechin: Oh, the meeting is being recorded. Be ready to engage in dialogue with others. Remember that like you're participating as an individual. So kind of identify what your personal view is versus like the whole organization feeling a certain way.

Try not to judge other people on what they say. Question first is an often thing to do. Instead of saying "Hey I don't agree with you," ask questions to probe into a comment that someone has made.

Try to attend all the meetings. I understand that things come up. But it really helps if we have a consistent attendance so that we're not catching a lot of people up every single time when we start a meeting.

Please share your advice to the team. And remember that if you're not sharing you feel, we don't know it. So silence is generally consent. So if you're being silent, we won't know that you disagree or you have a different opinion. So please share that. And then also try and be succinct, which I will try and do right now. Next slide.

So we have seven meetings, and they kind of align with different points in the process. It's kind of intense. It's really for a year that these meetings happen, and each one has—we kind of already know what we're going to be doing at each one, and we have this little syllabus that we've prepared that we'll be sending to everyone so that you can see when the working group meeting is and how that fits into the general schedule of the entire project. Next slide.

Next. Overview. So I've already kind of talked about the different sections of the HUD program. These are defined by HUD, and we're lucky to have LRK on board as our planning consultant because they've done projects like this across the country, and they kind of understand how to make a plan that can be implemented and successful in transforming communities and making stronger and better communities for everyone. Those are the three goals. Next.

So I'm going to talk about neighborhood. So this is where we're talking about creating conditions necessary for public and private reinvestment. So some strategies that might come out of the Neighborhood section of the plan can be strategies about encouraging infill development, programs to retain businesses and develop businesses—specific this street needs sidewalks, this street needs lighting, we need to make these improvements at parks—other things that might beautify communities like public art, thinking about other ways to reposition certain properties, and then neighborhood safety. So those are kind of things that might come out of the neighborhood plan. Next.

And so this is the Gilpin community. It's an aerial view of Gilpin Court today. So there's Gilpin Court and then that boundary that I shared before that the neighborhood plan will be looking at.

And some people have been like why did you do the southern side of Broad Street as well, and the reason we chose that is we wanted to do both sides of Broad Street and just think about how what happens on one side impacts the

other. So that's why we have both sides of Broad Street there on the plan. Next slide.

This area has a lot of plans and investments that are happening, and I'm just going to kind of run through them. And these are projects that either have been planned or there's investment that's happening soon. So I'm really excited that we were awarded the Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant because it means that this planning effort can help us align all of these efforts that are physical changes to the community, but then there's also other efforts that are happening related to people. You know, either workforce development, education, and health programs that can also be aligned with this planning process.

So there's the D.C. to RVA line. That's the high-speed rail. That's the blue one right there. Moving right next to it is the North-South BRT. People have been talking about North-South BRT (Bus Rapid Transit). That's one line. Then there's a dotted blue line that shows another option of it going through. That's not certain.

So some of these things are kind of planned but not funded. Another thing that's planned but not funded yet is this Belvidere Street Interchange. They want to redo—that orange boundary, they want to redo that. Then related to that there's safety improvements with the pink hatching. Then there's the Reconnect Jackson Ward project, which is a different project that we are working on. We have a public meeting April 28th. I'll put the website in the chat. But that's looking at how do we reconnect north of the highway and south of the highway with the park, with buildings, with roads, or something to bring back together the community that was destroyed by the highway. And that's trying to position us for federal fundings.

There's this 1st St. Bridge Rehab that is fully funded, and that is a project to replace that bridge. And that construction is like starting. The Fall Line Trail that goes from Petersburg to Ashland—it's a bike/pedestrian trail. And then there's the City Center plan to redo the Coliseum area and transform that area as well. So there's a lot happening in this area. Next.

In addition to that, there is other improvements to like park space—you know, Calhoun Center renovation, improving the park next to it. Yessenia, thank you for putting that in the chat. Public Art at the Community Garden. The 5th Street Cemetery, which is a recent acquisition of the City. The City just purchased that land. It's an African-American burial ground. So that's another project that's kind of around this area. Next.

And I'm going to turn it over to Jackie to talk about people strategies.

Jackie:

Hi, everyone. Yeah, so what Maritza mentioned earlier—this basically will be a plan that you all will help us put together to really focus on the people. So we know there's going to be a lot of physical infrastructure, and we really want to make sure we're not forgetting about the human aspect of all of this.

So the bullet points here—I'll read them aloud for some folks that are on the phone. Making sure that there's a high level of resident access to quality early learning. Significant growth in individual resident educational outcomes. Increasing the residents' income and the targeted housing over time. Improved access to health services and improved health over time. And also housing choice for all residents. So specifically around that housing choice piece, obviously that'll be in partnership with the Housing work group.

And this next slide here is just talking about our early child services that are in that area. One thing we want to say about this group—or I'm sorry, this slide—is that we know that there are more childcare services that are not noted on this map. So this work group will really help us identify what those services are—traditional and nontraditional educational services—and the City actually does have a early childhood taskforce that is going to be meeting and has kind of somewhat already started meeting, especially focusing on our out-of-school time as well. And you can go to the next slide. Thank you.

Another big aspect that we are definitely going to be focusing on is that poverty piece and really getting the incomes up for folks that live in this community. We know that this is one of the top issues that we deal with here in Richmond, and so obviously we see that there is a really dire income disparity between this neighborhood and, if you look over to the left of the map toward the West End. Again, this information really isn't super new to those of us on the call, but sometimes looking at a map and just really seeing it just kind of puts a fire under us to work harder towards this.

This slide is, again, just continuing to focus this even more. Just looking at the household income for this neighborhood, it's substantially lower than other parts of the city. And so we'll be taking all of this into consideration as we create innovative and really creative programs for folks to increase their income.

