

PLANNING COMMISSION WORK SESSION

November 28, 2017, 2017

5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

I. PLANNING COMMISSION WORK SESSION

Members Present: Chair, Lisa Green (arrived late), Vice –Chair Corey Clayborne, Commissioners Genevieve Keller, Taneaia Dowell, Jody Lahendro, Kurt Keesecker, and John Santoski

Staff Present: Lisa Robertson, City Attorney, Carolyn McCray, Missy Creasy, Brian Haluska, Matt Alfele

Call to Order: Corey Clayborne, Vice Chairman

AGENDA

Ms. Creasy said we are diving back into the Comp Plan and there are a lot of dates on the calendar. Starting tonight, we'll talk through the questions, and the yellow areas on the chart that need information. It is anticipated this work will be done tomorrow as well as discussing what the community engagement might be.

Questions

1. What do you see on the map that needs further discussion?
 - a. Graphics: the commissioners will continue their discussion on the colors on the map as they relate with the corridors, parking, streets, and the railroad tracks. Another project is to identify the areas that are problematic.
 - b. Areas of the circle - find a different way to downplay the circles so that is not where your eyes go to first.

Commissioner Keesecker: said what we came down to was the environment on the path is focused on the path and is one parcel deep and there's no intention in the future and no future the Planning Commission should assume, without a concerted effort that that thing is supposed to get wider and start bleeding back into the adjacent neighborhoods or whatever it is. He heard recently at a seminar that is where the bus stops versus where the buses go. The circles are where the bus stops are and the lines are the corridors where the buses go. He asked where are the transit points in the City?

Commissioner Keller said we are seeing these as primarily residential corridors as opposed to our mixed use corridors.

Ms. Creasy said the greens and blue have both.

Commissioner Keesecker said the distinction we were making is that the blue areas need to have commercial on the ground floor. We may have too much blue on our map.

Commissioner Keller said these are corridors where we wouldn't necessarily need mixed use in a single building. The first two levels could be commercial or residential but once you got to three and above you need to be residential.

Ms. Creasy: said you did not want to box yourselves into having those words in a title to define what those characteristics were going to be. The idea was to do it backwards - Here are the characteristics of these areas. She said with our first question, we have some graphics that need to be addressed and names of categories. We have discussed the definition of our general flow of the area that has a circle on them and what that means. We will try to find different ways to represent that and downplay the purple circles as Jody suggested.

Chair Green: said we need to look at the hard edges of the tracks because the south side of that track is completely different from the north side and we need to take a look at that. She would like to have those tracks and hard edges highlighted.

Commissioner Keesecker: said we were a little heavy on the orange and blue and could use a bit more green.

Ms. Creasy: said you might think about each section as a range, a grouping so it may be certain orange areas when it gets to the zoning end of things, is going to be on this end of the range where others may be on the other end.

Chair Green: said this is completely different, not the same topography.

Commissioner Santoski: asked aren't we talking about the orange being residential only right? More height and more density.

Commissioner Keller: said we talked about a guiding principal where it made sense to try to have more of that near community resources like schools and parks, a higher intensity of residential uses.

Commissioner Keesecker: said there are probably another ½ dozen places we could talk about for 15 minutes. We should try to identify the ones that are problematic and if we see any patterns are starting to emerge from the ones that are interesting or probably occur along big roads or tracks, schools, or parks. Then we need to look at the 4 colors regarding commercial uses on the ground floor have that the destination quality.

Mr. Alfele: explained how the chart was put together with Commissioner Keesecker; and these categories came out of concern areas that the Planning Commission wanted to address. We are looking at broad strokes and not necessary saying building footprints need to use all of the yards;

we are looking for broad concepts, something like this will transition into the narrative of the Comp Plan. It's good to be thinking about these concepts while are we looking for footprints that create small blocks, walkable areas. The concept will be the zoning that will be the tool that is implemented and what you will be thinking about the footprint of a building in the red area, more shoulder to shoulder on blocks in all of the categories. The parking you talked about in the beginning was very productive, and good concepts came out of these ideas of larger parking areas, and these red areas. The density range in the red somewhat lined up to our current zoning and you have what currently the density ranges are. Our Comp Plan only mentions 15 DUA, everything below that is low density and everything above that is high density.

