

A recessed meeting of the City Planning Board was held on January 3, 2007 in the Second Floor Conference Room in City Hall at 7:00 PM.

Present at the meeting were Members Drypolcher (who as Chair presided), Dolcino, Foss, Gross, McClure, McGonagle, Meyer, Swope, and Alternate Member Blanchette. Messrs. Woodward and Henninger, and Ms. Hebert and Ms. Osgood of the City Planning Division were also present, as was City Councilor Lemieux.

At 7:05 PM a quorum was present, and the Chair called the meeting to order and seated Alternate Member Blanchette for Member Merrill who was not expected.

MASTER PLAN

- Presentation by DeWan Associates on the **South End of the Opportunity Corridor**.

Mr. Woodward introduced Terry DeWan and Tom Farmer from DeWan Associates, of Yarmouth, Maine, who had been hired to produce a conceptual plan for the south end of the Opportunity Corridor.

Through use of a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. DeWan explained that the Southern Opportunity Corridor is comprised of 55 acres of useable land, 20 on the east side of the railroad tracks and 35 on the west side. The Corridor is bounded by the Water Street overpass near Gas Street on the north, the South End Marsh and I-93 on the south, South Main Street on the west, and by five parcels on the east side of the B & M Railroad tracks behind and excluding the properties along Hall Street on the east. He explained that because there are several parcels involved with different ownership, the envisioned build-out of the corridor could take years or even decades.

Mr. DeWan explained that after doing some exploration of the area, they saw this as more of a vision plan than a master plan, a plan of what this area should look like. He discussed opportunities and constraints for the area under study and noted that it is an urban site, not suburban. He suggested that 400-450 units of housing are possible and appropriate for this area, depending on the type of housing.

He explained that there were a number of corridor-wide considerations including a pedestrian crossing over and above the railroad tracks, a shared use pathway, the South End Marsh, South Main Street frontage, and the need to develop design guidelines that set the standards for all new development and rehabilitation in this area.

He explained they had divided the corridor into four areas. The first area was approximately from the Water Street overpass to Allison Street where they were suggesting medium to high density residential uses for this area. They also suggested extending Storrs Street south along the railroad tracks and under the Water Street Bridge to create another strong access into the Southern Opportunity Corridor, creating a suitable landscaped setting for the circular Gas House structure, and preserving a significant vegetative buffer between the new development and the rear yards of the

properties along South Main Street. They recommended that the City support the start of a walkable neighborhood with two- or three-story apartment buildings along the boulevard and improve the South Main/Allison Street intersection to accommodate the anticipated increase in vehicle trips, and reinforce the Allison Street entrance into the Corridor with mixed use buildings close to the street and on-street parking. The City should consider live-work units such that the first floor may be a shop or home office with residential uses on the second or third floors.

Mr. DeWan explained that Area B was the area from Allison Street to Langdon Avenue and could be used for medium to high density residential and mixed use retail and commercial uses. They suggested that the City re-use or rehabilitate the existing former railroad buildings that are of cultural and historic importance, treat the historic train shed as a focal point or anchor in the Corridor, create more parking within easy walking distance, preserve existing trees, and establish a strong buffer along the tracks.

He explained that Area C, between Langdon Avenue and the South End Marsh on the westerly side of the railroad tracks, could be used for high density residential, office, and small scale commercial uses in three-story structures. They suggest that the City preserve and reuse existing buildings of cultural and historic importance, design convenient circulation systems and parking along with pedestrian connections, and be mindful of the area's relationship to the Marsh.

He explained that Area D would be located between Langdon Avenue and the South End Marsh on the easterly side of the railroad tracks and could be used for a mixed-use technology center or community college campus. The City should retain the former railroad structure as the focal point for new development and consider pedestrian overpass-type connection between the east and west sides of the tracks as a means of transition to and integration with the neighborhood westerly of South Main Street.

He reported that they are promoting a mixed use development, not just housing, but the commercial uses would be of a limited scale. This is a way of adding a sense of vitality to the neighborhood. A sense of community needs to be maintained. Parking will need to be treated sensitively so it is not an overwhelming presence in the community.

Mr. Blanchette asked where Mr. DeWan saw the gateway to this development area. He asked where most people would enter the area. Mr. DeWan responded that there should not be just one place for people to enter and exit, there should be a lot of places.

Mr. Gross had a totally different point of view for a concept which he felt would involve a whole lot fewer political problems. He felt the rail yard should be used as a central axis to a new community. It should not be treated as something to be integrated with the surroundings but rather an entity unto itself. This opportunity should be taken to maximize the function of mass transit or foot traffic with the potential of reducing the demand for parking. He suggested that a design competition should be held for the development of the area.

