

DDA FALL PLANNING RETREAT
Thursday, November 12, 1992, 4-8 PM
Two Rivers Convention Center

Present: Bill Petty, Glen Dennis, Joe Skinner, Dan Rosenthal, Mancel Page, Conner Shepherd, Jean Sewell, Mark Hermunstad, DDA Director Barbara Creasman.

Also present Larry Timm and Kathy Portner, Community Development; Mike Shafer and Fay Timmerman, DTA; Mark Relph, Public Works; Mark Soden, Design Consultant, Parks Master Plan, and Wendy Schade, Administrative Secretary.

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order by Bill Petty at 4:15 p.m.

RIVERFRONT/SOUTH DOWNTOWN PLAN

South Downtown Land Use Plan

Kathy Portner explained the Land Use Planning, which began last year. It will:

Include the area south of Pitkin to the River and from the milltailings site to Riverside.

The goal is to determine whether zoning is appropriate. Rezone, if appropriate and plan what to do with some of the city owned properties.

Issues have been identified through neighborhood meetings. Goals and objectives have been drafted. The Department will be meeting with small groups to refine goals.

Starting to look at land issues. Developing land use alternative maps, which will include implementation.

Plans will be completed and should be at point of adoption by mid 1993. State owned properties - list set of plans - passive recreation. Mill Tailings pile will be a state recreation area. City property south of levee will restrict vehicular traffic. This will still be in the flood area. Pedestrian or bikes only. Only final grading plans have been completed.

Community Development

Larry Timm shared his philosophy of Community Development, which is a combination of city, economic, commercial, downtown revitalization, and housing preservation. Not one entity is responsible, but rather the entire community. The city has established a community development department. The DDA, Housing Authority, neighborhood groups, and the Chamber all have a part to play. Everyone needs to work together to identify issues and problems and then to find solutions.

Within the city, Department of Community Development should play a leadership role. However, currently, Community Development is only staffed to do planning, development review, process annexations, code enforcement. Day to day contacts are with developers. Maybe in time, that will change. City does not always have to play the lead role.

The physical complexion of the Department of Community Development needs to be changed. Office space needs to be renovated. Working conditions are too crowded. With these changes, the department can become more goal orientated.

Upcoming Project

Council is going to deal with Valley Vista sewer issue. Sewer brings up a lot of planning issues.

Next year Community Development will do zoning study of northern downtown, between the core part of downtown and North Ave.

Barbara - 1 or 2 years ago, the DDA looked at Downtown zoning that was inconsistent. Had been taken care of by special zoning but now needs to be addressed through planned zone or overlay.

Dan - Does Community Development have recommendations to DDA on district boundaries? It is DDA's long term goal and on-going process expanding south downtown.

Larry - Will be part of the discussion. No thoughts at this point.

Barbara - DDA Board made decision to start expanding boundaries, 1986/87. Riverfront Commission stated they don't want to be the redevelopment agency. Inclusion into the DDA is voluntary. Every property owner has to sign a petition. At this time there is one TIF district. Area to the south is not in the TIF district, but it is possible to set up a second TIF district.

Joe - We are working on parking ordinance and should meet within next couple of weeks. Have til the end of March to finalize.

Joe - Downtown lost a lot during the boom. People were getting the cheaper land and building in the County.

SIGNAGE

Mark Relph, City Public Works, gave a presentation on the proposed signage program. Directional signage has been discussed for several years. The VCB formed a committee to look at the issue and included representatives from Horizon Drive, Mesa Mall, DDA, VCB, City Public Works. The committee reviewed, looked at I-70 corridor, at city and outlying areas, at type of facilities necessary to sign. Put together a

list of attractions necessary to sign. Then took that information to the Traffic Department to determine cost and number of signs needed. Decided 100 signs were needed.

The Committee further discussed the design of the signs - Looking for unique sign. One example - listing places with directional arrows. Try to use logo with signs so people know they are in the city.

Next issue was mounting. There are many different alternatives. Price of signs and posts with steel ball on top is \$1,000 each. This price includes installation on 4 x 4 steel post. \$250 is the cost when using simple 2 x 2 posts. Perhaps more decorative posts can be used for certain areas like Two Rivers Convention Center; cheaper posts at other locations or mount to street lights. Total estimate - \$35,000. CIP committee supported this budget request. Money was already in the budget from previous public works program, so there was no overall increase.

Location of signs is critical. Must find out who is affected and get them involved. It is a monumental task organizing people for input.

Regarding highway signs - Don't have a lot of choices due to state and federal restrictions.

Hope to use 2-3 different size signs. This will keep costs down. Are able to do a lot within city sign shop, but some things are not possible. Planning to have reflective signs, not lighted. Would like to concentrate on arterial streets. Mark's preference is the 7th Street Corridor to Downtown. The interstate should be put on back burner. Tough issue dealing with the Feds.

If Council approves budget, meetings could resume this winter; the first series of signs could be made and installed in spring. For next phase, must have policies in place before implementation. Need to know location of signs and how signs will be paid for.