Ms. Creasy: said another sensitive area would be the river.

Commissioner Keller said environment, historic/cultural are highly visible interests as well as the entrance to the city.

Commissioner Keesecker: added where we currently have conflict is from West Main to Fifeville.

Commissioner Clayborne: asked should there be a separate map?

Commissioner Keesecker: said the overlay district could be considered to be sensitive and covered by that and there are other sensitive areas neighborhoods that could be encroached upon including East High Street recently.

Ms. Creasy: said this is just giving parameters for what might be appropriate for discussion on zoning; even though you are showing to go up to those levels once you look in on a certain area the zoning may fall within that realm but it may not land there.

Commissioner Keller: said if we don't identify in future land use then it could go straight to zoning and then no one would be informed of these conversations that we have spent substantial time on.

Ms. Creasy: said that is good but how we represent that she doesn't know; sounds like a lot of sensitive areas, maybe we need a narrative to get into the depth of that. Maybe it is not a map thing, maybe it is a narrative.

Chair Green: said when we look at this map again we should take these sensitive areas off the parks. She thinks that will be a huge question for the public.

Mr. Alfele: said originally this came out of your conversation about the river.

Commissioner Lahendro: asked is it sensitive because of its existing attributes, and to have those attributes being conserved when we have high density development? How does it affect high density development because it is going to be built on top of whatever attribute you saw there to begin with.

Commissioner Keesecker: said we could try to use these other zoning categories to address whatever step down in intensity is appropriate in the sensitive areas to determine how it looks with these colors. If we do the sensitivity map it might be another map.

Commissioner Keller: said we might be doing ourselves a disservice by using the term sensitive.

Commissioner Santoski: said we need to be careful discussing land use and discussing sensitivity; and what the BAR has control over. If we start loading everything onto the map pretty soon we are not going to be able to see anything.

Ms. Creasy said in the present Comp Plan we do have separate maps; one is called the small area plan which includes some of these areas that you are talking about.

Commissioner Keller said we would not include Hydraulic Road as an area of interest because it is small area.

Ms. Creasy: said you are trying to provide narrative advice in this plan. The river corridor is very important and extends from here to here. There are a number of efforts that have taken place to preserve that and work through the future of that.

Commissioner Santoski: said the narrative needs to be considered in the sensitivity of the area and but the land use is the land use for there. To preserve that, potential for development, it needs to be considered and a land use is a land use.

Commissioner Keesecker: said the land use map says where we want to direct our new develop efforts and where we want to preserve the existing characters of these two maps and the small area plan is where we want to develop, sub-quality and density and zoning decision, it will blow up on us.

Chair Green said she is not sure that the map shouldn't include areas of preservation and other things we would like to see, to make sure they don't overlap.

Mr. Alfele: said you might want to think about graphically showing the river on the map and that it is important to the community as well as the railroad tracks, 29, and 250 and make this map for your ideas.

Commissioner Dowell said we should have some key points on the map for the public to understand.

Commissioner Keller said we need the river, the railroad tracks, Route 29 and Route 250, and the University.

Commissioner Keesecker suggested going through the yellow boxes. In the red zone there can be a multi-family, site layout. Add more yellow and different ways to encourage it,

Commissioner Lahendro: said we need more bonus possibilities; he doesn't believe we have enough bonus options to justify it to developers from what we have been hearing. Fundamentally, there is not enough bonus being offered to get affordable housing. He said for brown, blue, and green he would add another floor to the max height to have two floors of bonus.

Chair Green said we are starting in the red zone. A multi-family, site layout, add more yellow and different ways to encourage it.

Commissioner Dowell: said this would give us more of a guide because if we can figure out what we want to see there, then that will help determine what the density is in building footprints.

