

MIDTOWN *Brackenridge* SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

PUBLIC WORKSHOP #1

AUGUST 21, 2010, 9 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

TRIPPOINT (3233 NORTH ST. MARY'S STREET)

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Get a sense of what the residents, business owners and interested public would like included in the MidTown Brackenridge master plan.
- Explore and develop a common language that describes the types of physical characteristics desired for the places within the master plan area.
- Review land use definitions and begin to visualize what is desired for the MidTown Brackenridge area.
- Develop ownership of the plan.
- Identify issues and opportunities for consideration as the master plan is developed.



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 the neighborhood associations to disseminate to their constituents, nearly 2,300 postcards were sent to Bexar County Appraisal District property owners who owned property within a ¼ mile of the TIRZ boundary, and approximately 100 posters were posted in restaurants, dry cleaners, and other businesses in the area – all notices and posters listed the complete series of public workshop/meeting dates. The Express-News printed a notice in their Thursday, August 19, 2010 edition of the North Central News as well as in the Business Section of their Saturday, August 21, 2010 edition. NowCast SA, a web casting organization, provided notice to its users and streamed the workshop live. The web cast was also available on their website, nowcastsa.com, after the meeting. Media

representatives from WOAI-TV and FOX TV were at the workshop and the San Antonio-Bexar County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) published a follow-up story on their August 30, 2010 edition of their Internet based newsletter the Fast Track. A copy of the notices and the MPO article are attached.

There were 85 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. Thirty-one individuals identified him/herself as a resident, 15 identified him/herself as a business owner, and 31 identified him/herself as a property owner with eight members of the Midtown TIRZ in attendance. Approximately 20 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

Suzanne Scott, San Antonio River Authority General Manager, who welcomed everyone and thanked them for taking time out on a very busy Saturday morning to be part of this master planning effort, convened the workshop. She explained that the River Authority has a vested interest in seeing MidTown Brackenridge revitalized because of their enormous investment in the recently completed Museum and Park Reach segments of the San Antonio River Improvements Project. Mrs. Scott then introduced her counterparts on the project from the City of San Antonio as well as the consultant team.

Patrick Howard, Assistant Director of Planning and Development Services for the City of San Antonio, welcomed everyone and emphasized the City's commitment to the master plan and the public process. He then introduced John Wolters, Assistant Capital Programs Manager for the Capital Improvements Management Services for the City of San Antonio. Mr. Wolters gave a brief presentation related to the City's Broadway Corridor Capital Improvements Projects currently under design. Specifically, the projects include the Phase IIIA project beginning on Broadway at Groveland Place and along Hildebrand from Broadway to the San Antonio River outfall to provide drainage designed to convey a 100-year storm event as well as the reconstruction and widening of Hildebrand from N. New Braunfels to the San Antonio River with curbs, sidewalks, driveway approaches, and turn lanes and traffic signal improvements at the intersection of Hildebrand and Broadway. The other related project is the modifications to Mulberry

Ave and the bridges over the Catalpa-Pershing at Mulberry and Millrace entrance to Brackenridge Golf Course to accommodate a 100-year flood event. Mr. Wolters indicated the City will be conducting a public meeting, tentatively in October 2010, to give the community an opportunity to learn more about the projects. The projects are expected to break ground in January 2011. He concluded his presentation by giving everyone his contact information. The meeting was then turned back over to Mrs. Scott.

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 on the back. Each attendee was assigned a table number to ensure a good mix of participants in each small group. Each table had a 3' X 4.5' map of the MidTown Brackenridge TIRZ and the surrounding neighborhoods, three packets of various images related to building types and character, two sets of Post-It notes (yellow and pink), pens and markers.

The first exercise asked participants to use the colored Post-It notes to indicate their appreciations (yellow) and their concerns (pink) for each of the four sub-areas of the TIRZ and the surrounding neighborhoods. The four areas were presented as overlapping bubbles and were developed to assist with referencing a particular part of the project area.

