

MIDTOWN *Brackenridge* SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

PUBLIC WORKSHOP #2

OCTOBER 23, 2010, 9 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

TRIPPOINT (3233 NORTH ST. MARY'S STREET)

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Get validation from the participants on how the information from the first public workshop was incorporated into the planning process.
- Identify the elements that participants think are most important to incorporate into the street sections.
- Get general agreement to proceed with further development of the concepts presented for the Master Plan.

OUTREACH AND ATTENDANCE

MidTown Brackenridge stakeholders and the general public were informed of the workshop through the use of neighborhood association contacts, the project stakeholder e-mail list, direct mail postcards to property owners, workshop posters displayed at various businesses in the area, as well as newspaper notices. E-mail notices were sent to attendees who signed in with an e-mail address at the first public workshop as well as neighborhood associations to disseminate to their constituents. The postcards and posters that were sent and posted in the TIRZ area prior to the first public meeting included information for this public workshop. Councilwoman Mary Alice Cisneros included a notice in her weekly e-newsletter dated October 15, 2010. The Express-News printed a public meeting notice in the Thursday, October 14, 2010 and the Thursday, October 21, 2010 edition of the North Central News. A reporter from the North Central News attended the workshop and wrote a follow-up story for the Thursday, October 28, 2010 edition of the North Central News. Additionally, KSAT 12 News TV did a report on the master planning efforts that aired on Thursday, October 28, 2010.

There were 51 attendees who registered for the workshop. Attendees were asked to self-identify their status (as many that apply) in relation to the MidTown Brackenridge area. Eighteen individuals identified him/herself as a resident, 9 identified him/herself as a business owner, and 19 identified him/herself as a property owner with three members of the Midtown TIRZ in attendance. Approximately 16 members of the planning team from the San Antonio River Authority, the City of San Antonio, Alamo Architects, Gateway Planning, Pate Engineering, 1836 Asset Development, Pate Engineering, Brown & Ortiz PC, Bender Wells Clark Design, and Ximenes & Associates facilitated and attended the workshop. The complete set of sign-in sheets are attached.

WORKSHOP FORMAT AND RESULTS

Suzanne Scott, San Antonio River Authority General Manager, welcomed everyone and thanked them for taking time out to be part of this master planning effort, and convened the workshop. She explained that the first public workshop was held in August and the next steps, after this workshop, will be concentrated on developing the draft master plan to be presented in December. Mrs. Scott then introduced her counterparts on the project from the City of San Antonio as well as the consultant team.

Mrs. Scott introduced Sonia Jimenez, Public Involvement Manager with Ximenes & Associates, Inc., as the lead facilitator for the workshop. Ms. Jimenez reviewed the desired outcomes as well as the agenda and workshop process.

As attendees registered for the workshop, they were provided an agenda with the MidTown Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) Board vision and a simplified project map as well as a comment card. The agenda handout is attached to this report. Each attendee was assigned a table number to ensure a good mix of participants in each of the small groups. Each table had a large cross section map of the MidTown Brackenridge TIRZ and the surrounding neighborhoods, a kit of parts representing traffic lanes, sidewalks, bike lanes, landscaping elements, center medians, left turn lanes with medians, parallel and reverse angle parking, as well as scissors, removable tape, Post-It notes, pens and markers.

The first half of the workshop was dedicated to presenting the findings of the first public workshop, information on urban design standards and guidelines, and preliminary street cross section alternatives for the MidTown Brackenridge transportation corridors. The second part of the workshop gave participants an opportunity to create two street cross sections, one with 100' of right of way and the other with 80' of right of way, with the kit of parts provided and by collaborating with other participants at their table. This trade-off exercise was developed to allow workshop participants to experience the process the consultants are experiencing in making the determination of what and where various public improvement elements should be planned.

Following the workshop overview, Irby Hightower presented the results from the first public workshop and a progress update. Based on the comments and collaboration, the overall vision and the master plan will include:

- multi-modal connections to community assets,
- a pedestrian friendly environment,
- improved drainage and general safety,
- a parking plan,
- getting Fort Sam Houston engaged, and

- varied building heights: St. Mary's up to three stories, Josephine Street near the river between four and six stories, and Broadway up to six stories with adjacent areas having low-rise residential areas.

