



DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

April 16, 2009
7:30 a.m.
City Council Chambers, Upper Level
57 E First Street

Members Present

Jeff Jarvis, Chair
Vern Mathern
Linda Flick
Kari Cluff
Gary Gallagher
Dean Taylor

Members Absent

Adam Decker
Steve Chucri
Gregory Holtz

Others Present

John Wesley
Tom Ellsworth
Angelica Guevara
Lesley Davis
Gordon Sheffield

Mike James
Christine Zielonka
Mark Soronson
Others

1. Call to Order

The April 16, 2009 meeting of the Downtown Development Committee was called to order at 7:30 a.m. at the City council Chambers, Upper Level 57 E. First Street by Chair Jeff Jarvis.

2. Approval of Minutes of the December 18, 2009 Meeting:

It was moved by Linda Flick and seconded by Vern Mathern to approved the minutes as revised.

The vote passed unanimously

- A. Discuss and Take Action on an Application for a Special Use Permit Case No. ZA09-001TC to allow the development of a Comprehensive Sign Plan in the TCB-1 zoning district at 58 North Country Club Drive.

Angelica Guevara explained this was an application for a comprehensive sign plan. There are currently signs on the south side of the building. The owner was requesting to place signage on the north and east elevations. The request was for four attached signs totaling 84 square feet. Two of the four signs would be for lease signs.

Boardmember Linda Flick was concerned that allowing the two internally illuminated for lease signs would set a precedent.

It was moved by Vern Mathern and seconded by Dean Taylor to recommend approval of Case No. ZA09-001TC for a Special Use Permit for a Comprehensive Sign Plan, with the following stipulations:

1. Full compliance with approved plans and all current Code requirements, unless modified through the appropriate review and conditions outlined below.
2. Compliance with the sign plan provided with this submittal.
3. A maximum of 30% of window coverage with signage is allowed. Existing window signage shall be removed to allow 70% of the windows to remain transparent.
4. Existing freestanding internally illuminated monument sign shall be retrofitted to provide an opaque background so that only the sign copy is illuminated.
5. Compliance with all requirements of the Building Safety Division with regard to the issuance of building permits.

Vote: 6 – 0

Hear a presentation from the Transportation Department on Central Mesa High Capacity Transit Alternatives Analysis Locally Preferred Alternative Recommendation

Mike James, Deputy Transportation Director, explained the City has been looking at extending high capacity transit from the Sycamore Transit Center into the downtown area. He explained input from the community, stakeholders, and an internal tech team has resulted in a locally preferred alternative. They are hoping to go to City Council May 18, 2009 with a final recommendation. He then introduced Marc Soronson, Metro's Project manager, to present the findings and recommend to the Committee.

Mr. Soronson explained the slide show presents the recommendations that will be made to City Council. He stated they were holding a public meeting the evening of April 16, 2009. He stated it was becoming clear the corridor should continue out to Gilbert Road. However, the regional transportation plan only showed the corridor going out to Mesa Drive. The regional transportation plan did not have funding out to Gilbert Road. There was a lot of public support for improved Link BRT service out to the ASU polytech campus and Gateway. He stated they were seeing a lot of interest in mandating communities to have land use policies in place for federally funded projects. The preliminary recommendation was for Main Street to be the alignment of choice to Mesa Drive with an end of the line station just to the east of LeSueur, in front of the Temple. Mr. Soronson reviewed the reasoning for this recommendation, the funding, and the approval process.

Mr. Soronson stated they tried to be careful to study the sensitivities of the downtown. The Main Street alternative provides the best access to downtown events such as the Mesa Arts Center. The two alternatives of 1st Avenue and 1st Street would require additional property purchases to provide the turn-outs, would slow down the time to get through the downtown, and put the project over the 194 million dollar budget. There were two alternatives for the Main Street alignment; one would be a two lane street configuration the other would be a four lane street configuration. There would need to be street widening at Robson and Country Club for the four-lane option. They were still reviewing whether to use two-lane or four-lane configurations. He stated they had been asked by Downtown Mesa Association to look at using angled parking to create additional on-street parking. He stated their research had shown angled parking can work. He stated they could have an interim park and ride lot at the west side of LeSueur for about 200 to 300 spaces, they were thinking that could be a lease so the property could be left for economic development in the future. Ultimately they would like to go to Gilbert Road where there could be land to accommodate the appropriate land for park and ride.

On the construction side, the downtown stakeholders had asked them to look at how they might be able to stage construction to minimize the impact to those merchants during their peak season which is in the winter. He stated they could restrict construction between Hibbert and Country Club to summer months. Then flip flop the construction to the west half of the project during the winter months. He stated they would continue to work with the downtown stakeholders to preserve the uniqueness of the downtown area.

Boardmember Gary Gallagher confirmed the cost from Mesa Drive to Gilbert would be 150 million dollars? They had not done any engineering review so depending on the utilities it could be relatively simple to construct since the street is wider through that stretch. Mr. Gallagher also confirmed they were not working with the State yet regarding the expansion to Gilbert. Mr. Gallagher questioned the timeframe for building the project. Mr. Soronson stated they were looking at different ways to complete the project as quickly as possible.