Specifically, the areas are 1) St. Mary's, 2) Josephine River, 3) Lower Broadway, and 4) Upper Broadway. Each participant was given about 20 minutes to complete the exercise and discuss his or her opinions within the small group. Their appreciations and concerns were posted directly on the map. Photos of the maps are attached to this summary.



Following the exercise, each table facilitator was asked to report to the larger group a quick summary of the comments posted.

Ms. Jimenez then introduced Irby Hightower, Co-Lead Architect with Alamo Architects, who provided attendees an overview of the establishment of the MidTown TIRZ and the master planning process. The TIRZ was established approximately two years ago and will be in place for another 18 years. The tax increment that is generated in the area will be applied to public improvements projects in this area (as opposed to be put into the City's General Fund account.) The master plan is intended to guide the allocation of these funds in a strategic manner. The public process includes the establishment of the

Planning Team and a series of public workshops and meetings. The Planning Team composed of representatives, residential and commercial, from each of the surrounding neighborhoods, as well as representation of the MidTown TIRZ Board. This workshop is one of two. This one to get input from the community on the Vision and types of development and the second workshop to get community feedback and on alternatives to be included in the master plan. The final public meeting will present the Master Plan and allow for additional public comments.

Mr. Hightower then explained the consultant team had reviewed all of the existing neighborhood plans (Government Hill, Westfort, Mahncke Park, River Road, Tobin Hill, and Monte Vista.) Furthermore, he emphasized this master plan will not undermine these plans and is intended to compliment them. Upon review, the team became aware that the various plans used different terms to describe what the team thought were the same concept. Mr. Hightower demonstrated how different one definition of “high density” can be to another definition using the same term. In order to gain a common understanding



of what the community wants for this plan, the team developed an exercise involving images related to building types and development character.

This exercise allowed participants to explain the various elements, types, and character they agreed with when referring to different types of development. Each group was given approximately 30 minutes to review the images and discuss their opinions. The groups were not required to come to agreement on the terms but simply express their perspectives. A

full set of the images is attached to this report. Following this exercise, each table facilitator reported out the highlights of the discussion to the larger groups. Participants were then given a short break.

Following the break, the small groups were given a clean version of the same map and the “appreciations” and “concerns” map was posted in close proximity of each group. The next hour of the workshop was dedicated to using the information from the first two exercises to develop elements for creating a vision. The small groups were asked to think about the appreciations and concerns and the various types and character of development and what they would like to see in the MidTown Brackenridge area. Participants explained their desires for these elements, discussed issues and opportunities, and identified areas they thought were ideal for development or redevelopment. Following this exercise, each table facilitator reported out the predominant themes associated with the vision for the area.

Ms. Jimenez thanked the participants for their time and efforts and informed them of the next workshop scheduled for Saturday, October 23, from 9 a.m. – noon at TriPoint.

During the next workshop, the team will present the attendees with alternatives based on the information collected at this workshop. Mr. Hightower thanked everyone and the workshop was adjourned.

INITIAL FINDINGS AND FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Appreciations and Concerns Exercise

The recurring themes around appreciations involved mostly cultural and historic aspects of the existing environment. Many expressed appreciation for the eclectic character of St. Mary's Street as well as community assets such as Brackenridge Park, Lion's Field, The Witte Museum, and the surrounding neighborhoods and universities. Pearl Brewery, TriPoint, Brackenridge Golf Course and Kiddie Park were specified as good revitalization/reinvestment projects. The San Antonio River Museum Reach and the bike trails were also noted as great improvements to the area. Connectivity to the river from Pearl and the areas that have connecting sidewalks were pointed out as positive developments. Broadway was noted as a good, direct connection to downtown.