He then went on to explain the specific goals the consultant team has developed to achieve the vision. These goals include:

- Providing a public space environment supported by mixed-income, mixed-use, higher intensity infill development.
- Improving and creating street connections
- Improving streetscape and green spaces
- Making Brackenridge Park more visible and more accessible
- Minimizing/mitigating traffic from Fort Sam Houston on neighborhoods.

The master plan will include an outline of the implementation process, projected tax increment reinvestment zone (TIRZ) revenues, and the recommended most efficient use of these funds. Mr. Hightower highlighted specific recommended connections to Fort Sam Houston, Brackenridge Park, Pearl Parkway, Josephine, N. St. Mary's, and River Road. The master plan will also suggest improved visibility for Brackenridge Park from US 281 in addition to an alternate park entrance off of Stadium Drive and more direct multi-modal access from Broadway.

Scott Polikov, with Gateway Planning Group, then presented information related to scale and sustainable development. Mr. Polikov described the TxDOT approved approach for designing walkable urban thoroughfares using context sensitive solutions. He also provided several examples and case studies demonstrating the benefits and improvements resulting from the reinvention and redesign of corridors with a unified context. Mr. Polikov concluded and then turned the presentation back over to Mr. Hightower.

Mr. Hightower presented information related to urban design elements and how they apply to the MidTown Brackenridge district. Design elements include sidewalk widths, underground utilities, vehicular lane widths, bike paths and lanes, and parking (on-street, parallel and reverse angle). He also emphasized the need for predictable development standards and significant infrastructure improvements.

Alternative concepts for the district were presented with a combination of small incremental changes and large-scale dramatic changes. All alternatives were presented showing existing conditions and concept drawings demonstrating the proposed improvements. North St. Mary's, Josephine, and Grayson were described as requiring only small incremental changes to make these great streets. Alternatives included adding bike lanes and street trees or on-street parking and

trees. Avenue B was imagined as a *Woonerf*¹ based designed street that gives priority to pedestrians and cyclists over automobiles.

For Broadway, more dramatic changes were presented in the alternatives. Alternatives for Broadway include concepts that 1) maximize parallel parking allowing for 2 cars and 1 street tree in 52' of right-of-way length, 2) maximize sidewalks (12 feet) and bike lanes, 3) maximize reverse angle parking (2 cars plus 1 street tree in 45' of row length), 4) utilize on-street parking and provide bike lanes, or 5) create a boulevard with large sidewalks, bike lanes, and a center landscaped median. The various alternatives presented for Broadway could be potentially utilized within the corridor at different locations with transitions from one alternative to another. For example, the grand boulevard alternative may be more appropriate in areas with less driveways while on-street parking and bike lanes may be more suitable for more densely developed areas that require greater access. The full presentation can be found as an attachment to this report.

Following the presentation, the seven table groups spent the remainder of the workshop doing the trade-off exercise and sharing their results. This exercise had the participants discuss with each other their specific desires for the design elements and then come to agreement about the final design. Each group took the kit of parts – traffic lanes with transit, medians, bike lanes, landscape buffers and different on street parking types - and plotted specific elements to the two oversized street section worksheets. The street sections and the kit of parts were created to scale. The written part of the worksheet provided space for participants to list issues related to 1) the relationship of infill/urban development to the street, 2) width and use of sidewalks and proximity to traffic and parking, 3) location of transit/streetcar, bikes, and travel lanes, 4) type and location of parking, 5) placement of landscape trees and buffers, and additional space for general comments.

The general themes emerging for the 80' right-of-way street section (Lower Broadway from IH 35 to Josephine Street) included asymmetrical solutions suggesting elements on one side of the street were not mirrored on the other side of the street, no median, parallel parking favored over reverse angle parking, some form of vegetated buffers either between the street/bike lane and the sidewalk, and street trees used as buffers or between parking elements. The majority of the groups (5 of 7) suggested a minimum of 10' sidewalks on both sides. At least one group suggested no on-street parking while another suggested using reverse angle parking on one side of the street and parallel parking on the other. Bike lanes were

¹ Woonerf is the Dutch name for a “living street” in which the needs of car drivers are secondary to the needs of users of the street as a whole. It is a “shared space” designed to be used by pedestrians, playing children, bicyclists, and low-speed motor vehicles; becoming a public place for people instead of single-purpose conduits for automobiles. (Source: www.knowledgejump.com/woonerf/woonerf.html)

placed on street, separated from traffic and buffered by vegetation, or limited to Avenue B only.