Chair Green started with inappropriate uses in the red area. She said single family attached.

Commissioner Keller: said passive uses like storage, car washes, and asked how many people could live here and how many people could understand what this map is.

Commissioner Keesecker: said it doesn't have to be super exact, just a certain quality.

Commissioner Santoski asked what if you wanted to put in a 30 foot tall warehouse. It would be close to Interstate 64.

Mr. Alfele asked what kind of characteristics would be noted for the warehouse?

Commissioner Santoski: said he wanted to put in a brewery and ship beer down to somebody else and that is where he wanted to package it or it could be magazines or books and he is going to ship them some place.

Commissioner Keesecker: said in the zone itself, he didn't see anything wrong with that. He said those on the street would be terrible and it needs to have an animated street frontage.

Commissioner Keller: said if you look at the old concept of Preston Avenue and the way it developed with the Coca Cola plant and the dairy and it had its up front street uses and customers and sales people in and out. The warehouse function is to the rear and trucking is to the rear.

Commissioner Santoski: said say for instance he is Barnes and Noble and has his books on the street front but behind it he will have his warehouse and will ship books all over the country, would that be allowable in the red?

Chair Green said yes.

Commissioner Keller said then that is where you would want to be looking at the sensitivity because you wouldn't want that adjacent to a residential area and have all of this traffic. She said then you would want the form based code because you would want design for those conditions

Commissioner Santoski asked but do we allow something that could be 4 stories high but it is not really 4 stories but is only 40 feet high?

Mr. Alfele: said you want to be thinking about the characteristics and what type of things would activate the street. Are you thinking a certain type of manufacturing and industrial uses would still be appropriate in this area as long as they are activating the street in some way and that is kind of a blanket statement but can lead to a narrative?

Commissioner Keller: said they are auxiliary uses to a primary use. What characteristics are needed for an active street?

Commissioner Keesecker said we have said we want these places to be intense for both living and working but we have to have jobs somewhere.

Chair Green: said that is what we were talking about when we talked about red areas and look how they are strategically located is a perfect example. You've got an active brewery on the bottom and got all of the storage. When we talked about these red areas we talked about the ease and access to be able to reach those things outside; up Route 29 out Fontaine to Interstate 64.

Public Comments:

1. Robin Hoffman: said she is here on behalf of generation one eighty to speak on the idea that solar has become so cheap and there are many people in the city that want to change their house utilities. If you took everything out of your house and started new with solar and used high energy efficient equipment, the cost would be similar to current electricity costs. She noted their group was having a meeting on November 30th.
2. Eugenio Schettini: asked what the concentric circles meant on the map. It was noted it was potential for a neighborhood commercial use but was not site specific. He noted concern about the blue in downtown Belmont. Mid-range commercial requires parking and we have nothing available. Cannot rely on street parking so is there some to designate at Belmont church? He would like to see more landmarks on the map. Also Amtrak provides more than passenger service and major transportation and that should be noted.
3. Neil Williamson from the Free Enterprise Forum was impressed with the interaction. He hopes in the end we could get what the current plan allows and what the new plan allows, commercially designated, where are the jobs, housing, how much housing, low and high for density, answer will help form the questions. Maintaining the neighborhood at all cost, this group has been working diligently to deal with those concepts, this map will help designate where we are going to grow. The map should be aspirational rather than defensive.

It was requested that Corey and Taneia provide additional feedback.

Commissioner Clayborne noted that there should be a focus on the yellow areas and images and examples of the different categories would be helpful.

Commissioner Dowell noted that there should be an allowance for additional industrial in the red and there should be a focus on the uses. She noted there should not be large blocks as the road grids are important and she supports mixed use.

Chair Green encouraged commissioners to forward images to staff to illustrate areas of interest.

Commissioner Keesecker: said it may be helpful to take this draft of the map to other committees for feedback prior to taking it out to the public.

Ms. Creasy reminded the commissioners that they decided to take the map to the community at the same time and then set discussions with individual groups to gain additional feedback.

Adjourn: 7:10