And this is a slide really specifically to a lot of the work that we do here at the Health District around life expectancy. So there's a lot of different health outcomes that we look at, from high blood pressure to heart disease to even

gun violence that really impacts the life expectancy of our families. And so, again, it's just so hard to sometimes look at all these maps that we see an extreme disparity from The Jackson Ward community as compared to the other parts of our city. And you see a twenty-year life expectancy across this map.

So these are just some examples of data points that we're going to be looking at. If you go to the next slide. I'm going to pass it over to Desi, and later in the presentation we're going to talk a little bit more about how we're going to collect that information from the People plan. So thank you.

Wynter:

Good evening, everyone. Again, my name is Desi Wynter. I'm a deputy director with Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority. I'm going to talk a few different points here. I think just in our editing, we brought over the People strategies to the Housing strategies. Fairly quickly, the goals for the Housing team working group will be to transform not only Gilpin Court but the entire neighborhood as well. We're looking for well-managed and financially viable developments that are budgeted appropriately for rental income that can be generated from the project and can meet or exceed industry standards for quality management and for maintenance of the property.

We're also looking to do mixed-income housing affordable to families and individuals with a broad range of incomes, including low income, moderate income, and market-rate unrestricted. We're looking to do energy efficient, climate resistant, and sustainable housing—housing that has low per energy and water consumption that is built to be resistant and local to disaster risk.

Accessible housing that's healthy and free from discrimination, housing that is well designed, meets the requirements of accessible design, embraces concepts of visibility and universal design, and has healthy indoor air quality, has affordable broadband internet access, and is free from discrimination.

An overview of Gilpin: 98 percent non-white mixed race, nearly 90 percent very low income. Sixty percent of the families are small. That's why we call it a family development. Over 50 percent of the units only have 6 percent of elderly households. Remaining households are mostly three-bedroom units. That's the demand for the housing units within the community. Fifty-six percent of the population is under eighteen years of age. Only 3 percent of seniors, due to recent senior developments that have been going on within the Housing Authority development process. Over 50 percent have been recent move-ins for the last three years, so we know that this is a very transitional

community. Twenty-one percent of households are ten-plus years residents. Ten percent of households are twenty-plus years residents. Next slide, please.

I'm not going to get into great details regarding the market study. Sometimes we kind of have to look at this with a microscopic lens to understand the numbers. But very broadly, average annual market potential above 100 percent AMI is nearly 30 percent. Twenty percent is between 60 and 100 percent area median income.

Based on market absorption, income mixing potential is positive. And I think that third bullet point is very important. Based on market absorption, income mixing potential for this community is positive. Next slide, please.

Activities for Gilpin would include demolition will take place in a phased strategy. Each family will have housing options for relocation, including tenant protection vouchers, project-based vouchers for units developed throughout the city of Richmond—utilizing a voucher—choice of remaining in redeveloped Gilpin Court.

Vacant units at Gilpin will be used for temporary relocation as needed. And we're anticipating doing a build-first strategy in order to begin the relocation process. Gilpin residents for the build-first strategy will be a priority, as well as looking at North Jackson Ward across the highway. We'll be looking at derelict property and vacant properties to see what their development potential is as well, working with the community and working with this group to see what the opportunity for market, affordable, and subsidized housing will be. Next slide, please.

And now I'm going to turn it over regarding the Resident Assessment & Community Survey. This is back to you, Danielle.

Lake: This is Jackie, actually.

Wynter: Oh, Jackie. Okay, sorry. Go ahead.

Jackie: Yes, and I'm not sure if my camera is working. I don't know if y'all can see me or not. But yes—

Lake: We can see you.

Jackie: Okay, perfect. So this is kind of what I was mentioning earlier about how will we collect all this data and information, and so that will be through our Resident Assessment Survey. And this is something that is a requirement from

HUD for us to do. We have talked a lot about the fact that we know the community is surveyed a lot and is over-surveyed. And so we are speaking with other agencies that are working in the community to make sure that we can streamline some of this so that folks do not feel over-surveyed.

And so the first survey is really focused on the Gilpin Court neighborhood, and that is the Resident Assessment. If you don't mind going back. This is perfect. Okay, I can use this one. Thank you.

Yeah, so the first survey is that Resident Assessment one, and that's going to start in early May. And then also in early May we're going to—or about mid-May, we're going to also do a community survey. And this is really towards the surrounding Jackson Ward community. And as I already said, we're going to do a great job to ensure that folks who fill out the resident survey will not have to also complete an additional survey. So again, just making sure things are streamlined. So all of this data will really be filtered out really to all the work groups, but especially for the people to help us inform what kind of programming services support folks need. And you can go to the next slide.

We kind of mentioned this during the standing committee, but we wanted to bring it up here as well because this really explains how we want to ensure that folks are not only sharing information but folks are empowered to really create change. So not only just being a collector of very insightful information—some of the information that HUD does require us to ask really does get a little bit personal. But we are really putting a lot of eyes on it as well the work group will be able to say this is a question that we should remove, this is a question that we should keep, so that we are making sure that we are being healing-centered and trauma-informed in everything that we do. And that folks not only feel but do have a leadership role in this. Okay, the next one.

So this slide pretty much again just goes into more detail about how the two different assessments will be administered. So of course we will have paper version, electronic version. Then the dates that I mentioned—May 10th for the Resident Assessment as well as May 12th for the Community Assessment. We do have that goal of reaching about 60 percent of the households in Gilpin Court, and so we have a lot of different partners and community folks that will be helping us. If you go to our next slide, I can talk more about our team that will help us get that.

Yeah, so we have actually hired a Gilpin Court informed resident coordinator. So this is someone that will work with residents of Gilpin Court, that will be organized to get the survey out to their neighbors. That coordinator is Ashrelle

Thompson, and we will be hiring—the application is posted—hiring community members to help us get that out. You all are aware of the Community Ambassador Program that does a great job with doing this. So if you're thinking about that group, we are definitely in conversation with that group as well about how we can partner in doing this work.