Need to have a committee to study downtown further. To date, the VCB committee has been more of the focal point of the effort.

Barbara - Signs need to be repainted for public parking, so they are more visible. Also, would like some guide signs to public parking. Delta has signs, "Public Parking →", mounted on existing poles. Grand Junction has had a sign committee off and on for 15 years.

Mark will replace 3 of 5 parking signs immediately. Try to include City logo.

Entrance sign at 5th and Ute is a separate issue. Same idea as City monument signs, but not same design. Public Restroom signs should be a part of this. Police are not on list of public places. Location of police may be important.

PARKS MASTER PLAN

Mark Soden - Diagram presented Parks Master Plan overview, which includes the 201 service area - Redlands, Orchard Mesa, Clifton, up to I-70 on the north. A year has been spent evaluating, creating an inventory of existing city and county and state parks, Division of Wildlife areas. Extensive public surveys were done to determine the needs in terms of parks and recreation. Meetings were held with community organizations and general public. All information was compared. Finalizing information, implementation and funding, preparing to go to Parks Board. Will go to City Council in January for approval.

Originally 1 square mile had 4 parks - Whitman, Emerson, Hawthorne and _____. Then Sherwood, Pomona and Columbine evolved. Then Lincoln Park. Lot of cooperation has occurred with School District, county, civic organizations. Have found that existing facilities almost used to capacity. Ted Novak says, "We're loving Lincoln Park to death". It is hard to find a place to play soccer, basketball, etc.

There is a need for additional outdoor and indoor facilities. It has been a long time since major piece of land has developed for park. There is now a shift from structured activities to more passive recreation, such as hiking, etc. Strong statement has been made regarding the need for additional trails. We have seen the value of Watson Island - minimum investment, great return. The county is not in the parks business and this is an issue that needs to be addressed when discussing areas outside of the city limits.

Different kinds of parks have been defined. Regional preserve - flood plains and river areas - recreational areas. Everything could link to river system. River - wildlife, water quality, conservation - lots of benefits. Botanical Society is interested in developing a garden at the Riverfront.

Providing recreation, stimulates the economy and results in additional tourism. Future goal is to develop a trail connecting Fruita with Palisade.

Regional Parks

Regional Parks are 200-300 acres. This is similar to the ratio (population/park space), which was used when Lincoln Park was purchased in 1917. Council is considering three sites for the regional park, however the preferred location is on Patterson. The owners are Dr. Matchet and his sons. This park would be a first class recreational area, offering:

1. Tournaments for softball, etc.
2. Wide open areas for frisbee, picnics.
3. 60,000 square foot recreational facility (\$5 - \$7 million) to house an indoor pool, gym, special area for Sr. Citizens, meals.

Architect from Boulder, working with Design Consultants, has determined that yearly operating expenses would be \$600,000 for this facility. User fees would cover all but \$150,000. It would be the future Lincoln Park.

Community Parks

The Northwest area is highest priority. Community parks would be 50 acres in size and would be located close to middle schools or high schools. The parks would be used for ball games; not big tournaments. There would also be large area for picnics.

Neighborhood Parks

These parks serve 2,000 people and are located within walking distance. Plan to work closely with school district - future or existing schools. Models - Pomona Elementary, Orchard Mesa Middle School. They are not just a part of the school, but it's a real park.

It is important for parks to connect to each other by trails or sidewalks. Should be able to quickly get out of house and onto a trail and walk to a nearby park.

Department of Transportation has been given instructions to allocate a percent of their funds for other transportation routes, such as bike trails, pedestrian walkways.

Cultural Facilities

Facilities available to cultural groups today is inadequate for the number of plays and special events that are scheduled.

The most expensive solution is developing an entirely new complex of cultural facilities, combining large, medium, and small theaters, and building an Art Gallery and Museum all under one roof or complex. This scenario has worked in Greeley.

The most explored and affordable solution is restoring both of the theaters downtown, thus providing a small and medium size theater. Performances over 1200 would still have to use the high school for their larger needs.

To do a good job of restoring both would cost \$3.1 - 4.1 million. Operating these two theaters would require an annual subsidy of approximately \$100,000. The cost would be greater the first couple of years.

A presentation will be given on Saturday, November 21, to the various cultural groups.

In order to implement the Park Plan, existing sales tax would have to be reallocated to provide \$1/2 million per year or a vote of the people would be required to sell bonds. It would be necessary to sell \$5 million bonds, \$1/2 million per year for 10 years.

Most of the 3/4 cent allocation for capital improvements is going towards roads and sewers. Hopefully City Council will shift some of the money.

There are 2 parks in DDA district. Upgrading of these existing parks is a lower priority. There are several smaller issues, such as the manual operation of sprinklers at Lincoln Park, which are not addressed in this overall study. More important priority in this plan is the acquisition and development of new land.

Whitman Park, though poorly utilized, is not part of the study. Therefore, this study has no recommendations. Museum has had eye on Whitman Park.