In terms of concerns noted by workshop participants, most were the opposite of the appreciations. There was concern about vehicular and pedestrian connectivity between St. Mary's Street and the Broadway corridor as well as between Government Hill and Pearl. Several comments were made about the impact of Fort Sam Houston traffic on the neighborhoods on the eastside of Broadway. The lack of a good, safe, pedestrian connection to the University of Incarnate Word as well as general (cars, bikes, pedestrian) connectivity east-west was expressed as a concern for the area. The lack of parking, lighting, trees, a grocery store, code enforcement and drainage were recurrent themes listed as concerns throughout the TIRZ area. Too much graffiti, homeless people in the park, speeding cars, stray animals, and deteriorating or vacant buildings were consistent recurring concerns expressed by participants. Existing multi-family developments and the areas surrounding the schools were noted as concerns that needed to be improved upon. There were also concerns noted about providing incentives to property owners to clean up and the ability to identify funds for making any improvements to the area. A complete transcript of the exercise is attached to this report.



Building Types and Development Characteristics Exercise

This exercise involved participants looking at various building types and development characteristics and discussing their opinions about them. They were shown images of

low-rise residential (group A), mid-rise residential (group B), neighborhood mixed-use (group C), and mixed use (group D.) Overall, participants liked the idea of mixed-use



with residential, lots of green space, buffers between pedestrian areas and traffic, as well as parking located on the side or behind buildings with limited on-street parking. Buildings would be limited to eight stories (maximum), with set backs to provide for a small yard and/or wider sidewalks or pedestrian plazas. Landscaping was consistently favored over a hardscape image and trees to provide shade in pedestrian areas. Development should be based on a human scale horizontally and vertically and

be varied and eclectic. Copies of the images and the complete transcript of related comments are attached.

Vision Exercise

The visioning exercise allowed for participants to inform the team of their desires for the area. They used the images and information from the previous exercise to describe the type of developments for specific areas and personal ideas and preferences for public improvements. The general first impressions stemming from the visioning exercise included having more connectivity using a variety of modes, addressing drainage, security issues, moving overhead utilities underground, with a complimentary mix of business and residential components. Overall, participants suggested more green space with more trees and landscaping. The highest building height desired in any part of the MidTown Brackenridge area was about 6 stories with gradual decreases in height the closer the buildings get to single-family residential areas.

Participants generally desired an increase in parking but did not want parked cars necessarily visible – they liked the concept of garages in key locations, shared parking based on day/night/event use, building-wrapped and side lot parking. A comprehensive parking plan for the area was suggested. There was common agreement about the desire for a streetcar or trolley system that would serve Broadway and possibly a loop route to serve the entire MidTown Brackenridge area. Fort Sam Houston was mentioned in terms of access and opportunity impacts.



However, most participants felt Fort Sam Houston was focused on their own mission without much regard for the impact to the area immediately outside the fort's boundary. Redevelopment opportunities were identified at the former Lone Star Dodge dealership on Broadway, the ACCD property (former Playland Park) in the lower Broadway corridor, the SAISD site off of N. Alamo, the former ButterKrust Bakery on Broadway, the Flasher Equipment lots and adjacent vacant buildings in the Josephine-River and lower St. Mary's St. areas, the "old city garage" on Hildebrand, Mulberry where the stables were located, and the former site of the Alligator Gardens next to the Witte Museum. Photos of the maps and the associated transcripts are attached.

The area was envisioned to be cohesive with the sub-areas being distinct in their own right. St. Mary's Street was described as an improved version of what currently exists. The eclectic mixture of small businesses, restaurants, churches and entertainment in a walkable corridor with a trolley route and the majority of parking at either end of the corridor to allow for less conflict with bikes and more room for pedestrians. The development along St. Mary's would be low-rise mixed use residential. The connection from St. Mary's Street to Josephine Street would be improved and more connected to Pearl creating an Arts District.

The Josephine Street/River subarea was envisioned to have more and better pedestrian connections with a positive impact on Tobin Hill and greater connections to Newell Street. Grayson would remain open to all modes of transportation and commercial redevelopment of currently vacant lots on Grayson and Newell Street were imagined for this area. The building types would be limited to four to six-stories commercial mixed-

use (image D5) with a residential component along the river and neighborhood mixed-use (image C1) along Josephine Street. The existing residential areas on Josephine would be given incentives to make improvements and Flasher Equipment would make their properties more attractive.



