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PLANNING COMMISSION
DESIGN COMMISSION
URBAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
SPECIAL-CALLED COMBINED MEETING
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2012, 6:30 PM
WALLER CREEK CENTER, 625 E. 10TH STREET ROOM 104
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701

Meeting Minutes

Planning Commission Members

NP - Dave Anderson
NP - Danette Chimenti - Parliamentarian
P - Mandy Dealey – Vice-Chair
NP - Richard Hatfield
P - Alfonso Hernandez
NP - Saundra Kirk - Secretary
P - Jean Stevens
P - Dave Sullivan - Chair
P - Donna Tiemann

Design Commission Members

P - James Shieh - Chair
P - Juan E. Cotera – Vice Chair
P - Dean Almy - Secretary
P - Hope Hasbrouck
P - Evan Taniguchi
P - Bart Whatley
P - Jeannie Wiginton

Urban Transportation Commission Members

P - Dustin Lanier – Chair
NP - Boone Blocker – Vice Chair
NP - Allen Demling
NP - Sheila Holbrook-White
NP - Dana Lockler
NP - Richard MacKinnon
NP - Eileen Schaubert

P= Present; NP=Not Present

CALL TO ORDER by Chair Shieh at 6:35 PM; No quorum of the Urban Transportation Commission

1. **CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: None**

2. NEW BUSINESS – DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION:

Briefing, discussion, and possible action on the Airport Boulevard Corridor Study Report seeking input on proposed recommendations.

[Commissioner Evan Taniguchi of the Design Commission recused himself from participation and discussion on the Airport Blvd. Corridor Study item].

Mr. Alan Hughes, City of Austin Transportation Department, presented a brief overview of the Airport Boulevard Transportation Corridor Study and introduced Mr. Joe Willhite representing Kimley-Horn and Associates who presented the report recommendations to the Commissions.

The following is a summary of the input and questions related to the Airport Corridor Study:

Design Commission

1. Hope Hasbrook –
   Would like to see bicycle and pedestrian facilities separated by a buffer. Pedestrians don't like to exercise or walk adjacent to a bicycle lane. Can bicycle and pedestrian connectivity be provided from further east and north?
2. Bart Whatley – Consider providing connections to destinations that may be outside the study area. How do we deal with the challenge of properties that have continuous curb cuts? Look into capturing unused ROW at intersections.
3. Jeannie Wiginton – Is the driver for minimizing open space economics and high density? Dedicate open space for parks and schools.
4. Dean Almy – Consider the role that open space plays within dense communies. Potential locations for affordable housing - need places for children to play relative to residential environments. Seek opportunities for consolidated recreation space that is not surrounded by traffic. Space should be away from roadway and particulate matter.
5. Juan Cotera – no comments.
6. James Shieh – Need usable open space located within walking distance with kids. Examine parking and possible parking nodes. The area will become congested so we need to keep the corridor less congested via parking strategies.

Urban Transportation Commission

1. Dustin Lanier – Relocating the Highland Mall Station and the creation of the Middle Fiskville Station are good ideas. Not in favor of reverse angle parking on Airport Boulevard due to the speed of traffic.

Planning Commission

1. Mandy Dealey – Not familiar with some of the jargon used in the report (pedestrian hybrid beacon, Michigan left, etc.) Would like a glossary of terms. Would like to see specific code items being recommended regarding driveway consolidation and parking.
2. Donna Tiemann – Interested in bikeability and walkability. Likes the buffer between bikes and traffic. Are the trees in the narrow buffer sustainable?

Can the sidewalk and bike areas become more organic and less rigid as shown in the cross sections? Can the sidewalk width be reduced as you get away from the commercial uses and approach neighborhoods to allow additional room for other uses?

3. Jeff Jack – How will business buy-in be obtained for the proposed medians? Has an infrastructure cost analysis been done? Consider narrower lane widths to reduce traffic speeds. What would happen to the proposal if urban rail does not materialize in Austin (Urban rail shown in the cross-section from IH-35 to Aldrich)?
4. Jean Stevens – No questions.
5. Alfonso Hernandez – No questions.
6. Dave Sullivan – Member of the Airport Blvd. Advisory Group, so no questions.

Citizen Input

1. Bryan Teich – Design needs to support manufacturing facility. Does not like the medians that are being proposed for Airport Boulevard. Access needs to be maintained.
2. Nick Tarrintino – Why so much emphasis on bicycle traffic? Is a center turn lane feasible?
3. Penelope Doherty – Businesses are concerned about the proposed median and the impact on their business.
4. Gerard Kinney – A 12' trail and a 7' cycle track as shown in one of the cross-sections seems redundant. Will the COA take over maintenance of Airport Boulevard between MLK and 183? The speed limit will need to be reduced to 35 MPH in order to allow on-street parking per city rules. Will the pedestrian connections between Cherrywood and Mueller be improved? Can a u-turn be provided on Airport Boulevard to improve Cherrywood connectivity? Figure out a way to negotiate a land swap at MLK and at Manor to provide a usable park instead of having intersections with green space adjacent to them.
5. Damon Howze – Would like to see sidewalks constructed away from the roadway and a lower posted speed limit. Airport Boulevard at Guadalupe Street pedestrian crossing – he can't get across Airport Boulevard before the pedestrian indication tells him not to enter the roadway. Would like to see the median provided for pedestrian refuge.
6. Charles Wagner – Concerned about business overflow parking in the neighborhood. Can parking be provided along the west side of Airport Boulevard?