The exciting thing about this is, again, having folks that are from the neighborhood just really talking to their peers and their neighbors about it, to relay that information back. And these Gilpin informed residents will also be part of the work as well. So again, what I said earlier about not only going out and pulling information and giving information but truly being in the seat amongst the decision-making team. Thank you.

Wynter: Okay. We've reached our Q&A, so we can entertain questions. I think there are a combination of ways we can do this. Hands raised. You can state your question in the chat. And hopefully we can—as well as if you want to unmute and talk. We can try to look at how we can manage the conversation. But hopefully you have a few questions; otherwise, we did this perfect and we can go right into the working groups.

Pechin: We also will be going right into working groups after this if you want to save your questions for then.

Lake: I see a hand raised from Chanel.

Bea: Quick question. I know that you mentioned a lot of different task forces and committees that are meeting, and there's a lot of moving parts to this. How will we know or keep apprised of what's happening with the other groups so that we can know how our groups overlap and bring information back and forth between the additional groups?

Pechin: That's a really good question, and there are a lot of moving parts. And so that steering committee will be a place that will help align the efforts and make sure that we're not duplicating. Also, the leads for each group—so I'm the lead for Neighborhood, Desi is the lead for Housing, and then Amy and Jackie are the leads for People—we are all meeting like every other week for the duration of the project. So that will also help with alignment.

There is a lot going on, and believe it or not we actually tried to reduce the amount of meetings because we didn't want people to feel really overwhelmed.

- Wynter: And Maritza, if I can add as well, we're going to have community meetings as well that has all these groups together. So that'll be an opportunity for cross-referencing information as well.
- Lake: I'll also make a plug. We have a website that we'll be sharing at the end of the meeting, where we'll be keeping everyone informed of events going on, and everything will be shared with the public. So the recording from this evening's meeting will be posted. We'll be sharing fliers and more information through the grant term with the public.
- Wynter: And by all means we're always open to suggestions to how we can share information.
- Bea: But beyond sharing with the public, just internally with us so that we're all on the same page and we're all continuing to work for the same goal. And I get what you said, Maritza, about you guys meeting on a consistent basis. It's more or less like I don't want to get stuck in my silo.
- Pechin: That's great. I love that. I think it's really important to think cross-sectionally across the other silos. And so we will have—so for every working group meeting in the future there'll be pre-meeting homework. So like before the meeting you'll have work. So there will be communications leading up to the meetings and then after the meetings. So that will help keep you kind of abreast. So there will be a lot of communication. Let's just put it that way.
- Wynter: Okay. There's a question. What is the timetable on Gilpin redevelopment, and what's the vision for mixed-use zoning? So I think the timeframe and the vision for mixed-use zoning will all come from us going through the Housing and Neighborhood discussions. Again, this is going to be a plan that we are creating in order to move forward with development of housing, incorporated into the neighborhood as well. So a specific timetable has not been developed as yet. Of course, we want to start as soon as possible in order to get things going. But we want to be very responsive and responsible in terms of how we move forward, make sure that the timetable is doable, and look at all the options that we have in terms of zoning requirements.
- Pechin: Yeah, so it hasn't been determined yet is the answer really. That's part of the planning process.
- Wynter: Okay. Another question is are there other constraints articulated by the grant that we should be aware of that may limit outcomes. From my perspective, not really. I think that HUD allows us a lot of latitude in terms of moving forward with the development. What they want to see is really a community

engagement process and not leaving anyone on the sidelines in terms of development. So we are very conscious and concerned about the community engagement process—getting everyone involved, getting input, feedback, as well as compromises on what we do. But in the end, what they want to see is a plan—a plan that incorporates people strategies, neighborhood strategies, and housing strategies.

Pechin: Yeah. Mmm-hmm.

Wynter: Sorry. Maritza, you have something to add as well?

Pechin: No, I was going to add something, and then I realized that you said it perfectly, so I don't know why I was going to say anything.

Wynter: Other questions?

Pitchford: I had a question.

Wynter: Commissioner Pitchford, yes?

Pitchford: Yes. My question is what is the target income for the redevelopment as far as the residents. What is the target income that you're going to be marketing for? And then the last question: will there be any money for people or residents who want to start their own business? Like somebody might want to do daycare, you know? Startup money. Somebody might want to do cosmetology, you know?

Wynter: Sure. So in terms of target income, I'm not sure if you can go back to the slide that kind of showed the market analysis, but again, what we are trying to accomplish really is that third bullet point. Based on the market absorption, income mixing potential is very positive. Right now the concentration in Gilpin Court is primarily very low income, and what we want to do is transform our community into a mixed-income community. But by all means, providing housing options to our families, as we mentioned, giving them the option to use a tenant protection voucher as well as a project-based voucher as well as remaining at Gilpin Court and other developments that are done within the community.

So that's kind of broadly what we're looking at in terms of targeting an income. And in terms of businesses within the community, I think one of the things that, as we develop this process, and to the question regarding zoning earlier as well, is where can we incorporate those types of changes or zoning, and

does the community support that? Does the redevelopment support that type of zoning in order to create businesses within the community?

So again, this is where that input is important, as we all come together and work toward the planning effort to see if those are the kind of things we can incorporate into the plan and eventually build on as we go through the process.

Pechin: We do have one more question. Ralph, I see you have your hand raised.

Pitchford: Thank you.

Pechin: And then we'll go to breakout groups.

Wynter: Okay.

Dickerson: Yes. I think one of the questions that was raised already was opportunity for entrepreneurialism, particularly among the residents, who really may feel and already have felt that we should provide kind of a nurturing area for business development. And I think that's an important aspect. I would add that as a fifth opportunity because that is an economic opportunity that is going to focus on self-sufficiency for them.

