

Downtown Working Group
Meeting #3 – February 12, 2013
Town/County Conference Room 1:00 PM – 3:30 PM
Meeting Notes

Attendees: DWG: Dave Harvey (DH), Mickey Brown (MB), Bruce Woodward (BW), Jay Deinken (JD), Jim Smith (JS), Bill Taylor (BT); Absent: Jo Bacon, John Vereuck, Tom Cage

Public: Elizabeth Tenney (ET), Jack Copeland (JC)

Staff: Ellen Clark (EC), Jessica Morriss (JM), Abe Barge (AB), Nore Winter (NW), Martha Miller (MM)

Agenda Item 1: Meeting Agenda and Purpose

Jessica Morriss provides an overview of the meeting purpose and agenda. No additional items are added to the agenda. The DWG approves the 1-28-13 meeting notes with no changes.

Agenda Item 2: Consultant Team Introductions

Jessica Morriss introduces Martha Miller of Dyett & Bhatia, who are the consultants for the Commercial Zones chapter update as part of the Zoning Code Update Project, and Abe Barge and Nore Winter of Winter & Company, who are the consultants for the Main Street Implementation Plan project. Ms. Morriss describes how the two firms are working together to successfully complete both projects.

Agenda Item 3: Recap Input from 1-28-13 DWG Meeting and Next Steps to Develop Draft Commercial Zones Chapter (Dyett & Bhatia)

Martha Miller provided an overview of the progress on the draft Commercial Zones chapter update, as well as what has been heard from the DWG thus far. She indicated that the comments and consensus items heard from the DWG will be used to inform the next steps of the draft Code update and that a final draft will be brought forward in the near future for staff and DWG review. The Planning and Economic Development Commission will later review the Commercial Zoning Chapter and provide final direction to staff. The objectives of the Commercial Zoning Chapter are (including, but not limited to):

- Accomplish the goals of the General Plan with regard to achieving active street level uses, feet-first transportation, creating a pedestrian-friendly public and private realm,
- Create economic development opportunities and long-term community sustainability through zoning that achieves the desired improvements related to the public and private realm.
- Achieve the types of uses and buildings the community wants through the code.
- Provide clarity to the development community and public.
- Provide flexibility for development.

Ms. Miller stated that one of the best ways for the Town to attract reinvestment is to use the zoning standards and permit review process to incentive and achieve the types of development that are desired. She stated that Dyett & Bhatia felt that the current Commercial Zoning chapter of the Zoning Code is too prescriptive and does not have enough flexibility. She described that some aspects of project review are best handled through the Design Review Permit process and that it may be more efficient and cost-effective if the Design Review process was done separately from the entitlement process.

The Working Group made the following comments:

- EC – Staff has heard from many people that the code and the permit process (combination of entitlement and design review) are not flexible enough.
- JS – Currently developers have to go through an entire design process, designing a very specific building, in order to get a use permit. It's way too expensive. We need to find a way to streamline the process and make it cheaper to build in order to attract more developers. Why can't we just get entitlements for a "white box" so that we know what we're allowed to build (massing/density, etc.)? This reduces the risk and the upfront expense. Then when it is time to construct, go through the design review process. Allow the developer to sell the permit/entitlement to someone else and let the design review occur at a later date.
- BT - Design approval has led to revisions to the project at the "white box" level. The Town combined the permit process and the design review process in order to try to streamline the process for the developer. If you separate the processes, how do you avoid the possibility of having to go back and change something related to the entitlement as you're going through the subsequent design review process?
- JS – I would like to see the need for a conditional use permit removed altogether.
- BT – I agree. It would be nice to get rid of conditional use permits and use the design review process to achieve the type of building aesthetic that is desired.
- EC – this would be something we would have to consider very carefully. I think there may still be some instances where we would want the option of having a conditional use permit.
- MM – It is important to keep in mind that the use permit process is a heavy burden on some of the smaller developers and it may be stifling reinvestment.
- DH – Agreed. It's not inductive or conducive to redevelopment or reinvestment.
- BW – Right now our use permit process requires you to know where the maid's cart is located on the floor plan. The property owner should know what they can do and what they are entitled to and go through the building design and review process separately.
- EC – Question: Are there examples of communities that have struck the right balance between entitlement and design review?
- MM – It depends on what the community's appetite for control is. Every community is different. We'll give you recommendations and options. We'll look at best practices and tailor them for you.
- BW – The codes should be clear enough to know what can be done on a parcel; but design of the building should not supersede the approval.

- MM – Agreed. The entitlement approval process should be just enough where the developer will know what kind of uses and density/mass, etc. are allowed, but does not have to go through a full building design for approval.

The Working Group discussed some of the issues with the draft Code and the Design Guidelines with respect to building mass, particularly with regard to step backs and setbacks, and the height at the street front:

- BW – One issue with the design guidelines, that we've discussed previously, are the requirements regarding articulation and step-backs and setbacks. It creates a "wedding cake" effect, which is not really what was intended. And a "wedding cake" building form makes for inefficient floor plans and unusable space.
- JD – Agreed. The setbacks and step backs were intended to treat one problem: reduce visual impacts related to building height, but the problem is that we developed a particular solution for a general problem. We need to provide more flexibility for the designers.
- ET – Yes. Step-backs were required with Old Mammoth Place because there were view corridor and height concerns.
- NW – there are other ways to achieve this intent, but without making the code too prescriptive. Having the code be too prescriptive can be counterproductive. The code should be more nuanced. Codify the intent, rather than the building form.