No action was taken by the commissions.

2. Briefing on the Upper Airport Boulevard Form-Based Code Initiative.

[Commissioner Evan Taniguchi of the Design Commission rejoined the discussion on the Airport Blvd. Form-Based Code discussion item].

Mr. Jorge Rousselin, City of Austin PDRD, Urban Design, presented an overview of the Airport Boulevard Form-Based Code Initiative. The briefing included a general overview of the initiative to date with the intent to present further details of the draft code framework at a May combined commissions meeting.

The following is a summary of the input and questions related to the Airport Boulevard Form-Based Code Initiative:

1. Hope Hasbrook – As development regulations get drafted, would someone please consider the development of green, recreation space in relationship to the amount of development potential or anticipated development? There are few parks in such zone.
2. Evan Taniguchi – Relying on these types of corridor, transportation, and land use studies like these to depict the kind of policy direction that Imagine Austin is trying to demonstrate – you are headed in the right direction.
3. Bart Whatley – No comments related to the FBC.
4. Jeannie Wiginton – See comments above.
5. Dean Almy – Find ways to create equity in the Code that guarantee equity in terms of consolidated recreational space (as defined by Commissioner Hope Hasbrouck) that becomes comfortable for families with children. Glad to see the transition that is taking place along Airport which is in accord with the efforts of Imagine Austin with the introduction of tools such as the form-based code. Concern with "over coding" of the regulations. As this process moves forward, we begin to study the descriptive roles of form-based codes that there is a level of flexibility that is built into the system to allow different levels of economic participation from the micro to the macro- economic level.
6. Juan Cotera – no comments
7. James Shieh – Likes the creation of the vibrancy of the corridor. Need to provide parks and open space within walking distance for families with children. How will Compatibility be addressed? Compatibility is one of the biggest barriers in realizing a Vision such as the one presented for the form-based code. Is there a plan as to how that will work? What if someone wants to opt-in or opt-out?

Urban Transportation Commission

1. Dustin Lanier – Recognizes the challenge when trying to identify open space amenities on private property and appreciates the holistic approach to integrate open space in the corridor.

Planning Commission

1. Mandy Dealey –Would like to see specific form-based code items need to be addressed.
2. Donna Tiemann – no comments on the form-based code.

3. Jeff Jack - What is the existing zoning and entitlements for the area? What would the entitlements be in the future under this proposal and how do those differ from what entitlements exist today? Compatibility of form is understood – what about compatibility of land uses? Can bars go in the transition areas when not compatible with existing residential uses? The Planning Commission deals a lot with compatibility of land uses not just the building size. How does the form-based coed address those kinds of issues? Consider the neighborhood plans when addressing the compatibility issue – very concerned from transitioning to a new approach to Compatibility without the neighborhoods buying-in to it. If a form-based code is enacted, and neighborhoods buy-in to it, and give up the old standard of Compatibility with the expectation that the new nuanced form is going to be what we get, what are we going to build into the Code to ensure that we don't get scope creep – commercial creep that further exasperates the problem in the neighborhoods? While we try to maintain affordable housing in these neighborhoods, like Ridgetop, that we create a desired zone where investment dollars float to it and property values go up – how do you intend to address that so that we can maintain that affordable housing stock and vice versa, to get the level of affordability that exists in the existing neighborhoods, what is going to have to be the MFI for affordable housing in this new development?
4. Jean Stevens – No questions.
5. Alfonso Hernandez – How were ideas from McKinney, TX on form-based code implementation taken into consideration for this initiative and what were the lessons learned? Did the form-based code have the desired effect in the communities where form-based code was implemented? Implementing a form-based code in such a large land area- such as this, increase the land values?

Citizen Input

1. Nick Tarrintino – Will the form-based code provide for flexibility so that the regulations do not make it so that any changes to the property have to be implemented? What kind of flexibility will be built-in? Make sure that improvements to the businesses are still an option without forcing a property owner to develop under the form-based code.
2. Penelope Doherty – interested in pursuing form-based code for the residential portion of Harmon triangle in the Ridgetop Neighborhood.
3. Ms. Tepter – What are the issues for home owners that occur just behind the form-based code boundary?
4. Damon Howze – reinstate Tannehill Branch Creek on the Highland Mall site to have a greenbelt running though the site.
5. Charles Wagner – Affordable housing concerns and the impact of affordable taxes

ADJOURNMENT at 9:30 PM