

downtown napa

SPECIFIC PLAN



Meeting Summary September 30, 2009 **Downtown Plan Steering Committee, Hatt Hall, 500 Main Street, Napa**

I. Introductions. Tambri Heyden, Community Development Director, described the purpose of this Downtown Steering Committee meeting and introduced Grania Lindberg as a new Committee member. Michelle Williams, who represented the Arts Council, has resigned to take a new job in Santa Cruz. In accordance with the Committee's meeting guidelines, Grania was the "alternate" and has been appointed. A long term resident, she has expertise particularly with housing non profits and flood programs.

Agenda and Feedback from Meeting Survey. Chris Beynon, Principal with MIG and the meeting facilitator, went over the agenda. Tambri Heyden and Dana Smith, Assistant City Manager then provided results of a brief Committee member survey asking how the meetings are going. Tambri reported that most members responded; that people are generally happy with the meeting room and with the materials, although some have asked for added background information to assist decision making. Most comments pertained to the meeting structure and facilitation. Several members wanted more discussion time and clearer resolution of issues. Many also wanted additional meetings to fully discuss issues. Tambri Heyden said that the meeting's agenda and flow had been adjusted at this meeting to respond to comments raised, and that a meeting had been added to provide more time to discuss the focus areas. Another comment: while public comments are important, they need to be concise and on point to the Committee's discussion. The Committee appreciated the survey and response – coffee will be provided at future meetings!

II. County Facilities Master Plan. Brett Ferguson, Deputy CEO for Napa County, then provided a handout and summary of the County's Facilities Master Plan and jail expansion plan. Several County employees from various departments and the Courts were available to respond to Committee questions. He described their total facilities – they are a major downtown employer with about 500 employees Downtown and another 400 at the Health and Human Services complex on Old Sonoma Rd. They have an outdated jail that doesn't satisfy today's or future needs. The Board of Supervisors has approved a jail expansion in Downtown and that is their first priority. The current location is ideal in several respects in that there is a secure tunnel (avoiding prisoner transport) to the newly built Criminal Courts building; it is near to the Public Defender and District Attorney's Offices, Probation Dept. and other services; and it avoids the need to try to find a new location, which is a difficult process. By the end of 2010

the County will finalize an overall Master Plan and debt capacity plan; at some future time they will surplus unneeded property – likely to include the former County Corporation Yard on the riverfront, and the Carrithers building on First Street, which the city has a first right of refusal on. He emphasized the County is willing to work with the City on design of the jail and administration complex.

Discussion:

Jeff Doran said from the Committee's standpoint the jail location is not "ideal". Gordon Huether said the County as a major property owner should be represented on the Committee and other members were also interested in this; Dana Smith said the County had applied but a decision was made to keep this citizens committee and coordinate with the County at more of a staff level; staff will work on this request. Kevin Teague requested (as the County can exempt itself from City review) that the County express some level of agreement that they will adhere to Plan design principles. While several members said the County will not change their plans, they would like more information about why the jail can't move. Lisa Gansky said the conversation should at least continue. Jeff Doran said, for example, perhaps if there is a greater building setback on Main, retail could line that frontage. The Committee had an interest in maintaining the library downtown. The Committee will send any additional comments or questions on the County Facilities Master Plan to staff.

III. Draft Vision. Tambri Heyden led a discussion of the draft Downtown Vision. The Committee had provided a variety of concepts that were then woven into a draft Vision statement sent out to the Committee for review over the last month. Several comments from members had been incorporated into this evening's version. After discussion, the Committee agreed it was as good as "working draft" ("95% there") with the inclusion of "an active riverfront" and the "Napa River" in the initial paragraph.

Public Comment:

- The Vision "bullet point" describing a sustainable city should be moved up, perhaps into the first paragraph
- George Altamura presented a concept for a "vintner's walk". To take advantage of the Napa Valley vintners, he suggested that vintners receive a monument in exchange for providing streetscape improvements along that block. It could be an attraction and help define downtown.
- Are there short term deliverables (yes, on web site) and the Committee should take care to recognize how downtown plans affect residential neighborhoods.
- Concern about fire lanes and fire safety in neighborhoods that might be affected by changes downtown
- Is the jail a part of the "diversity" mentioned in the vision statement?
- The jail should not be downtown; maybe both the jail and courthouse should be moved
- The County parking lot block should become a park.
- Are we a micro-urban community?