Mr. Swope felt strongly that there was too much parking suggested in this area. The idea of a design competition makes a lot of sense for this area.

Mr. McGonagle noted that the existing residential neighborhood will be very sensitive to the creation of opportunities for straight-shot, through traffic into the neighborhood which would be promoted by making Allison Street a primary artery. He would like to see people filter through in less concentrated patterns of traffic. He liked the limited scale mixed use concept and the concept of living and working in the same neighborhood. The major challenge is how to connect this area to Main Street and the highway. He felt it would be essential to make the Storrs Street connection work.

Mr. Swope asked about live/work units that Mr. DeWan spoke about. He asked if that would be a restriction built into the deed or if it would be a function of the market. Mr. DeWan indicated that it usually is a function of the market but it might be possible to develop a deed restriction.

Ms. McClure liked the idea of the mixed use and the density being suggested.

There was agreement among Planning Board members that the Storrs Street connection was absolutely necessary in carrying out this plan.

Mr. McGonagle also reminded the Planning Board, and particularly Councilor McClure, of the odor problems from the existing wastewater treatment plant that can sometimes be unpleasant for residents, and will present a problem for the redevelopment of this area.

Ms. Foss asked if there was any possibility of considering this area for the construction of the Merrimack County courthouse being proposed. Mr. Woodward responded that it was the City's interest in keeping the building downtown. Ms. McClure felt that the timing might not be quite right for that.

There was a general consensus of support for the concept presented but it was agreed that there is need for attention to some of the details and modifications as discussed.

- Presentation by Vanasse Hangen Brustlin on the **Transportation Section of the Master Plan.**

Mr. Woodward introduced Martin Kennedy from Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, who was contracted by the City to write the transportation section of the Master Plan.

Mr. Kennedy noted that the last time he was before the Planning Board the Board was beginning to make land use decisions. At that time the Board had concluded that it wanted to consider the following future land use elements in the development of the traffic model's future land use scenarios:

1. Include the economic development and mixed use initiatives for the Opportunity Corridor together with the exploration of additional residential density in the Opportunity Corridor, and commission a design concept for a mixed use, high density village in the southerly end of the Corridor.

2. Provide for the protection of substantial amounts of open space and require cluster development for major subdivisions outside of the Urban Growth Boundary.
3. Promote the infill of urban residential development in the existing villages and neighborhoods in traditional forms and densities that mimic the traditional older neighborhoods of the City, containing mixtures of single family homes, duplexes, and structures with up to six dwelling units on variable sized lots in grid block patterns. Explore the concept of an exchange or transfer of development rights such that development of new residences would be reduced in area outside the Urban Growth Boundary, and those residences would be exchanged with, or transferred to, areas inside the UGB in the form of increases in the density of infill housing.
4. Retain the concept but not the specific prototypical locations of new villages, defining a new village in terms of performance standards, and to be implemented if the opportunity arises, much as Urban Reserves were defined in the previous Master Plan.

He reported that he heard in various forums that there is a strong need to protect residential neighborhoods from undue traffic.

He explained that the work effort consisted of establishing an understanding of the existing transportation conditions and the City's vision of its community and the role of the transportation system. After that, they developed and evaluated various alternatives to assist the City in achieving its vision and transportation goals. And the last part of the project was to develop a plan and strategy to meet the City's long-term transportation needs.

He explained that the report provided a discussion on the functional classification system, roadway connectivity, traffic calming, pedestrian and bicycle mobility, multi-modal transportation, access management, and traffic operations, as well as a summary of the findings of the recently completed Opportunity Corridor Master Plan. He reported that the recommended plan also included a discussion on which roadways need to be designed to process vehicular traffic and which roadways should be designed to discourage through traffic. He felt this discussion is critical to the success of the master plan.

Mr. Kennedy explained that the Transportation Master Plan Committee had established a number of goals and objectives, based on public input, which served to guide the development of the report. Those goals and objectives include:

1. Establish a roadways system that encourages the appropriate use of the City's street system.
2. Establish a multi-modal approach to the City's transportation needs.
3. Prioritize major highway and transportation improvements.

