

River North Master Plan

6th PLANNING TEAM MEETING

Monday, October 6, 2008

5:30 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: David Adelman, Christine Vina for Manjiri Akalkotkar, Lynda Billa Burke, David Bogle, Ben Brewer III, Timothy Cone, Quinn Edmondson, George A. Geis, Carol Harris, Harper Huddleston, Glen Huddleston, Marcie Ince, John Kenny, David Marquez, Mary Kay Martinez, Pedro Martinez for Sam Mills, Bill Myers, Dr. Marion Oettinger, Howard Peak, Terri Rubiola, Don Ryden, Suzanne Scott, Scott Smith, Lewis T. Tarver, Murray H. Van Eman, Michael Westheimer

Planning Team Alternates in attendance: Dean Perry

Visitors in Attendance: 10

5:45 – 6:00 **Welcome / Opening Presentation** – T. C. Broadnax, Assistant City Manager welcomed the Planning Team, and discussed the ground rules and process to reach consensus on final recommendations for changes.

6:00 – 8:30 **Review, Discuss & Reach Consensus on Recommended Changes to Chapters (refer to hand out)**

Chapter 1

Nina Nixon-Mendez presented the items from Chapter 1 of the River North Master Plan to be considered by consent. Discussion occurred on items that should be removed from the consent agenda. Mr. Glen Huddleston asked that the items related to the Parks section be considered individually, and he felt that section should be eliminated.

Changes were requested to the wording: Provide authentic civic and cultural attractions that generate visitors to surrounding districts. “Authentic” should be deleted and “based on local history and culture” should be added after attractions. The Planning Team agreed to this amendment.

The Planning Team agreed to the consent items.

Andrea Gilles presented the item for individual consideration related to adding public art language to the plan. Lewis Tarver spoke in favor of adding a section or chapter in addition to inserting as an overarching goal. Another member recommended that it potentially could be integrating the streetscape section. Discussion ensued. Mr. Tarver

volunteered to work with staff to write language for consideration at the next meeting. The Planning Team consented.

Chapter 2, Vision

Nina Nixon-Mendez presented the consent items for consideration. She noted that the phrase “with potential towers that may extend to 20 stories” should be struck and to add “to high-rise” after mid-rise.

Glen Huddleston asked that the sections pertaining to Parks be removed from the consent agenda with exception with the area near the San Antonio Museum of Art. Ms. Nixon-Mendez stated that these would be considered individually.

The section pertaining to transit route should be removed for individual consideration.

Suzanne Scott asked that a sentence be added to the last paragraph on p. 2:11: “Implementation should be coordinated through VIA’s transit master planning process.” This was a staff oversight and should have been included with the consent items. The Planning Team agreed to put it on consent. Ms. Nixon-Mendez stated that staff would go through the document and make sure the approved changes are consistent throughout the document.

David Adelman suggested that the section regarding the street trolley be considered individually, that this should be linked to the discussion that would occur later in the mobility section.

George Geis asked for a copy of the actual pages that reflects all of the changes. Ms. Nixon-Mendez agreed.

The Planning Team asked that the reference to RIO-2 in the new language to be inserted on p. 2:9 be clarified by adding “zoning overlay district.”

Another amendment was requested to a consent item by Ms. Vina: p. 2:19, correct spelling of “compliment.”

The Planning Team agreed to the consent items.

Discussion ensued regarding the linear parks/open space concept. Several points of view were expressed including the potential for regulatory takings, need for landscaping along the River banks, enhancing the private/public realm along the River and nothing that buildings should not turn their bank along the River. Ben. Brewer stated that the consultants thought there could be refinement on the variation of setbacks and diversity of spaces along the River. He asked that the Planning Team be open minded to this concept when the Regulatory section is reviewed. Discussion ensued on the topic of not labeling parks on private property.

T.C. Broadnax asked Andrea Gilles to present options prepared by staff concerning the parks concept. Ms. Gilles presented two alternatives. Staff looked at ways to maintain the concept but representing it differently than the plan currently does. The first concept showed Park Area 1 and Park Area 2, removed Park 3 and Park 4, and slimmed down the

landscaping along the River to represent the current RIO-2 buffer. A second option outlined general areas where parks could be encouraged. She asked if the group wanted to pull the concept completely or if staff could still work with the concept using one of these two alternatives and bring back next meeting. Staff could remove specific wording referencing location, if desired. Discussion ensued.