Specific comments recorded on the worksheets included developing more industrial type businesses on lower Broadway, requiring buildings edge located close to the property line to provide a good pedestrian environment, use of pervious materials for sidewalks, street furniture and public art, help and retain local business as redevelopment occurs, clear consistent signage, placing existing utilities underground, and promote neighborhood type business (grocery store).

With regard to the 100' right-of way street section, an asymmetrical approach was the majority solution (5 of 7) with more support for reverse angle parking on one side of the street and larger sidewalks (10-15 feet) on the other. Bike lanes were supported on Avenue B as well as various configurations on Broadway including bike lanes in center of a vegetated median (separated from traffic), a two-way bike lane on one side of the street between the sidewalk and on-street parking, and bike lanes buffered and between vegetated strip and traffic lanes. Street trees were mostly placed between parking spaces to soften the edge and in center/turn lane medians. Transit stop locations were identified by at least one group as appropriately located on the boulevard/continuous center median.

Worksheet comments included encouraging more common access driveways (elimination of continuous curb cuts) and consideration of access to businesses from side streets when determining the relationship of businesses to the street, streetcar routes to the San Antonio Botanical Garden, and a "gateway" element should be considered. Underground utilities and public art were also noted.

Following each of the trade-off exercises (80' and 100'), table groups reported to the larger group a quick summary of their "best" street section concept they developed based on trade-offs of the various elements. Copies of each group's street section worksheets are attached to this report – please note there was not a group #7. Attendees then reconvened as one large group.

Ms. Jimenez thanked the participants for their time and efforts and informed them of the next public meeting to present the draft master plan scheduled for Saturday, December 11th, from 9 a.m. – 10:30 a.m at The Witte Musuem. (Please note that as of the date of this report, the December 11th meeting has been postponed until early 2011.) During the next public meeting, the draft master plan will be presented and attendees will be given an opportunity to comment and give feedback on it before it becomes final. Mr. Hightower thanked everyone and the workshop was adjourned.

There were approximately 29 comment cards and meeting evaluations completed and returned. Comments included the desire for more information on what can be done on St. Mary's and Josephine Streets, and supported the idea of lower Broadway and upper Broadway being treated differently based on the character of each

segment. Participants who completed the comment card indicated the street section trade-off exercise assisted in understanding what is involved in planning and believed their group came up with good ideas. There was a section on the comment card dedicated to ranking the various elements in term of most important (1) to least important. There were eight elements listed with a space for “other”. The results of the elements prioritization are as follows:

1. Wide sidewalks
2. Landscaping
3. Appropriate building height (upper Broadway-no more than 10 stories) (specifically, three responders indicated no more than 5 or 6 stories)
4. Appropriate building height (lower Broadway-no more than 5 stories)
5. Bike lanes
6. Landscaped medians
7. Median with frequent left turn lanes
8. Extra traffic lanes

Under “other”, comments included (in no particular order or rank): underground utilities; parking for St. Mary’s and Kings Court; trees along Broadway; parking (not parallel – not enough know how and it is a waste of space); designs to allow for traffic flow but slower; consistent look; context sensitive design – more walkable, bikeable, and livable; public art; more incentives for local non-chain businesses; limit parking access from Broadway, use side streets; keep all current parkland as it is; and transparency on the ground floor – storefronts in glass and their entrances directly emptying on to Broadway’s sidewalks. Finally, most comment cards showed agreement with the direction the consultant team is taking and the majority of responders are looking forward to the draft master plan. All completed comment cards are attached to this report.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Workshop Agenda and TIRZ Vision and Boundary Map
2. Sign-In Sheets
3. Presentation
4. Street Section Trade-Off Exercise Worksheets and Transcripts
5. Comment Cards and Transcripts