Chair Jeff Jarvis confirmed there was a good demand for light rail out of the east valley. Mr. Soronson stated there were a lot of riders going to ASU. There were several spaces at the Sycamore park and ride that are used for 2 – 3 hour intervals because of the ASU traffic, which was something they had not expected. Mr. Jarvis

confirmed they had looked at extending to Gilbert because of the access to both the freeways and access into the Town of Gilbert. He questioned how light rail would impact the character of downtown; for instance the parades. Mr. James stated downtown is unique and it is a pedestrian place. They understand that and they think the light rail can enhance the pedestrian character. He thought it could be a catalyst to the town center concept that was developed in 2000. He confirmed that pass through traffic along Main Street would probably be diverted to University and Broadway because traveling along Main would be less convenient. He also confirmed that University and Broadway could handle the increase in traffic. Mr. James stated that for people who want to get to downtown by car could use First Avenue and First Street which actually have better access to parking. This would be like Mill Avenue which encourages pedestrian traffic and has outdoor cafes. Mr. Jarvis questioned where parades would go. Mr. James thought they would be along Center. Mr. Jarvis questioned the difference between economic development along BRT versus light rail. Mr. Soronson stated they had not seen the economic development drivers related to BRT. He stated Metro had documented about 6 billion dollars of investment along the 20 mile corridor. He stated they had not seen that investment from bus routes. Mr. Soronson stated the light rail provides a consistent travel time.

Boardmember Vern Mathern stated he was very pleased that they are looking at Main. He stated we should slow down traffic along Main and make it more pedestrian friendly.

It was moved by Gary Gallagher and seconded by Kari Cluff that the Committee recommend to the City Council approval of the staff recommendation.

Hear a presentation from Development and Sustainability on Progress made to date on the Zoning Ordinance Update including Module 3

Zoning Administrator, Gordon Sheffield went over the changes to residential and commercial districts proposed in Module 2.

Mr. Sheffield explained that Module 3 deals with overlay districts. Mr. Sheffield stated that the Airfield district had been completely re-written. The intent was to make sure everyone including renters/leasers are notified they are close to an airport.

The AS overlay will basically remain the same. The only change will be to make allow administrative review in cases where a spouse under age 55 wants to remain in their home alone after their spouse's death or other circumstance.

BIZ, PAD and DMP overlays: Allows City Council to modify what is required by Code; reduce parking or setbacks, or allow for taller buildings. PAD is typically used for residential and are plan specific. The change will be to refocus the PAD and BIZ

so they accomplish different things for different reasons. BIZ will be used more for small projects usually only one building, where PAD applications will be for projects with multiple buildings. The revisions will establish criteria to qualify for a bonus: such as higher quality design; voluntary green building; use difficult building sites; build on in-fill sites; allow taller buildings in certain areas. Another thing that could qualify for a bonus would be to allow inclusionary housing. PAD would create a better place by allowing multiple types of uses within a project. The idea being the different uses work together as a whole. DMP would be for large scale projects that are built out over several years.

HP and HL overlays: Historic Preservation is for multiple sites, they tend to be for neighborhoods. Historic Landmarks are for unique individual properties the community feels are worth preserving. For the most part they are staying the same. The language is changing to line the language up with national language. The problem is people who are used to working with Historic Districts don't understand Mesa's language.

In-Fill District is a new district. IN will be for properties over 2.5 acres. This district will allow bonuses for people who develop in-fill properties. It will allow the Zoning Administrator to allow deviations to Code to keep requirements similar to what is surrounding them. These sites would be similar to the DIP process for sites under 2.5 acres, but the IN would be established by City Council so people developing in those areas would not need to go through the public hearing process. Chair Jarvis was concerned that this not lower the quality of the developments. Boardmember Flick was concerned with the wording "permit processes incentives to stimulate investment in these areas that would contribute to the creation of employment opportunities for low and very low income individuals". She thought that would imply the City is looking for a lower standard development. Also the FAR increases being tied to the percentage of permanent employment to targeted applicants. Mr. Sheffield agreed with the concerns. He thought it would be very difficult to monitor job creation and whether they keep those jobs. He explained this is how in-fill projects work in California. Ms. Flick confirmed the 10 year requirement for DIP applications would not apply for IN districts.

Mr. Sheffield explained Module 3 also deals with landscape requirements. The revisions would allow substitution of fewer, larger trees for the Code required numbers. Chair Jarvis agreed with the changes but stated there are other things that can be used like fountains, water features, trellises, ramadas. The revisions would also allow for averaging of foundation base landscaping, so you get the same numbers but they are distributed differently. The hope being there would be more interesting groupings of landscaping and outdoor seating areas. The hope was also to eliminate the need for SCIP applications for projects that are increasing by less than 20% and allow staff to work with the applicants on landscaping issues.

Parking changes would include shared parking analysis; ratios for bicycle and motorcycle parking; allowing some small additions to be done without requiring additional parking; and authorizes the use of compact parking stalls. Specifies pedestrian connections and tries to simplify the loading standards. The ratios, for the most part, remain the same; there are some that will need to be changed. He explained that for Fiesta Mall the parking requirement is currently for each use within

the mall even though people go the mall and typically shop at more than one store and often eat at one of the restaurants or in the food court, so shared parking analysis would recognize peak periods. Shared parking analysis would the same space to be counted for different uses within the project. The revision would also allow the Zoning Administrator to look at alternative dust proof materials and allow reduced parking requirements when people use alternative parking such as valet parking and off-site parking. Chair Jarvis stated the document also mentions transit. Mr. Jarvis questioned where the 500 foot came from. Mr. Jarvis stated that people who take transit to a location will walk more than 500 feet to their destination. Boardmember Flick stated that in some mixed use areas some of the uses are amenities to the other uses such as restaurants within office developments, so the restaurant parking should be shared with the offices.

6. Adjournment

With there being no further business, this meeting of the Downtown Development Committee adjourned at 9:17 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John Wesley, Secretary
Planning Director

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