

Fort Sanders Long Range Planning
Subcommittee: Physical Land Use Planning Group
Notes from September 3, 2009 Meeting

Attendees

Ginny Morrow (Covenant Health), Randall DeFord (Historic Fort Sanders Neighborhood & CDC), Alvin Nance (KCDC), Bill Thurman (Children's Hospital), Amy Brooks (TPO), John Craig (Property owner & Knox Heritage), David McGinley (City Engineering), Kim Trent (Knox Heritage), Anne Wallace (City Project Manager).

Meeting notes

Anne Wallace handed out the Implementation Strategies that were discussed at the August 2009 full committee meeting. This table includes seven categories for plan implementation; it was originally created by the 2000 Ft. Sanders Forum Plan and it was updated at the last meeting by assessing what has been accomplished since that time and what still needs to be done. MPC and Policy & Communications staff recognized that the following categories of implementation are applicable to the Physical Land Use Planning Group: 1) Land Use & Development Plan, 2) Core Conservation Plan, 3) Open Space & Parks Plan, 4) Sidewalk Improvements Plan, and 5) Transportation Plan.

In the discussion regarding Land Use & Development Plan, revising the R-3 zoning was the main focus. R-3 has the ability to place 24 units plus to the acre (typically tower form) and this seems to be too intense for the core of Fort Sanders. Also Randall DeFord offered that what has typically been developed was really R-2 "plus" variances. The R-3 zone was really created for UT in the 1960's when the university was in a period of growth and whole block redevelopment was anticipated. The typical variances that have been requested are for setbacks (which has been somewhat taken care of by NC-1 guidelines) and parking (which was often varied because of the on-street parking within the neighborhood, however, that resource seems to be used to full capacity currently). It was noted that the parking ordinance seems to be designed for this area when it was less likely for students to bring a car to school, this may need to be updated. Documentation of the parking issues may be helpful.

Another conversation included using 18th Street as a model street to provide a narrow right of way with parking on both sides and two-way traffic. However, the hospital representatives did request caution with regards to this possibility as it relates to the need for emergency vehicles to be able to maneuver the right of way, especially if there were any obstacles prohibiting access to the hospitals via the normal routes established for emergency traffic. Additionally, considering rear loading of buildings may help, however, there are conditions where some properties are not served by an alley. Follow up on this discussion should include: 1) Check with MPC Development Services regarding discrepancies between R-2 & R-2 and 2) Check with City BZA staff regarding the most common variance request in the Ft. Sanders area. As a sidenote it was

requested that the Fire Marshall review the proposed Form Based Code for Cumberland Ave.

As part of the discussion on the Core Conservation Plan, the concept of a redevelopment area had come up in previous discussions, so Alvin Nance, Executive Director of KCDC, provided an overview of State legislation and local process. Some highlights of that discussion are included here in bullet form:

- KCDC acts at the will of the City Administration
- A redevelopment plan creates an approved process
- Requires working with residents for plan development
- Plan creates an area of focus for public dollars
- Creates the possibility for KCDC to use its state given powers of eminent domain to force a sale (appraised value is the minimum offer for sale)
- Property owners can challenge amount offered through the court system
- Public process is required for the creation of a redevelopment plan
- KCDC currently manages 21 redevelopment areas for the city (16 are commercial, 5 are residential)
- State law allows KCDC to acquire real property for reasons of blight, non-conforming lot sizes, and to clean a title ownership (most condemnations are for title clearing)
- Urban renewal powers enable public dollars to be spent on private property
- Plan requirements include: existing land use, local objectives and process forward
- Appeal process includes: Advisory board, KCDC Board, and City Council
- Provides possibility of using Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
- Cumberland Ave is NOT currently a redevelopment area (property east of 17th St. in the I-275 corridor is a redevelopment area)
- South Waterfront is a TIF district (where monies go to pay for public improvements) cannot then use TIF for individual projects (no double dipping)
- Redevelopment plans do not "sunset", no specific endpoint; TIF's have an endpoint

This discussion sparked an idea that there could be a redevelopment area placed over Fort Sanders area, create a TIF district for the hospitals and capitalize on the increased tax revenue from the new medical office building. This would focus funds into the Fort Sanders area for public improvements, but it would remove the taxes from the general fund for the city.

Follow up: At this time, City Administration has no plans to pursue a TIF district in Ft. Sanders. A redevelopment area plan would need to be separately considered.

The other items were not addressed at this meeting due to time constraints.

Updates from Partners

The hospital representatives noted growing concern with the back up of traffic from the Metron Center Way signal on Cumberland Ave. Evidently traffic was backed up into the Children's hospital garage off 22nd Street one day last week and once employees left the garage it took more than 40 minutes to get to Cumberland Ave. Randall DeFord asked if the High Priority Project funding comes through for the RR overpass improvements, would it be possible to reroute Volunteer Blvd. to come out across from Metron? Anne Wallace asked if Mr. DeFord could provide a sketch of what that might look like.

One other item came up. Randall DeFord mentioned that KUB was looking back into the neighborhood to locate a substation that they have been working on various sites for 2 plus years. He was significantly concerned about the impact of a substation on the quality of life in the neighborhood even if it was more aesthetically pleasing than a standard station. He recommended that KUB investigate sites on the east side of 17th Street which is currently in a redevelopment area and is therefore eligible for brownfield redevelopment grants. Anne Wallace said she would pass this idea onto KUB.

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.

Next Meetings

Full Committee meets on Thursday, October 1 at 3:00 pm in the Knoxville Museum of Art.

Long Range Subcommittee next meets on Thursday, November 5 at 3:00 pm in the Baker Center.

Post Meeting Follow Up

At this time, City Administration has no plans to pursue a TIF district in Ft. Sanders. A redevelopment area plan would need to be separately considered.