

River North Master Plan

2nd PLANNING TEAM MEETING

Monday, July 28, 2008

6:00 PM

Cliff Morton Development & Business Services Building (One Stop)
1901 S. Alamo, 2nd Floor, Training Rooms A & B

MEETING MINUTES

Planning Teams Members in attendance: George A. Geis, Suzanne Scott, Don Ryden, John Kenny, Scott Smith, Dr. Marion Oettinger, Ben Brewer, III, Glenn Huddleston, Timothy Cone, Cathey Meyer, Howard Peak, David Bogle, Mary Kay Martinez, Michael Westheimer, Murray Van Eman, Manjiri Akalkotkar, Marcie Ince, Lewis. T. Tarver, David Marquez, Bill Myers, Billy Cavender, Lynda Billa Burke, Carol Harris, David Adelman, Harper Huddleston, Quinn Edmondson, Terri Rubiola

Planning Team Alternates in attendance: Anne Bristol, Dean Perry, Norbert Hart for Angel Vasquez

Visitors in Attendance: 15

6:00 - 6:05 **Welcome** – Pat DiGiovanni, Deputy City Manager, welcomed the Planning Team members. He reviewed the items on the meeting’s agenda. He stated that staff received one email regarding questions pertaining to the MOU, and that staff addressed this and emailed the response to the Planning Team members.

6:05 – 6:15 **Finalize Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** – Nina Nixon-Mendez, Planning Manager, reviewed the meeting handouts and revised timeline. She then reviewed the draft MOU. She reported that an email was received from Mr. Geis just around noon that day with question regarding if the Planning Team composition reflected the Unified Development Code provision. Ms. Susan Guinn from the City Attorney’s Office responded that the UDC provides guidance; however, the Planning Team composition was defined by the City Council ordinance and that the ordinance is final. Ms. Meyer inquired if the MOU were to be adopted does that mean that the Planning Team is endorsing the July 2008 draft document? Ms. Nixon-Mendez responded that the MOU sets forth an understanding of how the planning process will work and is not an endorsement of the July 2008 draft River North Master Plan. Mr. Glen Huddleston expressed concerns about numbers 7, 8, 9, and 10 of the MOU. Ms. Nixon- Mendez stated that these are referenced in chronological order. During the planning process, the Planning Team will identify concerns of the Planning Team, will identify concerns of the public through public meetings, and taking all of these concerns and comments into account will recommend edits to the plan. The final draft would be a result of this process. Mr. Huddleston suggested a clarification be made in the MOU that this will be the plan that has been agreed upon by consensus by all of the members of the Planning

Team. Discussion ensued on this suggestion, and the Planning Team was unable to agree on this. Mr. Peak commented on number 6 of the MOU that references the draft plan, and asked if conceivably the plan draft may not survive. Mr. DiGiovanni stated that the City Council wanted to use the draft plan as the starting point. He clarified that by signing the MOU that members are not supporting the draft plan and it would not obligate anyone. He stated that if a member did not want to sign the MOU, that is his or her option, and the rest of the group will move forward. Mr. DiGiovanni asked the sentiment of the group, and the majority indicated that they would sign the MOU. The MOU was circulated for signature.

6:15 – 6:30 **General Session: Document Question & Answer** – Ms. Nixon-Mendez reviewed the sub-committee membership and introduced the facilitators and conference room locations for each sub-committee. Visitors were invited to make comments on the plan in the Training Room B area during the sub-committee meetings. She announced that staff will be recording sub-committee comments on easel pads. Staff will also record questions for the consultants on the easel pads. Ms. Nixon-Mendez asked if there were any overarching questions for the sub-committees to consider. She then asked for any specific questions for other sub-committees and distributed the comment cards. Members noted their comments on cards which were then collected by staff. Ms. Meyer inquired if minutes would be taken during the sub-committee meetings. Ms. Nixon-Mendez reiterated that the comments and ideas would be noted on easel pads, summarized and reported at the next meeting.

6:30 – 6:40 **Discuss Consultant Visit and Meeting Format** – Ms. Nixon-Mendez discussed the format for the consultant’s visit and recommended a presentation followed by a questions and answers period. She requested that questions for the consultants be provided to staff by August 4th so that the consultant will have the questions in advance of the August 11th meeting. Ms. Nixon-Mendez reviewed the ground rules for the sub-committee work group discussions (hand out).

6:40 – 7:45 **Break into Sub-committee Work Groups** – The sub-committees convened to discuss their assigned plan sections and to address questions/comments received on comment cards from other Planning Team members. Two staff facilitators accompanied each sub-committee and noted work group comments on easel pads.

7:45 – 8:00 **Large Group Report Out** - The sub-committee point persons reported to the larger group.

- Group 1 - Mr. Cone reported the work group’s comments:
 - Link the area north of IH-35 to Downtown (not just Pearl Brewery)
 - Improvements along the San Antonio River should be physically distinct
 - Are the proposed locations for parks conceptual? Why were these specific locations chosen?
 - Open space should incorporate the plans of the River Improvement Project and build on them
 - Is the plan advocating to put a separate pedestrian facility adjacent to the San Antonio River where there is a substantial elevation grade differential and if so, would this not be duplicating the River Improvement Project effort?

- Concerns about 20 story building height in the River Corridor and potential “canyonization”
- Will the RIO overlay continue to function? How will new zoning and RIO districts interact/relate?
- Guiding Principles (Appendix A) should incorporate guidance on density
- Group 2 – Mr. Westheimer reported the work group’s comments:
 - Develop the streetscape of Broadway and incorporate public art, traffic calming, and wider sidewalks.
 - Avenue B stops at McCullough; therefore, it would be more logical for mass transit to be located on Broadway
 - Development intensities along Broadway should not be limited to mid size buildings
- Group 3 – Ms. Meyer reported the work group’s comments:
 - Need clarification on what is a park and what is open space
 - Need for pocket parks for residential areas
 - Why is a park planned near a sewage treatment facility?
 - Are safety issues being taken into consideration when planning for parks and open space?
 - Will the plan eliminate the space under the interstates and other key areas to watch the parades along Broadway which has been a community tradition?
 - The group compiled many questions for the consultants.
- Group 4 – Ms. Harris reported the work group’s comments:
 - Were property owners notified of the new streets and connections proposed in the plan?
 - Why were the new streets proposed? Need more justification.
 - Concerned about how to exit from the freeways to the Park Once areas?
 - Are the proposed locations for Park Once conceptual? Why were the sites selected? Did the consultant contact property owners about this concept?
 - Need to distinguish between one and two-way streets in plan (unclear).

8:00 **Closing Comments** – Pat DiGiovanni emphasized the importance of working within the process. There should be a mutual understanding that comments and discussion need to take place within the planning team. A lack of respect for the process could undermine the outcome of the planning team’s work.

Next Steps – After group discussion on the proposed days and hours for the Planning Team meeting, Ms. Nixon-Mendez confirmed the 3rd Planning Team Meeting would take place on Monday, August 11, 2008, 4 to 8 p.m. The consultant will deliver a one and one-half hour presentation to be followed by questions and answers. The meeting will take place at the Cliff Morton Development & Business Services Building (One Stop), 1901 S. Alamo, 2nd Floor, Training Rooms A & B. She announced that the 1st Public Meeting was tentatively scheduled for Monday, August 25, 2008, and that the location for the meeting would be announced at the next Planning Team meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.

Minutes prepared by Nina Nixon-Mendez, Planning Manager, 207-2893 or nina.nixon-mendez@sanantonio.gov