T.C. Broadnax summarized the two points being made in the discussion: Some of the Planning Team members did not like the concept of a string of parks. Others agreed with the concept, recognizing that it is a concept only. Planning Team members continued to offer comments regarding this item.

Ms. Gilles asked if staff could work on some language in light of the Planning Team's comments to bring back for consideration at the next meeting. T. C. Broadnax stated that this language will include some of the concepts discussed including parks, green space, and open space. The Planning Team agreed.

A short recess was taken.

Andrea Gilles presented the items for individual consideration:

- 1) Street trolley route. Michael Westheimer asked if the actual route determination would be made by VIA Metropolitan Transit. Christine Vina of VIA suggested that the transportation section address what this group would like to see in terms of a circulator or connecting to a wider route. Ben Brewer stated that the consultants selected this proposed route to encourage visitor traffic from downtown to connect with neighborhoods. The trolley consultant talked the planners out of Broadway because it could prevent wider sidewalks, eliminate parking and seriously affect retail. Thus the consultants suggested Avenue B for the route northbound, and St. Mary's southbound. He added that this particular project will probably require a whole other planning study.

Dr. Oettinger suggested that we should look at specialized routes as well as the larger and wider route such as Broadway. David Adelman stated that access to the River North neighborhood is walkable from Broadway and that Broadway should be the transit corridor. There may be challenges such as sacrificing parking and turn lanes, but incredible development happens along major transit corridors that outweighs these considerations. He has visited Salt Lake City where cars share the lane with the street car, and it works well. Lewis Tarver suggested that the kind of service regarding the connection or circulation should be described without assigning a route.

Andrea Gilles summarized the options that the group expressed during their discussion:

- a) maintain route and infuse other language regarding the intent re: circulation, connection
- b) show the route along Broadway

More Planning Team discussion ensued. Members asked staff to look at it from the corridor perspective and work on the text in the document.

- 2) Broadway – building height. Discussion ensued. Ms. Gilles commented that Neighborhood Plans do refer to low-mid rise or mid-high rise, but the specifics as to how many stories would be addressed in the Regulating Plan. The Planning Team agreed to the wording of mid-high rise on Broadway.
- 3) Madison Square Park – Staff presented new language that addressed historic resources, employment generators, Quincy as an access road to the Interstate. The Vision I subcommittee asked for alternative language to add to this section to include these points. Discussion ensued on the historic resources in the area. Ms. Nixon-Mendez addressed the idea behind creating historic blocks by moving a historic structure from a block which does not possess good integrity, to another block with good integrity to fill in. This would free up the first block for new infill development. Discussion ensued. Murray Van Eman stated that the plan should recognize the diverse types of development of River North, and that it is a very unique area of River North. The Planning Team agreed to the language.
- 4) Affordable housing. John Kenny suggested that language be added regarding affordable housing. He volunteered to draft the language and get to staff to be considered at the next meeting.

Chapter 2, Parks and Open Space

Andrea Gilles presented the consent items. Amendment offered to the consent items were:

- 2.44 Conceptual Public Realm Plan plan – delete second “plan”
 - 2.43 Given the significance of water – delete “significance” and insert “importance;” add “use” after water
 - 2.44 Cleansing pond full of floating aquatic plants – delete “full”
- The Planning Team agreed to the consent items with the amendments.

The Planning Team also agreed that staff should bring back different language for parks/green space and open space.

Chapter 2, Mobility

Andrea Gilles presented the consent items.

It was recommended that wording be amended: to “small and varied”
The Planning Team agreed to the consent items.

Ms. Gilles presented the items for individual consideration:

Ms. Gilles proposed two options for streets:

- a) Keep the maps as is and consider as conceptual.
- b) Modify the maps where the new streets were removed but a general area (not parcel specific) is shaded where a traffic/circulation study is warranted.

The Planning Team agreed to option b.

Ms. Gilles summarized what would be brought back to the Planning Team at the next meeting. Staff will bring back new language for parks/open space/green space section; trolley issue and map; public art; and mixed income housing.

The meeting was adjourned.

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