4. Enhance the aesthetics of the City's street system.

He explained that key to accommodating the future growth on the City's roadway system, while protecting the quality of life within the community, will be to identify key connections that would be designed to efficiently move vehicular traffic through or around the City while at the same time identifying roadways that would be designed to discourage through traffic, particularly in residential neighborhoods. He then reviewed a number of transportation improvements that were deemed critical for the City's future circulation system to function acceptably, including Interstate 93, a connection from I-89 to I-393, the northern segment of Langley Parkway, Route 106, Route 3 at Exit 17 of I-93, Manchester Street, and the northern and southern extensions of Storrs Street together with transportation improvements associated with the Opportunity Corridor. He also reviewed a series of roadways for which improvements were proposed to enhance safety but *not* to increase capacity, including Loudon Road, Fisherville Road, and North State Street. Lastly, he suggested that the City seek to have Hall Street designated as Route 3A which would allow South Main Street south of Kelley Square to become a local street south to Exit 12.

Board members had a few specific questions for Mr. Kennedy but were generally comfortable with the content and direction of his efforts on the Transportation Section.

- **Outline and status report for the Draft Master Plan**

Mr. Woodward discussed the draft outline and status report for the updated Master Plan that had previously been provided to members. He reminded the Board about the content of the 1993 Master Plan and provided an overview and status report on the proposed content for the current update of the Master Plan. He indicated his next effort will be to provide a land use section and future land use map to the Planning Board.

Mr. Drypolcher started a discussion about the level of detail the Master Plan would have relative to the South End as shown in the presentation this evening. He felt it should be made very clear what the City wants in this area as well as what the City doesn't want.

Ms. McClure felt that two things that should be emphasized in the plan are that the Storrs Street connection should be made and the City should negotiate a railroad crossing whether pedestrian or vehicular.

Mr. Gross felt that a major design improvement would be to continue Storrs Street to meet Hall Street. It is critical to start thinking in terms of that kind of access as this is too big a development area to chop up.

Mr. Swope felt the major principle that needed to be considered is to not bring traffic through residential neighborhoods. He felt the suggested the concept of including a parking garage overwhelmed the proposal.

CITY COUNCIL REFERRALS

- Consideration of a memorandum from the **Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce** relative to **Workforce Housing**.

The Planning Division had provided two reports to the Board, one dated December 14, 2006, and the other dated December 27, 2006, on the matter of workforce housing. The Planning Division's first report highlighted sections of recent municipal and Master Plan studies that have addressed housing in the City including the *Economic Development Strategy & Implementation Plan* prepared by RKG Associates in 1998 which addressed housing issues within the context of the City's overall economy. The *Economic Development and Tax Base Expansion Plan* prepared by Bonz and Company in 2005 was also cited by the Planning Division, noting that this plan again looked at housing in the context of the City's overall economy. The Division also reminded the Board that it had also received the *Report of EDAC on the Economic Development and Tax Base Expansion Plan* on October 14, 2005 and which contained the following conclusion: *Concord is a regional economic center. Therefore, the City should assume a leadership role in:*

- *Initiating discussions to determine how to promote appropriate work force housing;*
- *How to form cooperative arrangements to promote appropriate work force housing; and,*
- *Fostering creative solutions to this regional issue.*

The EDAC report also noted that high end housing and multifamily housing were two of the top seven forms of most fiscally productive forms of development that should be sought for the City.

The Planning Division report also indicated that the 2001 Zoning Ordinance contained extensive opportunities for housing, particularly in the Downtown and adjacent portions of the Opportunity Corridor, as well as the urban residential districts, and a number of commercial districts contain opportunities for mixed use development. It was noted that the Planning Board has found no basis for a growth management ordinance in Concord, in stark contrast to its neighboring communities.

The second report from the Planning Division provided the following housing data and information:

1. Comparative housing data published by the NH Office of Energy and Planning for 2005, as well as
2. Excerpts from the "Affordable Housing Needs Assessment for the Central New Hampshire Region Year 2000 Update" prepared by the CNHRPC.

Notably, the CNHRPC report concluded that Concord had more than met its fair share of the region's affordable housing needs.

Members felt this was a topic that needed more time for discussion than this evening would provide and recommended postponing discussion to the Board's recessed meeting in January.

There was then a discussion about the need for a more regional solution to workforce housing.

Mr. Gross felt there are people in the city who continue to pay too much for their housing and get too little, and there needs to be something done about that. He also felt that Concord did not need to be responsible for all of the workforce/affordable housing in the area. The City Council needs to encourage the business community to provide more and better affordable housing.

Ms. McClure suggested asking the Chamber of Commerce committee be invited to come to the next Planning Board meeting to discuss its report.

The Board agreed to invite the Chamber of Commerce Committee on Workforce Housing to attend either the Board's regular meeting on January 17th or the recessed meeting on January 31^s to discuss the report and respond to questions.

There was no further business to come before the Board and the meeting was adjourned at 10:35 PM.

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST:

Douglas G. Woodward
Clerk

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