

Fort Sanders Long Range Planning
Subcommittee: Long Term, Physical Land Use Planning Group
Notes from July 2, 2009 Meeting

Attendees

Randall DeFord (Historic Fort Sanders Neighborhood & CDC) , Alvin Nance (KCDC), Jeff Maples (UT Administration), Rudy McKinley (Children's Hospital), Amy Brooks (TPO), Joe Hultquist (City Council), John Craig (Property owner & Knox Heritage), David McGinley (City Engineering), Mark Donaldson (Executive Director of MPC), Anne Wallace (City Project Manager).

Meeting notes

MPC took the map from the last meeting and added additional layers of information. A suggestion was made regarding the Medium Density Residential (MDR) and High Density Residential (HDR) to extend around the northern and eastern boundary of the neighborhood in a perimeter style, since this is the current trend. The general consensus was to maintain the 2000 plan intent with density on the edges of the neighborhood. Also the proposed NC-1 overlay for the areas west of 22nd Street was discussed, other properties should be included, MPC will revise. It was noted that NC-1 overlays do not affect land uses, but do affect the form of buildings and can cover more than just residential properties.

Need to invite David Butler, Knoxville Museum of Art (KMA), to the meetings to understand KMA's proposed boundaries and master plan.

Need to follow up with the School Board regarding the property at 501 S. Twenty First St. What are the long term uses proposed for this property? Is there a way to make the park more accessible for the neighborhood?

Amy Brooks and Anne Wallace discussed that the Traffic Circulation Study by the MPC/TPO would be more of a working document that would provide recommendations to this subcommittee that could be approved for requests in the Capital budget and other funding sources. Anne Wallace mentioned that the Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) had published a call for projects for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding. The group discussed submitting an application with the following items:

1. It was suggested that a study be conducted of Clinch Ave. from Henley Street through the neighborhood to determine impacts of construction on Cumberland during and post construction. It was also suggested that this might be the time to also study the possibility of a streetcar or fixed guide way line for this route. Two other items that could be included are: A) the impacts to traffic & circulation that a two-way conversion of Lake and White Ave would have on the district; and B) the connectivity of Grand Ave. west ward with a fly over the railroad towards Tyson Park that could help to eliminate the current congestion on 22nd Street during peak travel times.

2. Creation of sidewalks and sidewalk improvements: since this is the most densely populated neighborhood in the City/County with the additional draw of connectivity to a major university, downtown, shopping and entertainment within "walkable" distances; connecting the network would help to reduce the number of very "short trips" under five miles for students and residents within the Fort. A suggestion for precedent on this type of request was the Bearden neighborhood.

3. This area is already served with a significant number of trolley and bus routes. The group is aware that some of the CMAQ funding will be requested for KAT's purchases of new buses. An element that is missing within the Fort Sanders area are bus shelters. Having safe, well lighted, easily accessible shelters is likely to increase the use of the public transit system that is already in place for this neighborhood.

4. Finally, would these dollars be available for street tree plantings in downtown, Ft. Sanders, and congested areas - given the ability of trees to help process vehicle pollution and the reduction in the heat island effect that occurs in urban areas which would help to reduce the number of air quality alert days?

The discussion returned to the Neighborhood Conservation Overlay (NC-1) and someone asked what the impacts on rental property might be with the overlay. The Historic Zoning Commission (HZC) would have to provide approval for improvements or changes to contributing structures. It will be important to catalogue contributing vs. non-contributing structures within the proposed district. Also it will be important to build consensus and work with the neighborhood to establish the boundary. Final approval of the boundary would require a majority vote by Council.

Another item that was discussed was the idea of a rental property program. Potentially this program could be started by charging x amount per bedroom for inspections. Another thought was that registration could be required or grandfathering status on codes and occupancy could be lost. Also KCDC mentioned that the participants in the Section 8 housing program could have a capital improvement incentive for subsidies (90-110% payment). This idea was brought up to highlight a "carrot" approach to the program.

Also discussed was a Special Assessment District (SAD), Mark Donaldson, mentioned that SAD's could be used to fund a façade program and an extension of the "My Front Yard Program". Fort Sanders is located in the Federal Empowerment Zone (EZ) and would be eligible for these program funds. Additionally, these funds could be directed at owner occupied or registered renters as an additional incentive.

Further discussion occurred regarding the location of hospital expansion within the neighborhood and the neighborhood representative, Randall DeFord, mentioned that he would prefer to see the hospitals expand north (to Grand Ave.) and south (to Cumberland Ave.) instead of expanding east or west ward since there was still historic housing stock in these areas.

Updates from Partners

Jeff Maples from UT mentioned that an expansion for the University Center has been planned. The location is east of 16th Street and currently the project is in the planning stages.

Construction might begin at the earliest in the summer of 2011. This is part of the University's long term Master Plan. There are feasibility questions that still need to be answered. The design for this project may start one year from now and will likely be an 12-18 month process.

Councilman Hultquist asked about the Form Based Code for Cumberland Avenue and what was happening with the street cross sections. City Engineering has recommended that the detailed specifics be removed from the zoning ordinance and be placed in the Land Development Manual. This will give the Code more flexibility while still providing intent and guidelines. Mark Donaldson noted that this change removes the possibility of incremental change provided by private property owners. David McGinley noted that it was important not to violate the "Rule of Proportionality" regarding required improvements.

Conclusions

The goal of this group is to provide implementation recommendations to the city and other entities and to assist with actions that will benefit the long term physical development of this area, especially regarding transportation.

Mark Donaldson will provide a copy of the Implementation Section of the 2000 Fort Sanders Forum Plan.

Next Meetings

Full Committee meets on Thursday, August 6 at 3:00pm in the Baker Center.

Long Range Sub Committee next meets on Thursday, September 3 at 3:00pm in the Baker Center.

Post Meeting Follow Up

July 5, 2009 – Anne Wallace contacted the TPO with the proposed ideas for the CMAQ application; it was subsequently determined that item 1 and 4 were not eligible for this funding. Items 2 and 3 (sidewalk improvements and bus shelters) can be submitted for this funding.

July 10, 2009 – CMAQ application requesting funding for new sidewalks, sidewalk improvements and bus shelters in the Fort Sanders and Cumberland Ave area was submitted to the TPO. A copy of the application is available upon request.

July 21, 2009 – Invitation to attend Fort Sanders Long Range Planning meeting was sent to David Butler, Executive Director of KMA.

July 22, 2009 – Contacted the Facilities Department of Knox County School System, awaiting return call.