Agenda Item 4: Main Street Implementation, Phasing and Funding (Winter & Company)

a. Consultant Work Scope Overview

Abe Barge provided an overview of their scope of work for the Main Street Implementation Plan project. Mr. Barge described that the final document will be an implementation plan to implement the Downtown Concept for Main Street. The implementation plan will focus on the physical logistics and economic feasibility of reconfiguring Main Street. He said that the plan will answer questions, such as the following:

- when and how will certain areas redevelop?
- when and how are the frontage roads removed?
- When and how do the buildings move to the street?
- what are the impacts to circulation and parking?
- what are the funding and financing tools?

b. Main Street Design Charrette April 2-4th

Mr. Barge also provided information was also provided about the upcoming community and stakeholder design charrettes, which are scheduled for April 2-4. He said that design charrettes are intended to solicit public input on a number of topics related to the future vision of Main Street developed through the Downtown Concept for Main Street. Winter & Company will host, with their team, the multi-day event that will include break-out sessions on design, finance, transportation, and economic development. The team will meet with property,

business, and land owners, as well as developers, Caltrans, the United States Forest Service, and staff.

Public workshops will also be held and will be advertised well in advance. There will be a kick-off workshop with the public on the first day of the event and a final workshop will be held on the evening of the last day to report back what was heard during the process. Following the multi-day event, Winter & Company, will produce a draft report summarizing the findings and recommendations. The draft report will be presented and refined as necessary, resulting in a final report in the fall/winter of 2013.

There was a discussion about the public workshops/design Charrette process:

- NW – We would like to hear your ideas on how we can best generate interest in the workshops.
- BW – We need to stress that we're not starting anything new.
- JS – Agreed. The public needs to know how this is an implementation plan, not another planning exercise.
- NW – Yes, we want to begin to show the community how the "rubber meets the road," that we are no longer planning the vision, we are moving toward implementing the vision.
- MB – As a reminder, our Neighborhood District Plans have been thoroughly vetted and we should present what the ideas were that were collected from those plans.
- ET – People will be looking for scenarios and specifics because there is a sense that the Town doesn't get stuff done. Can you provide specific implementation possibilities? Certain grants that are available, etc.
- JS – It would be helpful if you came in with alternatives for phasing, implementation, and financing. Break it down into pieces for the public and describe what the "book-ends" might look like. "Here's what you want. Here's what you can afford. And here are the options to pay for it."
- NW – We will help the community focus on a real set of potential outcomes and gather their input. We need the workshops to be productive and therefore we will help determine what the "book ends" will look like.
- JD – You should consider providing three alternatives that stimulate thought on how to get to the end product.
- EC – Question: How does Winter & Co. see the public participating in the workshop process?
- NW – Answer: One example is for Winter & Co. to present two or three phasing options, propose a development scenario for a few properties, and then have the public help to determine the desired outcomes and next steps. We would also want to have a public discussion of the financial aspects of a project such as this, and our team can guide the discussion.
- NW – Question: What are your standard methods of getting the word out for these types of events?
- JM – Newspaper ads, emails, phone calls, etc.

- JD – Maybe we should create categories of people that we would like to reach out to. The publicity methods may change depending on who you're talking about.
- NW – We'd like to ask the Working Group to help in the process to get people interested.
- JC – Chamber of Commerce can definitely help with this.
- NW – Winter & Co. can create some materials that can be used to help spread the work and get the public excited.
- ET – People will be interested in specifics and will want to see a preliminary agenda.
- NW – we can provide that.

c. Initial Input and Direction for Design Charrette

The Working Group discussed the need for parking to be analyzed as part of the overall financial analysis and that one of the outcomes should be to move toward implementing a parking district or districts: The Group made the following comments:

- NW – Parking districts can allow flexibility for developers who cannot provide all their parking on-site. It can allow them to buy-in to a district to provide their parking. It is also a revenue generating source. Transit can be used to connect parking structures to attractions.
- EC – Transit is a flexible resource that can be used to offset parking needs and can improve connectivity. Fragmented surface parking attached to each development is not efficient or effective.
- MB – One thing some of us would like to look into more seriously is the possibility of using all of the Developer Impact Fees to improve transportation and parking.
- NW – this could be looked into, but it is necessary that there is a nexus between fees and impacts and you still have to mitigate impacts related to non-transportation and parking items, such as water and sewer infrastructure.

d. Update on initial financial/market study & interview results

Andy Plescia of Andy Plescia & Co. (Winter & Co. team) provided an overview of his initial findings related to the economic feasibility of achieving change on Main Street. He described his interviews with local real estate and development stakeholders and the process that he is currently engaged in to develop proforma analysis for three hypothetical development projects, based on the modeling process performed by Dyett & Bhatia (where the physical feasibility of the draft Commercial Zoning standards was tested). Mr. Plescia stated that he will provide a preliminary written report and description of proforma assumptions prior to the next Working Group meeting so that it can be discussed at the next meeting.

Agenda Item 5: Next Steps/Meetings

- Downtown Working Group Meeting #4, Wed. March 6th at 9 am, Suite Z
- Downtown Working Group Meeting #5, Wed. April 3rd at 9 am, Fire Station