- A consistent streetscape is important, but maintenance is equally important.
- Maybe a Downtown subcommittee can be formed to meet with the County

IV. Revised Strategy Diagram. Anchi Mei of MIG described the map changes that had been made to the strategy diagram from the last meeting. Ryan Gregory said that the planned pedestrian bridge over the river to the Oxbow Preserve (at north boundary of the Planning Area) needed to be added. After some discussion and including this change, the Committee agreed with the Revised Strategy Diagram. It was recognized that the “focus areas” were yet to be discussed in detail and this could modify the land uses for those areas. The boundary of the Specific Plan area will be moved to include the Borreo Building and adjacent areas on Soscol on request of the Committee.

Entertainment District. Julianne Ward, City Planner said that the Committee had been interested in encouraging entertainment uses over a broad area downtown, but also in having a focused entertainment district for marketing purposes. She said that entertainment uses being discussed include: live music and performances; karaoke, comedy and dancing. She introduced a tiered approach:

- Level 1. Allow incidental entertainment uses (such as individual performers) throughout the city by right as ancillary uses to restaurants, bookstores, etc if they meet performance standards.
- Level 2. Indoor Entertainment. Require an entertainment permit for other indoor entertainment uses and establish standards for review. Inside the entertainment district, the permit would be handled administratively; outside the entertainment district, the entertainment use would still be encouraged but require a Use Permit.
- Level 3. Outdoor entertainment. Require an entertainment permit for outdoor entertainment uses and establish standards for review. Inside the entertainment district, the permit would be handled administratively; outside the entertainment district, the entertainment use would still be encouraged but require a Use Permit.

Inside the entertainment district, new housing would be forewarned about potential noise/activity conflicts and be designed to reduce such conflicts.

The Committee asked questions of clarification and discussed the approach, agreeing that the tiered concept and approach is a good one, with details about specific standards to be discussed further at a later time. Craig Smith said he would provide information on standards that Fullerton uses to staff. The Committee reviewed the Entertainment District boundaries and recommended that they be extended along Main Street up to the south side of Clinton. The boundaries will also be reviewed further as the focus areas are discussed in more detail. The Committee had questions about noise which will be addressed at the time the performance standards are drafted.

One-way Two-way Circulation. The Committee had received a pros and cons discussion paper on one-way two way streets to provide background information regarding one way vs. two-way streets. Jack LaRochelle, Public Works Director introduced this item. He said that within the Downtown Planning Area, the Committee can make a recommendation to change the streets to two way as a part of the Plan. However, any change like this is linked and may have impacts on areas outside the Downtown—in Napa’s case particularly on First and Second Streets between Downtown and Highway 29. These impacts will need to be evaluated as part of the environmental impact report. In response to a question about two way streets outside Downtown, Jack responded that he hasn’t seen an analysis yet, but First Street may not be wide enough east of Jefferson to accommodate two way traffic flows (i.e., it may need more lanes). The Committee supports two way traffic downtown and evaluating the linked alternatives of two way streets or reversing directions outside Downtown in the EIR. Jeff Doran commented that one way streets negatively affect retail success and that economic vitality related to traffic flow should be included in the analysis.

Jack La Rochelle asked whether they want to continue to explore re-opening Coombs 1 or 2-way. Lisa Gansky said she has heard from several neighbors in the Old Town neighborhood concerns that opening Coombs through to Pearl may create more traffic and congestion on Coombs, that could create spillover impacts into their neighborhood for people trying to avoid Coombs. Dan Worden said opening Coombs will improve visibility into the center and access to the parking lot. Kate King said that after walking through Coombs Plaza, she had changed her mind; she believes that the plaza has the potential to be a great green space and she would like it to stay if the Town Center stays. Gordon Huether likes the idea of reducing the “superblock” and providing a slow through street. Peter Mott suggested that if other streets downtown are made two-way, maybe *not* having Coombs open is less of a problem; retaining the plaza’s walkability could be an asset. Craig Smith said that doesn’t address visibility into the center. Ryan Gregory said the street only needs 2- 10’ lanes with wide sidewalks/bike lanes. Grania Lindberg felt some street needs to be opened up; Sarah Van Giesen also was in favor of reopening this and other streets. Paul Wagner said if the Center is developed with stores, people would walk; it doesn’t need to be opened. It can be kept for pedestrians and bicyclists. Chris Beynon noted that clearly there is no consensus yet on this item and it will continue next time when the town center focus area is discussed. Gordon Huether had to leave, but emphasized the County should be invited to future meetings.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan proposal

