Plan Cincinnati: Evaluation of NorthPointe Plan

Shown in italics are excerpts from Plan Cincinnati, “the official document guiding future planning and development in the City of Cincinnati.” We used the standards of this document to assess of NorthPointe’s proposal, laid out by each relevant guiding principle it names.

*During the course of the public participation process of Plan Cincinnati, a series of themes arose as the “Big Ideas” of the Plan. These ideas were brought up many times, by a variety of people, as early as the very first meetings. These “Big Ideas” became the overall principles guiding the goals, strategies, action steps and their detailed tasks that are the policies set forth in this plan.*

* *Increase our population.*
  + Creates new housing
* *Build on our assets.*

**X** Bulldozes all existing well-loved community assets on land—basketball courts, 12-year-old community garden, and small open green

**X** Lacks affordability for families of adjacent Rothenberg Preparatory Academy

* *Be aggressive and strategic in future growth and development.*
  + Offers potential increase in tax base

**X** Provides no structure to ensure that jobs go to local underemployed

* *Spend public funds more strategically.*

**X** Uses public land for private development while offering no significant public gain

**X** Uses government-owned and subsidized existing building to create 8 units of “workforce housing” at

60 – 100% AMI, instead of lower affordability where subsidy is needed most

* *Develop a culture of health embodied by thriving residents.*

**X** Reduces and downgrades recreation and green space for healthy play and exercise

**X** Bulldozes existing organic community garden with 18 years’ worth of cultivation for accessible healthy produce, in favor of a new aesthetically different garden with a smaller footprint.

* *Preserve our resources and facilitate sustainable development.*

**X** Contributes to ongoing trend of offering public resources to a private development process that prioritizes amenities for wealthy newcomers over needs of existing low-income community

* *Strengthen community organizations.*

**X** When confronted with residents’ concerns at OTRCC meeting in March of 2015, NorthPointe representatives stated that the developer would meet with residents for further input and discussion; no such meeting has been offered or attended by NorthPointe. After OTRCC rescinded its support of the plan, NorthPointe held the position that, due to boundary disputes, input and approval from OTRCC was not needed or valid.

**X** NorthPointe has opted not to engage representatives from Rothenberg Preparatory Academy, nor from three community-based nonprofits that remain publicly active with residents on this issue.

* *Lead by example to strengthen our region.*

**X** This plan takes no initiative to model strengths achieved by cities of other regions in efforts toward equitable development (i.e. Community Benefits Agreements, affordable housing creation, community land trust/coops, etc.)

As this is a residential development, the “Live” goals and strategies of Plan Cincinnati are worth special consideration.

***Live Goals and Strategies***

***1.  Build a robust public life.***

*A.  Develop and maintain inviting and****engaging public spaces****that encourage social interaction between different types of people.*

*B.  Create a****welcoming****civic atmosphere.*

***2.  Create a more livable community.***

*A.  Become more****walkable****.*

*B.****Support and stabilize****our neighborhoods.*

***3. Provide a full spectrum of housing options, and improve housing quality and affordability.***

*A.  Provide****quality healthy housing****for all income levels.*

*B.  Incentivize housing options of varied sizes and types for residents at all****stages of life****.*

*C.****Evenly distribute****housing that is affordable throughout the City.*

*D. Affirmatively further****fair housing***

**X** Given the plan’s removal of public space valued by the existing community, the lack of transparency and opportunity for community input on the part of city administrators and the developer, and the strikingly exclusive price points for the intended housing, it is difficult to give this proposal anything but a failing grade by our city’s standards. We can do better, especially with land collectively owned and controlled by we the taxpayers of Cincinnati!

NorthPointe’s current plan meets very few of these goals, and does so at the expense of several other goals. Furthermore, the goals it does meet are already being met by the market; this kind of development does not need our public assistance. To privatize this land for this result is to squander a rare opportunity to realize the inclusive development we all say we desire.