But the second thing I wanted to mention: let's not forget about the Diamond District project. The sixty-six acres. There's a real opportunity for combining efforts there. This is more than a real estate project. It's an opportunity for community residents to feel a sense of ownership, and we're pushing that. So this is a big, big project, and I think we ought to just make sure we understand how to interface with that and to claim some ownership.

Wynter: Excellent point.

Pechin: Yeah. Those about business ownership and kind of entrepreneurship—those are strategies that would be included in a plan like this. So that's absolutely in line with what we want to see going into the plan, based on what people are saying.

With the Diamond District, I'm happy you brought that up. I'm project managing that project. And in the latest kind of request to the developers, we've asked them to meet a goal of having 5 percent of their rental units be set aside for Gilpin relocation, if people choose to want to move there obviously. So that was kind of thinking that all of the replacement units do not

all have to be located within Jackson Ward. So maybe some of them could be located within kind of this new mixed-income community.

So let's jump into the breakout groups because we have forty minutes left, and there's a lot that has to happen in those groups too. So Shawn, is that you?

Balon: Yeah. So if everybody—I know there are still some people that are entering, and there's about eight of you that I'm not quite sure. I've reached out to everyone directly to see which room you would like to be in because some [indiscernible]. So I'm going to go ahead and put everyone in the rooms. And if you're not in a room, I'll chat with you and get you in the right room. And then if you get in a room and you're like this is not the working group that I'm supposed to be in, just let us know in the chat, and I'll move you between the rooms.

Pechin: Shawn, did you put me in a room? Great. That means Danielle is here. Hey, Danielle. Okay, so Neighborhood working group. So I want to start saying thank you for coming, and let's kick it off. So the first thing we're going to do is do some introductions because we didn't do that before because it was such a big group. So we're going to spend a little bit of time here with your name, your entity/organization, what your favorite food is, and what do you hope to see through this planning process.

So I'll go first. I'm Maritza Mercado Pechin. I work for the City. My favorite food—I'm Puerto Rican, and I have to say it's like Puerto Rican rice and beans. Like I could eat that all day long. It's like my comfort food. And what do I hope to see through this planning process? I hope to have the community create a plan that they feel ownership of and that we can like implement and move forward with a lot of support as we look to redevelop Gilpin Court and improve the neighborhood as people define.

And so I'm going to turn it over to Carlton because he's someone I see there. So Carlton, if you could unmute yourself and introduce yourself.

Boisseau: Yes, good afternoon. My name is Carlton Boisseau. I'm a retired engineering manager for a major corporation. However, I'm here this afternoon basically representing Club 533, which is an organization that has been in the Jackson Ward community for sixty-plus years. And so we would like to work with the Jackson Ward community in any future development and hopefully improve the neighborhood and the area. Favorite food—I like just about anything.

Pechin: Nice. Thank you, Carlton. Thank you for joining us. Robert Lester. And then we'll do Brandon King after Robert.

- Lester: Okay. Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Robert Lester, and my occupation is operation manager, particularly working inside of large law firms. I'm also a member of Club 533 and the immediate past president of the club, where we have about almost 200 members over at that building on 2nd Street. One of my favorite foods is just a plain old ice cream sandwich. And the reason for my joining is it's a large-range plan but just really creating safe zones for the kids out in those communities. I'm very affected by all of the crime that's going on and these kids that are being killed and just taken away so soon. And I just—I know it has to start somewhere. So if they have better neighborhoods and things like that—better opportunities—hopefully it'll reduce the crime way down the line.
- King: Good afternoon. My name is Brandon King. I work for the City of Richmond's Office of Equitable Transit and Mobility as an operations manager. So I work with RVA Bike Share, e-scooters, and things of that nature. My favorite food—I'll say mangoes. And outcomes—I would love to see transportation—a better connected Jackson Ward overall.
- Pechin: All right. Deborah, and then Jack Berry.
- Morton: Good evening, hi. I'm Deborah Martin. I'm the deputy director for Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities. I oversee the Recreation Services division. My favorite food is chocolate cake. And I try not to eat it every weekend, but anyway. Outcomes, similar to what Maritza said. I think a plan that has buy-in from the community, that they have input, that they approve, is a plan that won't sit on the shelf, that will get implemented. So we have to be strategic in how we make sure that we include all aspects of the community in this planning process, so that when it goes to Council or HUD or wherever it has to go for approval, it doesn't get shot out the air because we have people who were not involved in the whole planning process.
- Berry: I'm Jack Berry. I'm with the Richmond Region Tourism as well as the Greater Richmond Convention Center. My favorite food is my wife's cooking. She is a fabulous cook, and I think she can hear this in the other room. And so the outcome is that I always want to see the city move forward. It takes a lot of different studies to get things moving forward. This is a huge component that I've been actually down at the convention center for over thirty years. So I've seen the old convention center way back in the day. So our time has really come for Jackson Ward and Gilpin Court. So I'm excited to be on this.
- Pechin: Oldson and then Doyle.