Jean Hasser introduced the proposal, identifying several proposed off road and onstreet routes. The goals as expressed by the committee are to provide an interconnected system, usable by all ages through downtown, the city and beyond. She worked informally with two Committee members, Paul Wagner and

Lisa Gansky to consider the various routes suggested by the Committee. The routes include:

1. An Oxbow/east of river "path" through downtown that would expand the existing sidewalk along the west side of Soscol by using the southbound bike. This would help "close the gap" in providing an off road bike path through the city. It is not ideal as it still requires intersection crossings. To provide a better system, it may be technically feasible to provide undercrossings under Third, First and Soscol, but that is much more expensive and needs further analysis to determine flood project feasibility, both hydraulically and environmentally.
2. A west-side-of-river slower River Trail route from the end of the Crosstown Connector to south of Pearl Street, then along the Oxbow Bypass promenade, a new, wider ped/bike bridge across Napa Creek to the new Plaza behind the Opera House, a First Street crossing preferably *under* the First Street bridge; or a mid block crossing, both of which require further study, then along the existing promenade, continuing south at Napa Mill along the River to Imola.
3. An east-west Class 1 Napa Creek path from Oxbow Bypass Trails to Downtown, the Town Center and neighborhoods to north.
4. A Class 2 north/south route (bike lanes) along Coombs from Division Street to Coombs Street Plaza, which requires removing parking spaces on the east side of Coombs
5. A Class 2 east/west (bike lanes) route along Third from the bridge to Coombs or Franklin to provide an east-west street connector through the busiest part of downtown, removing parking on the south side of Third.
6. Class 3 (signed bike routes) on Third Street past Franklin, on Pearl/Clay Streets west from Coombs and Brown Street north of Clinton.

Paul Wagner said he thinks this is the beginnings of a good system emphasizing the need for a continuous Class 1 route along Soscol. The Committee Ok'd the concept and referred it to the Bicycle Advisory Commission for review and comment, and would like to know the order of magnitude of costs associated with the various options.

Public Comments

- Kohl's big building is a problem and should be demolished. We need more density and hotels downtown.
- I like Juliana Inman's idea of a new "art" bridge, which could be designed after an international competition, citing the beautiful Redding Calavatra pedestrian bridge that is now an attraction
- If going 2-way to 1- way, consider where it changes. If changing direction at Jefferson would require reductions in lawns, consider changing at Seminary.
- Downtown is too small to provide for a vibrant arts district. Consider the area between First/Silverado/Third and the River as an arts district

- A Second Street resident said he was not notified of this meeting and said it would require a general plan amendment to change First or Second to two way. No fact based information has been provided on this topic. Backing out on to the street would become a safety issue. They'd like a win-win and want to be included in the discussion. Chris Beynon said there will be a follow up neighborhood workshop on traffic.
- Carrithers building footprint could be a public plaza
- Consider developing a tiered system in the Downtown for live-work regulations.
- Concur that an environmental impact report is needed. Two way streets are not necessary to make retail successful; look at Bel Aire Plaza.
- MIG and city staff need to be clear that this is a specific plan with specific requirements that will need to be met; and also be clear about the planning process and how it fits with the EIR. This will lead to better community involvement.
- Copia is too far away to be an arts district. Would like to see an arts district closer to the Downtown.
- Invite the County

V. Check in, Summary and Next Steps

Chris Beynon asked for feedback on the meeting; in general members commented they liked coming to clearer decisions on items discussed and appreciated the flow of the meeting.

A meeting is added to discuss the Focus Areas and height, therefore the October 24 Community Workshop needs to be postponed. This date and place will be used for the Steering Committee meeting instead. We will have dates for the Community Workshop finalized in 2-3 days, to allow time for adequate publicity.