



Downtown Investment Authority
Redevelopment Plan Committee

City Hall at St. James
117 West Duval St., Lynwood Roberts Room

Wednesday, October 23, 2013 – 3:00 p.m.

REDEVELOPMENT PLAN COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Board Members Present: Chairwoman, Melody Bishop, Oliver Barakat, Tony Allegretti

Office of General Counsel: Jason Gabriel

Council Member: Lori Boyer

Attendees: Tony Robbins, Consultant; Lara Diettrich, Consultant; Aundra Wallace, DIA CEO; and Karen Underwood, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER

Board Member Melody Bishop, Chair of the DIA Redevelopment Plan Committee, called the meeting to order at approximately 3:07 p.m.

NEAR TERM INVESTMENT PROJECTS **Lara Diettrich & Tony Robbins Consultants**

Chairwoman Bishop stated that the meeting dates/times might be changed due to lack of participation.

Tony Robbins, welcomed the public, and provided presentation.

The discussion is to target areas where the board wants to move the needle.

- Small-scale changes next year that could lead to big changes down the road
- Use Southside TIF & Downtown Economic Development Fund

Strategic Objectives

- Strengthen the Downtown Economy
- Make Downtown More Balanced and Livable (beautify, more housing, cultural diversity)
- Build Capacity (diversify revenues, foster alliances)
- Improve Downtown Mobility
- Protect and Enhance Open space

Downtown Northbank CRA – Near term investments

1. Laura Street corridor (from Monroe to Landing)

- (a) Incentives for renovation of eligible buildings along this corridor
- (b) Property condition report for Snyder Memorial Church

- (c) Improved and strategically-located lighting for real and perceived safety
- (d) Use of potted plants, lower maintenance landscaping
- (e) Art in public places competition and/or partner with cultural council to create an arts promenade from MOCA to the Landing
- (f) Rotating art installed on permanent monuments or kiosks (are banks with Laura Street address could sponsor the monument/kiosk in front of their buildings).

2. East Bay Street Corridor (incl. Annex, Courthouse, Shipyards)

- (a) Road diet to prioritize people by replacing one vehicle lane with wider sidewalk, bike lane, landscaping and returning two-way movement to East Bay Street.
- (b) Create a shade canopy which encourages pedestrian traffic
- (c) Remove city-owned blighting influences by demolishing former courthouse and city hall annex and perform site analysis
- (d) Form a development plan for Courthouse and Annex that contains guidelines that establishes an opportunity for private capital investment to be made
- (e) Give our best to the public: Shipyards becomes works class city park
- (f) Makes critical riverfront property ready for new mixed-use development

3. Riverside Avenue/Forest Street corridor

- (a) Unity Plaza and its programmed events expected to be very popular
- (b) Brooklyn small businesses are having parking issues with employees of the big companies taking up on-street parking all day
- (c) Currently six lanes with hollow capacity (23% utilized)
- (d) Convert outside travel lanes on both roads to create two tree-lane boulevards with on-street parking and bike lanes
- (e) Can be accomplished with ROW without altering the engineering centerline, drainage utilizes
- (f) Reduce the pedestrian crossing distance strengthening a pedestrian-friendly connect to the river
- (g) Community driven concept (since 2004)

4. Downtown East-West Circulator

- (a) Reliable and frequent trolley system that extends from RAM to the Jacksonville Landing, Bay Street, and Metro Park/sports complex
- (b) Partner with JTA for six months to study alternative means of transportation to connect our target areas to surrounding neighborhoods
- (c) Recommended one-year pilot plan
- (d) Federal grants and other programs to assist purchase of environmentally suitable vehicles to serve the route
- (e) Explore operational funding resources that allow reduced or free fares for the circulator
- (f) Eliminate the perception Downtown is difficult to navigate. Supports use of peripheral parking facilities.

5. Southside CRA – Near Term Investments

- (a) Riverplace Boulevard
- (b) Riverside Avenue/Forest Street
- (c) Waterfront activation
- (d) Wayfinding signage
- (e) Zoning Overlay Amendment

6. Riverplace Boulevard Corridor

- (a) Existing design promotes high speed with long, unprotected pedestrian crossing
- (b) Road diet reducing travel lanes from five to two. Eliminate traffic signals in favor of roundabouts
- (c) Calm traffic speeds, provide wider sidewalks, street trees, protected bike lanes and on-street parking lanes (mimics recent Sam Marco Blvd. improvements offering seamless transition to Southbank)
- (d) Create safe pedestrian crossing at each intersection and public parking encouraging use of river walk
- (e) Rain gardens in planting strips along sidewalks and previous pavement to treat quality as well as quantity of storm water run-off pavements to treat quality as well as quantity of storm water run-off
- (f) Include public art by local artists in the streetscape

7. Waterfront Activation

- (a) Landing about to unveil redesign plans so start with Friendship Park
- (b) Regular weekly monthly and annual festivals and events to draw local citizens who may not utilize Downtown regularly
- (c) Emphasis on getting families to come Downtown (concert series, kid's activities movies)
- (d) Park attraction on a pier, paddleboard, kayak launch
- (e) Assist with funding staff, consultants, events promotional materials, distribution with other organizations in order to leverage and optimize each organizations efforts and funds.
- (f) Tie-in with Hemming Plaza and Landing events

8. Wayfinding Signage

- (a) Existing condition unacceptable
- (b) Ability to string other Downtown projects together
- (c) Address an impediment for visitors by offering easily indefinable directions to public parking, public spaces and points of interest
- (d) Combats the negative perception that is difficult to find your way around Downtown
- (e) A form of beautification by removing the old, purple signs from a past era
- (f) Plans are already complete and have been waiting for funding for many years

9. **Zoning Overlay Amendment**

- (a) Cumbersome, duplicative
- (b) Consolidate districts (go from 10 to 5)
- (c) Similar to districts in Wayfinding Program
- (d) Remove impediments to outdoor seating

Board Member Barakat commented on the Laura Street Corridor and suggested extending it to Church Street and not just Monroe Street, so that it encompasses MOCA, the Library, and Hemming Plaza.