- Duclos: Hello all. My name is Oldson Duclos. Currently I am the campus operations coordinator over at CHAT (Church Hill Activities and Tutoring) over at the high school there. What is my favorite food? So I don't really represent that organization in this. I'm really representing myself and my family. We moved into this neighborhood in Gilpin just this year—or within the past year. So we're excited to see change happen here. My favorite food is, believe it or not, pizza. I'm a grown man who can eat pizza every single day. But what outcomes do I see? Can you hear that? Can you all hear that?
- Pechin: Yeah, we've got some background noise all of a sudden. I'm not sure where it came from. Maybe Danielle, if you're able to mute people.
- Duclos: All right, excellent. Yeah, my greatest hope for this community—for this area—really is one of prosperity, one of just being a stable place not just financially but in community. I'd like to see this place that's been fractured not just from the rest of Jackson Ward but really fractured from the city and fractured even within their community—I would love to see wholeness take place there.
- Pechin: Doyle?
- Sapp: Trying to get my video started. It's taking a little while. Good evening, I'm Doyle Sapp. I'm the superintendent of Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site in Jackson Ward. My favorite food is very unhealthy, and I don't get to eat it very often, but it would probably be chicken fried steak. But there's not really too much I would turn down except for Brussels sprouts and scrapple. Outcomes I hope—I think I'm mirroring everyone else's hopes for this—a plan that the community has ownership of and improves the community but also one that balances thoughtful development with the preservation of the historic character of Jackson Ward.
- Pechin: Awesome, thank you. Then let's see. Shawn, Josh, Danielle, and Disenio will round it out. Oh, and then Galaxy Note. Okay, so god, there's five more people. This is a good group. Shawn, go.
- Balon: I literally just joined. I was over at the People before. So Shawn Balon, executive director at Storefront for Community Design. Favorite food? So difficult, but I'll say pizza maybe. What outcomes do you have to see? I just want people to be heard and feel like they were heard with the outcome of the plan. So we're excited to help make that happen.
- Pechin: Awesome. Josh Bilder?
- Bilder: Hello? Can everyone see me?

Pechin: Yes.

Bilder: Hey, how is everyone? My name is Joshua Builder, and I'm representing my company Sterling Bilder Development. And my favorite food—I'll just say a corn beef sandwich on rye with mustard. And where should I start? I'm part of a family business and actually my grandfather worked with Vernon Henley at Consolidated Bank for about sixty-plus years. They had a lifelong friendship and relationship. I've developed many properties in Carver and Jackson Ward. I have friends who have lived in Jackson Ward, and I'm also a student of history, and the history of Jackson Ward intrigues me and is very interesting to me. And what outcomes do I see through the planning process? I would say, when I saw the plan for the light rail and for the reconnecting of Jackson Ward, I saw that and I really wanted to be a part of it, and I see a lot of opportunity in terms of development, also in terms of the community spaces that exist and could be created in the neighborhood. I also see the business incubator building on Lee Street as a community asset and something that should be paid more attention to in the city. And I'm really excited to be a part of this, so thank you for letting me be a part of it.

Pechin: Thank you, Josh. Who's Galaxy Note 8?

Lambert: It's David Lambert.

Pechin: Oh, David Lambert. Wonderful. Could you introduce yourself? Well, you just said your name, but.

Lambert: My name is David Lambert. I represent the Eye Que Optical—I'm the owner of Eye Que Optical in Jackson Ward. I represent BCL Properties. We've been around since 1965. My family business. My father was Senator Lambert, and he's been in Jackson Ward since then. Basically my favorite food is any kind of seafood and steak. I love my grandma's cooking, so anything that can match that. Her brownies are the best. And I guess the biggest thing is what outcome do I hope to get from this process—definitely to empower the Jackson Ward North community with some strong aggressive rezoning commitments that will—hold on, I'm driving, sorry.

Pechin: Focus on the driving, but yes.

Lambert: Yeah, I'm driving. I'm cool. But yeah, the process basically to empower the Jackson Ward North area and get some zoning in place so we can have some strong [indiscernible] to encourage development. We hope to develop on our little area in Jackson Ward on 1st Street to help provide a commercial corridor for that area. And like I said, just bring the people together and reunite a

community that's been disenfranchised, isolated, and disempowered. So I want to follow in my dad's footsteps and keep the service alive and keep that point going in Jackson Ward. So that's my little spiel.

Pechin: Thank you. Thank you, David. T. Knight Womack. I don't know what your first name is.

Womack: Good evening. Can you hear me?

Pechin: Yes.

Womack: Okay, my first name is Tawanya, so I just go by T. for short. I'm here representing Greater Mount Moriah. I know that Reverend Dennis would be on here if he was still here to try to help. We just want to see the outcome of the community that's surrounded by the church. And we're here to help it any way that we can. My favorite food of course is seafood. So we're just here to help any way we can.

Pechin: Thank you. Thank you, T. Yessenia and Danielle I think are the last to introduce themselves.

Revilla: Hi. My name is Yessenia Revilla. I work for the City Office of Equitable Development with Maritza. And T. just stole my favorite food. It's seafood. And I'm from Peru, so I love ceviche. And what outcomes do I hope to see through this plan? It's to see—hope the community drives this process. And two weeks ago, I visited a friend in Gilpin. When she saw the Amazon truck, we started running through the house. And I don't want to see that stress.

Pechin: Danielle?

Lake: I'll close it out here. I'm Danielle Lake. I am with LRK. We're the planning coordinator. I'm a planning architect. My favorite food is tacos. I can eat tacos every single day for the rest of my life, and I will never get tired of them. And for outcomes through this planning process, I'd like to see the community feel empowered and their voice heard and ultimately want the community to feel proud of what we put together and the actual steps moving forward. Which I think we'll do. Hearing all of your stories already, I'm feeling really excited.

So with that, I think Maritza, are you ready to move into some discussion topics? We don't have a ton of time. We knew this would take a while.

Pechin: The first meeting is always—yeah.