Moving east toward Pearl Brewery and the lower Broadway area, participants consistently praised the model for redevelopment that Pearl has provided as a mixed-use residential development. There was a desire to have better connectivity between Government Hill and Pearl and to redevelop the area along lower Broadway across from Pearl into something that compliments the neighborhood. Participants identified this area, along the eastside of lower Broadway as good potential for low-rise residential with a

courtyard element.

Lower Broadway had a number of locations identified for adaptive re-use and/or redevelopment including the former ButterKrust Bakery building, the former Playland Park site, and possibly re-defining the use of the current SAISD Transportation Facility. The Butter Krust Bakery site was envisioned for redevelopment in a mixed-use manner with the buildings wrapping a parking garage (image D5) with commercial facing Broadway and a residential component facing the river/golf course. The site would be connected by bike and walking trails to the river as well as Broadway and across Broadway to the residential areas. Participants did not describe in as much detail their desire for the Playland site but described the SAISD property as a potentially good site for neighborhood commercial development with low-rise buildings and on-street parking (image C4 and Green Avenue in Dallas cited as an example.)

The connection between Broadway and downtown was noted as important and the concept of a streetcar or trolley was mentioned as well as improving the streetscape with center medians and landscaping. Broadway was described as high-rise structures at the north and south edges with lower density in between. Broadway would be developed in a manner that either side of the street could be very different from the other but the height of the buildings would depend on proximity to other commercial or residential areas. The entire corridor would be scaled to pedestrians.



Avenue B was identified for low-rise residential, 1-2 story to preserve the view of the park/river/golf course, with pedestrian access. The river frontage was imagined as mid-rise residential attached or multi-family with repetitive massing and street trees (image B2.) The Catalpa area was repeatedly identified as a challenging area and at least one participant believed it was the “biggest obstacle.” This area was envisioned as a potentially good site for a pedestrian gathering place with multi-family housing with varied building profiles (image B3) or some sort of mixed-use development. The former Dodge dealership site was seen as a potential site for residential development. Westfort stakeholders would like to see the neighborhood more connected to Broadway to eliminate barriers between the residential and commercial areas.

Mahnke Park was envisioned with improved pedestrian amenities and connections, neighborhood mixed-use development with low-rise commercial along Broadway and parking beside the buildings (image C1) in a manner that preserves and compliments the neighborhood character. It was also imagined that multi-family and vacant lot property owners would be provided incentives to improve their sites.

In terms of Brackenridge Park, participants wanted the park entrances protected with a more defined boundary but more visually open to allow for open space views. Wider sidewalks would surround the park with some form of barrier between the sidewalks and the street. Multi-family (image B3) or mixed-use (D images) 3-6 story developments that overlook the golf course and takes advantage of the park were desirable characteristics for this area. Development would be lower rise on the park side with larger buildings on the other side of Broadway.



Mulberry Street and Hildebrand were identified as needing bike lanes and pedestrian connections with better connectivity to Fort Sam Houston. Their was a desire to “fix the intersection” at Mulberry and Broadway. Mulberry Street would be no more than four lanes with slower traffic and small convenient retail development near the park but varied height development along 281 and on the opposite side of Broadway. Hildebrand was seen as a potential site for high-rise development near the University of Incarnate Word and noted as an extremely busy intersection with challenges to pedestrians and bicyclists.

There were approximately 29 comment cards and meeting evaluations completed and returned. The comment cards mostly reiterated the themes mentioned above. The meeting evaluations were generally positive with the majority of participants looking forward to the next workshop.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Workshop Agenda and TIRZ Vision and Boundary Map
2. Sign-In Sheets
3. Presentations
4. Appreciations and Concerns Transcripts and Photos
5. Visual Vocabulary Transcripts and Images
6. Vision Transcripts and Photos
7. Comment Cards Transcripts and Meeting Evaluations