He also stated that he is a proponent of the East Bay Street Corridor as being a secondary targeted area.

Referencing the Shipyards as a World Class City Park, Board Member Barakat liked the notion of the board to challenge them to have a World Class City Park. He was not sure if the Shipyards were the appropriate place for that because it was not very walkable from the CBD.

Council Member Boyer shared Oliver's thoughts regarding the Shipyards as a park. She was not sure if the jail and Maxwell House was the place to have a park. Metropolitan Park is already down at the Stadium. The Shipyards property and the Courthouse City Hall Annex site, is planning to be demolished. The conflicting issue of the Court House City Hall Annex site would be the perfect convention location because of its proximity and tie-in with the Hyatt.

Councilwoman Boyer commented about when the mobility plan was adopted, the mobility plan was adopted based on capacity studies of the existing roadways. If the roadway capacities are reduced, how does that affect the underlying premise and calculations?

Lara Diettrich noted that they needed feedback on what to stay and what to go. She referenced the infrastructure improvement and way finding. When they were walking last week, they could not get to the South river walk unless located at Friendship Park. The board needs to consider that when dealing with these districts, how many different layers of processed and regulations are there. He stated if there were duplicative layers, it would not make things efficient and identifiable.

Aundra Wallace referenced the Lavilla neighborhood. If someone move into the downtown corridor in the age range of 18-35 years old, as they mature they will seek different types of living accommodations. Lavilla is a very good overflow neighborhood in terms of moving from standard condominium living to more of a residential, single family townhouse type of living concept. The JTA will hold their Draft JTA Joint Use and Transit-Oriented Development Policies and Guidelines meeting tomorrow October 24, 2013 at 5:00 p.m. There will be various conversations about how they would like to see transit developments take place in the Lavilla area.

Chairwoman Bishop asked Tony and Lara where should the board focus and grow our college campuses downtown. Lara Diettrich responded that a large campus does not belong downtown because it takes up too much land. She suggested having satellite campuses at city spaces on floors, buildings, or properties. There are all kinds of different reasons for Undergrad and Grad students to

be working and accessing satellite functions. Maybe the CRA and City could use incentives to take these spaces and make the more modern and functional.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

John Nooney – handed out a listing of nine comments (attached)

Bruce Fouraker - Their needs to be signage on the river walk access to be sure that people see where they need to go through to get to the river walk.

Jen Jones – commented about the Shipyards, Bike Share, and Spark Districts. At the last DIA Experience committee, Vanessa Harper spoke about the river walk project, the purpose of education and activation and helping the community utilize the services that are already there.

Jennifer Hewett-Apperson - Activation & Re-use of Historic/City-owned properties. She stated that the Snyder Memorial, Florida Theatre building, Times Union Center and Riverwalk Front are all very ready for capital investment. The Shipyards, Courthouse, and Annex site could be viewed as a long term project. She urged the committee, City Council and the DIA to look at Brooklyn Bridge Park in New York City. That would be a perfect example of what the Shipyards could become.

Dick Jackson – expand the existing skyway express.

Mike Balanky - addressed Southbank fees.

Chairwoman Bishop inquired if there was a need or support for combining the districts. Alex Sifakis responded that it would not make sense to combine them and grow development. He stated that if the districts were combined make sure, the ordinances enabling that development are removed for development downtown.

Council Member Boyer noted that that could be done by an amendment. The locations with off-site parking requirements and the locations where there is not are different. There are no parking requirements, if it is located in the central core and if not located in the central core, there are parking requirements. Other criteria's are tied to those districts.

Council Member Boyer noted that more freedom would be better if zoning restrictions were taken away. She asked the developers if there were any issues about what is allowed in an area. She stated if the developers invest big dollars in an area, they do not want something done on the property across the street or next door, that impairs investments.

Tony Robbins encouraged the public to please join either of the public forums that will be held on Monday, November 4th at the Hyatt Regency at 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. and the next forum will be held on Tuesday, November 5th at the Wyndham from 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairwoman Bishop adjourned the meeting at approximately 5:07 p.m.

The next scheduled DIA CRA Redevelopment Plan Committee Workshop meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 13, 2013, at 3:00 p.m., in the Lynwood Roberts Room.

Please note that all attachments referenced will be posted on the DIA Web site <http://www.coj.net/departments/downtown-investment-authority.aspx>

The written minutes for this meeting are only an overview of what was discussed. For verbatim comments of this meeting, an audio CD is available upon request. Please contact Karen Underwood, at (904) 255-7567 or by email at karenu@coj.net.