- Lake: It's tough. We reviewed this before, so do you want to go to the next?
- Pechin: Yeah. We kind of already reviewed this stuff that could be included. I see Carlton's hand raised, so I want to take that. But let's go to the next slide. So let's see. When do we have to go back to groups? Like at 6:50, let's say?
- Lake: Yeah. We can push a few minutes, I think. Shawn's going to send a message out to the whole group. So we can push.
- Pechin: So these are kind of introductory topics, and I want you to know that this is the beginning of the conversation. We have six more meetings and many emails and continued conversation as we move forward. And really, you know some of the people in this group I would imagine. There's probably other people, that you're making a list of people who should be thinking about the neighborhood as a whole, you know? Not just the housing, not the programming that we're going to do for people. So the neighborhood—when we think about the neighborhood, we think about the physical built environment. Parks, transportation connections, private property, public property.
- So as you think about that, pick any of these questions that spark your interest. Who are stakeholders that we definitely have to have included? We may have invited them, but they couldn't make it today. So share any names. Are there other efforts or plans that we need to review? What do you think is the most important challenge for residents in Jackson Ward as it relates to like the offerings of the neighborhood? And then also like are there things that you're doing in the work that you do in Jackson Ward that we can like amplify through this process and share with others?
- So this is a little bit of a quick conversation, and then there's going to be more kind of a teaser, shall we say. And Carlton, you had your hand raised before. So if you want to let us know what your thought was. You're muted, by the way.
- Boisseau: I didn't realize that my hand was raised, so I really don't have any questions at this point.
- Pechin: Okay.
- Male: I would suggest that some of the stakeholders—there's a tremendous amount of churches in Jackson Ward, and I don't see very much reflection of the clergy. So I don't know if there's a complete organization, but we should have representation of the churches.

- Pechin: Yeah. And we have T. from Greater Mount Moriah, but there are many more churches that need to be pulled in. Yes, thank you. Doyle?
- Sapp: You may have already invited these folks, but the Historic Jackson Ward Association would be an excellent stakeholder for this.
- Pechin: Yeah, actually I'm surprised that they're not here. They are a member of our steering committee. So maybe she had a conflict—Janice did.
- Sapp: Janice, yeah. Okay.
- Pechin: Because she has been part of that. But keep going. Are there other clubs like the 533 Club in Jackson Ward that we should be kind of pulling in, Carlton and Robert?
- Lester: Well—
- Pechin: Oh, you started talking—
- Lester: There was The Devil's Club, but that one just closed down.
- Pechin: I saw that.
- Lester: There are a couple of others over on—well, I don't know if Military Retirees is in that area. It's over on Chamberlayne. That may be a little bit out. There's a number of clubs on Chamberlayne Avenue. The Railroad Club. But I don't know if that is in that zone.
- Pechin: So it's not in the study area, but because we tore down—not me, I wasn't alive. But like we, government, tore down a huge swath of Jackson Ward, basically destroying the whole community by like eliminating 900-plus buildings, there are a lot of people who might hold Jackson Ward—and you see them Two Street Festival—as a place of like importance. And sometimes you would label that like the descending community. So I think the people who live there now should probably have the most say in what happens, but we understand that there's even more people who care about Jackson Ward from beyond the confines. So I don't really know how to capture or like—it's such a broad—there might be someone who lives in Chicago who holds a place for Jackson Ward. But I don't know. Maybe you get what I'm trying to say.
- Lester: I do know there's an overlap of membership. For example, there are members of the Club 533 that are in the Military Retirees. They're in multiple clubs, a lot

of them are. So we can reach out to some of them and let them know what's going on and see if they can spread the word. I can do that.

Pechin: Cool.

Boisseau: One organization that we missed was Masonic Temple on 2nd Street. As well as I would reach out definitely to Third Street Bethel AME Church.

Pechin: Yeah.

Male: Question. As we're talking about clubs here, would you define what do you mean by clubs? Because here on 4th Street, there's the Cobra One Club, right? Which is this motorcycle club that they're invested in Jackson Ward. They're invested in Gilpin and care for it. But I don't know much else about them other than they like motorcycles. So I want to make sure we're on the same page here.

Pechin: Yeah. Honestly, it's anyone who is engaging people and doing good work in Jackson Ward, with the Jackson Ward community. So there might be—there's all sorts of different nonprofits and groups that provide services and help with Gilpin Court residents. I don't know if like we have a full understanding of all of them, right? And it would be great through this planning process to help align efforts, so that if we identify one of the needs as we really want to provide capacity, mentorship, funding, space for small businesses and entrepreneurship—well, we don't want to have like four different groups doing that. It would be nice for them to like align.

So as we think about just entities that are doing stuff, it might not necessarily just be like neighborhood, related to the built environment. It can also be groups that are thinking about providing services and uplifting the people who live in the Jackson Ward community.

Male: Okay, thank you. That was really helpful.

Pechin: Other thoughts? So what do you guys think are—another study that I know has happened—there was a North Jackson Ward study that was done I want to say like twelve years ago, kind of creating a vision for North Jackson Ward. That's what they called that plan—the North Jackson Ward Plan. What do you think are the most important challenges for residents in Jackson Ward? And Carlton, you kind of mentioned that in part of your remarks. Deborah, were you going to say something? You unmuted.

- Morton: I was going to say, for the residents, it's probably safety. A lot of gun violence. And then transportation—being able to get around to other areas. Access, being in the food desert. And then recreation.
- Pechin: Yeah.
- Lester: And I would probably add parking. Parking is an issue out there.
- Male: I agree with everything that's been said. What I would add is beauty. It can just look really depressing out there, so beauty. And in hand with that is trash pickup. For there to just be much more regular trash pickup and not just picking up trash and recycling but also beautifying the area—picking up trash from the grounds.
- Pechin: Right, right.
- Male: I would add, as far as safety, including the crime but also some of the traffic. Speeding issues and the traffic light syncs is kind of a big issue, especially in the area of Jackson Ward that we're in. And also a certain amount of—to build on the beauty idea, the need for green space to a certain extent as well.
- Pechin: Yeah.
- Male: Building on that, green space—just more trees, right? The improvement of our air quality and just having shade as we're getting into our warmer weather. It's really hot out here. So I'd add that. And there's nothing bringing you here. There's nothing attractional. So I'm just saying there needs to be something attractional. I think there's rich history here, but I don't even know if that's maximized, right, so that we could have more of a draw.
- Pechin: Yeah, absolutely.
- Boisseau: I would add also that we look at the number of plans that we have for the Jackson Ward area. Over the years—it seems like every three to five years there's a new plan. Recently there was a Richmond 300 plan, which included part of the reconnection of Jackson Ward. Prior to that, there were other plans. There was plans for hotel development in the area. And so when you are a part of that community, you hear all these things, but you never see anything come to fruition. Nothing is ever finalized in terms of what direction will this community go in, in the future. And I think we owe it to stakeholders to have a firm idea of what we're planning to do and how we're planning to go about doing it. Because like I said, over the years—and I've been with the club for many years—we've just seen a whole bunch of stuff come and go.

Pechin: Thank you for being engaged in this one. I'm certainly sympathetic to having a lot of plans and feeling like nothing ever happens. And I think a lot of—that's one of my main goals of this process, is creating something that leads to actual things happening.

So David Lambert wrote, "Limited job opportunities, limited training, food desert. The Zoning Department is a huge issue dealing with development."

It looks like we're coming back in a minute, so that means we get zapped into a vortex and returned back. It's very jolting. So we'll add those comments in, David. So as we think about this, one of the major outcomes of the plan will most likely be rezoning property to help foster the kind of development that we want, as well as helping to align capital investment. So like how the City spends its capital budget for things like roads and streets and lights. And there's only things that we can control with zoning in our capital budget, but what people do with their private land and whether they decide to develop it—that is up to them. We cannot force them to redevelop property. And so we're just trying to create environments that encourage the kind of investment that we want to see—that the community wants to see.

So thank you guys so much. This is really just the beginning. Today was way more talking by the project team than future meetings. Future meetings will be way more talking by you guys. I'm just going to leave the breakout room because I hate it when I get like transported mid-sentence. So I will see you back in the big room.

Pechin: Why don't you go to the next one, Danielle?

Lake: Is everybody back it looks like?

Pechin: I don't think everyone's back but just—that way, yeah. Now people are coming back. Okay, we only have eight more minutes of our allotted time, and I think most people have come back.

So this is one of these wacky HUD terms. So as we kind of have been saying, the plan that—the results of this process is going to be a plan. It's going to be a document with a bunch of words and strategies and some maps that then we will implement.

So one of the HUD requirements that has been—one of the requirements we have for HUD is to do an early action activity. And so this is a physical project. It cannot be like funding staff positions or funding a program. It is a physical project that you can touch. And we have about \$200,000 allocated in the

budget to pay for the physical project that then gets done during the time of the grant. So the project would be completed by November of 2023. And so these are examples of certain projects. So one of the things we need to do—so you can have a mural. You can do bike lanes. You can do a community garden. You can do façade improvements. On and on.

And the next slide, one of the things that we're going to want your help with probably at our next meeting—and we'll also be kind of asking the community about this—is helping figure out how we're going to select what activity. These are kind of draft principles of how we think we should select the early action activity—the physical project. We would like it to be closer within Gilpin Court. We want to like not come up with something brand new but augment something that's already ongoing. And then it has to align with those HUD requirements, where it has to be a physical project.

The next—I think if you highlight the next thing. Yeah, there we go. We want to discuss these principles at our next meeting in more detail. Like, okay, do we agree that these three ideas of close to Gilpin, uplifting existing efforts, and aligning with HUD are the right ones?

And then we need help kind of selecting a bunch of ideas for projects. And so some initial ideas that we have are the Parks Department has been issuing a survey to the community to improve the park next to Calhoun with different amenities. Playground equipment or splash pad or whatever. So it would be cool to—if we could fund something like that. There could be maybe more improvements to the community garden. Those are just like two ideas. I do not want to come up with this on my own. So as you guys have ideas, please send me your ideas for like a real physical project. And it can be anywhere in the area, but we'd like it to be near the Gilpin Court community so that it helps the residents of Gilpin.

So any thoughts? I saw some coming through. Blues Armory revitalization. That is not within the study area, so that one we couldn't do unfortunately. But we are doing that as part of the City Center Small Area Plan. So that is coming. A mural project in Gilpin. That's cool. And as you come up with other ideas, just know this is a placeholder. Know that we're going to come back to this more because I need more ideas because we have to spend this money and have a real physical project implemented by like the end of next year. Next slide.

Lake: This is just the map if we have time to pause, or we can move on to the end.

Pechin: We might have to move on because we have four minutes.

Wynter: Mmm-hmm.

Lake: Okay, all right.

Pechin: And then so next steps we are undertaking. We are going to have a—can you go to the next slide? So we're going to have this resident information exchange. So this is open to all Gilpin residents. It's going to be at Fay Towers. And the purpose of it is to kind of officially kick off the planning grant process—the planning process—with the residents of Gilpin.

Two days later, we're going to have what we're calling a community expo to also kick off the projects. This is open to Gilpin residents but open to the whole community at large. It's going to be at the Hippodrome. And at that meeting, we're asking representatives who represent all of those other projects that I mentioned that are happening in Jackson Ward—like the Reconnect project, the Belvidere, the blah blah blah, the blah blah blah—we're asking them all to come so they can answer any questions people may have. So that's going to be a big event. I mean, we're doing it at the Hippodrome. We really hope that we'll get a good turnout there.

The steering committee is meeting May 24th. Then in June, we're having the Resident Listening Workshop, followed by a Community Listening Workshop. And that's going to be at Gallery Five.

And then we want to know if—our next working group meeting we're planning for July 26th. So that's the next time we'll meet. So we'll have a little bit of time before we see you guys all over again. And so we want to know do you think our next meeting of this group should be in person or virtual. And the main homework—and we'll follow up with you via email on this—is to help us recruit and identify other people to join the working group, attend one of these engagement efforts—so if you're aligned more with Gilpin residents, maybe you go to that one. Or if you're aligned more with the community, you could go to both. You could go to all of them. All this information is on our website, which is at JacksonWardChoice.com. Next slide.

All right. I kind of zoomed through that because we just took a little bit of time. Two minutes for Q&A.

Stuckey: I just had one quick question. This is Ralph Stuckey. The dates and things you just shared, is that publicly—how is that being distributed and shared throughout the community?

- Pechin: So we just launched that website, and then we have a flier. And so we're going to be distributing it to the networks. I mean, we're going to want you guys to help us share information about these meetings. And then here's the website. So those meeting dates are all on the website too right there.
- Wynter: And word of mouth too. I mean, you know of a meeting, you know of folks that are interested—please tell your neighbors, friends, acquaintances, colleagues, bosses, nephews, nieces, cousins. Tell everyone. Let's get involved. Again, we want this to be a true community engagement process. Please let them know that we're having meetings. We've launched the website. We're going to do social media to get everybody engaged as well.
- Female: Is it a push for the residents of Gilpin to be at the Hippodrome? At the Community Expo at the Hippodrome. And if so, how did y'all go about doing that?
- Wynter: We are going to start handing out fliers, talking to Gilpin residents, looking at ways that we can contact our Gilpin community to see how they can attend all the meetings for the community engagement process.
- Female: Thank you.
- Wynter: I spoke with the Gilpin Tenant Council as well to go on Facebook and other media outlets that we can use. So again, our push is to get everyone involved as much as possible. Please spread the word. Let everybody know that we're having these meetings in order to have a true community engagement process. Go ahead.
- Stuckey: As soon as we can get this information, we can start putting it out.
- Wynter: As a matter of fact, Danielle put in the chat that this will be sent out to folks. So be on the lookout to get the information.
- Pechin: And most of the communication is coming from Angela Fountain, who is the communications director for RRHA. So when you see her name, don't delete it.
- Lake: Yes, so just in the chat I added the website for you all to visit, which has all the upcoming meetings. There is a location as well to download the Community Plan Overview. It's a general flier about what we're doing here, and it's also the second link I added into the chat as well. And you can download that, and like Desi said, we'll be disseminating all this information—slides, syllabus, and the meetings ahead—to the entire group. So you'll have all those resources as well.

- Female: Sorry, quick question on that. I opened up the links you sent. And maybe I just didn't see it, but is there a flier with the specific dates that are on this slide? So that if we could, yeah, just share with people who can join our teams or the residents. I know you said you'll mail them out to residents but just wondering if residents that we're connected with.
- Lake: So we have a version of it set up so far which has the list of events and activities that we're sending to the working groups. The flier that we have currently on the website is a bit more generalized to show when things are happening over the two-year grant term. But on the website, it has the specific events. We can absolutely create a flier that has all of those dates listed so it's easy for everyone to share. So thank you for that suggestion. We'll make sure that gets out to the group.
- Pechin: So just to—HUD requires us to do specific Gilpin resident engagement activities just to make sure that the residents have their own forum for kind of addressing their specific needs, which are different than the rest of the community. Residents are 100 percent invited, encouraged to participate in the community events. It's just more that we recognize and HUD recognizes that residents have very specific questions that are different from the general community.
- Male: And so the question for me is—so the residents—the Community Expo is for everyone. The residents is the listening workshop, the information exchange. Basically things that are at Fay Towers.
- Pechin: Right. And those will be the only two resident-only events. After that, it's all like combined.
- Male: Okay.
- Stuckey: So my question is—because I think it's important in terms of—this is Ralph Stuckey again—when we start talking about engaging residents in a very meaningful way, what efforts are we going to have to ensure that residents are at the Community Expo and these other greater engagements? Because I don't want the residents to feel like they're isolated and they're only a part of—they're not part of the big picture.
- Female: Exactly.
- Stuckey: So my question is what can we do—and I'm talking about Resident Services, I'm talking about RRHA—to ensure that our families are part of and feeling engaged and included. I know I can lean on Tim from STEP. He has a big van

that he loves to drive. I just found this out. But I think it's important that we make our residents feel included and whole, and we're willing to look at—I think this is Keisha talking, right? I hear Keisha on there. I think we could look at what are the ways that we could do that. Because I don't want the residents to feel like, hey, they're downtown talking about this, and we're over here talking about that, and we're not a part of that. Just the perception of it, the optics of it, I think is very, very important. And what we need to do in terms of resources and things to assist that that happens—to ensure that that happens—I mean, we're willing to do it.

Female: I mean, the reality is—

Wynter: What I would recommend to the entire group that we're talking to tonight is please—you have our email communication. I think Ralph makes a very good point. Let us know how we can also reach out to our resident families, okay? We don't have the answers for everything. We are going to try—I haven't used that we are aware of—but I do think that word of mouth, talking to families. I spoke with someone a couple weeks ago. I do plan to—she said go knocking on doors. And I do plan to go knocking on doors, handing out fliers, inviting them personally to come to the meetings. But let us know. We will try to engage what we can. Ralph talks about a van. That's one way that we can do it. But let us know how we can get our families engaged in the process as well.

Stuckey: All right, I have some other questions, Desi. I don't want to keep people, but I can talk to you tomorrow.

Wynter: Yeah, you're in between dinnertime.

Stuckey: I know, right.

Pechin: Well, thank you for everyone for staying six minutes over. Please know this is the beginning of the conversation. If at all you felt that you couldn't share what you felt like you wanted to share in the group, please reach out to us. As you sit and you think about this stuff at home, please reach out to us, and let's continue the conversation as we look to redevelop Gilpin Court and plan for the future of Jackson Ward as a whole.

Wynter: Okay, thank you. Have a good night.