Barbara - Parking would greatly enhance use of park.

Mark - Wouldn't have much of a park if provide too much parking.

County, school district, Mesa State, city, and local groups are helping with this study. Package will be completed by the end of November.

In reference to "existing special features" on map. Originally used Cross Orchard Museum symbol. Then used areas that offered potential. Possibly similar to 7th Street, historical, character of that neighborhood. Try to enhance ability of pedestrians to use parks, to get out of their cars.

Each square or circle is a proposed neighborhood center. May be small. May be small convenient, commercial area - schools, churches, small shopping areas. Encourage higher density housing around these areas.

Joe - Plan of Development for Downtown Grand Junction - improve streets so not afraid to use bikes. Seems that the connections are east of town - 29, 30 and 31 Road and have abandoned downtown. Mark - Graphic misrepresentation on map. Downtown to River, 7th, 9th Street eventually with connection to state parks. No intention to divert people from downtown. Downtown specializes in cultural activities.

Tourists accommodations - airport; commercial - mall. Connection from downtown to river is pretty important.

Conner - Studies have been done by two groups - Ad hoc committee out of Traffic Safety, Major Planning Document - \$36,000 study. There will be some revisions to this map.

Each study has been independent of the other. Mark will complete his. Each group will eventually come together.

Circles and squares don't represent specific sites.

Trail is the only given. Anything north of levee should be developed in terms of recouping cost of cleaning up area. Commercial, light industrial - similar to Foresight.

Conner - Money we recoup from Jarvis will allow them to keep areas open for ponds. May be speaking from the minority to describe Council complexion. There is pressure from other sources to use development to pay back cost.

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Barbara Creasman spoke briefly about the organization of the DDA and presented several documents.

Goals

Past Accomplishments

City/DDA Project Criteria for Redevelopment Project

The Downtown Development Authority is a geographic district; The Downtown Association is a volunteer membership organization, which anyone can join. The President and Vice President of the Downtown Association are ex-officio of DDA Board. When the DDA was founded, significant amount of planning was done.

It is easy to get discouraged if we focus on what has not happened downtown. We need to look at what has been accomplished.

As an example, the DDA worked hard to get state office building downtown. (See attached list.) 11 new properties will be included in the district boundaries this year. Many are tax exempt, so there will not be a lot of additional revenue.

Need to continue discussions with Public Service and US West to include their properties.

REDEVELOPMENT

Lee Talbot, developer from Salt Lake City, is interested in establishing a hotel downtown. This would be a major anchor project. A contract has not yet been signed, but Lee is the only one who is pursuing the idea. Lee has expressed concern that because 100 Main is too narrow; many visitors are not aware of what downtown has to offer. Lee has talked to a possible franchise and has met with an architect. \$2 million of the initial investment has been found.

Joe - Some history is important. Proposals for the Two Rivers area were developed in the 70's and the early 80's. In fact a hotel project was ready to go right before Black Sunday.

It is difficult to negotiate a deal through committees. There are so many different interests. Most difficult issue was use of Two Rivers. Public interest - Lions Club, etc. helped build Two Rivers. But at least parking authority bonds are paid off.

RTC has been flooded with hotels. Most people aren't building, but buying hotels. Traditional ways of financing have disappeared. Yet Moab, Utah is building hotels like crazy, which shows that tourism is a very viable, economic force.

The redevelopment project criteria was passed out. This criteria is still in stage of refining. Project most likely is to be mix-use with a hotel.

Infrastructure funding will be one of the issues negotiated. It is likely that a developer would ask the City to underground and relocate utilities, probably close 2nd Street.

Concerning the disposal of property we have acquired, we have to get fair value; not fair market value.

We must make parking available and must have attractions to draw people in during the day and night.

Had hoped last year, as we developed criteria, that we would have a project within a 3 year time frame. Now, have land acquired, except for Golden.

When we meet with the City Council, need to emphasize the importance of this project. Want them to like it and feel they have been kept well informed. Might have 4 new councilmen in April, so will have to do some additional review and informing at that time.

We now have the land and need to do something with it. This has been the objective since 1978.

Golden property update - 3 test holes, then did 2 more. There's no phantom tank, it was taken out in the '70's. But the soil is contaminated. Golden is filing report with state and waiting for their response. Ask state to find the soil acceptable even though it is a little above maximum allowed. In total we will have approximately 4 acres for redevelopment.

Art Center

We are working with the Art Center, who is trying to sell their property. Have not entered into formal agreement, which will be contingent on their deals going through.

Avalon

The Avalon has had four social events in the past month, with an average attendance of 200-400. Each performance made money. The current owner of the theater has not charged us anything for the use of the building.

The Option to Purchase is up in April. The city signed the option for two years, agreeing to pay the owner equal to the taxes for one year, but has told Avalon Board not to ask for another year's option. \$200,000 is the purchase price and the cost for Phase I remodel is \$375,000.

The DDA is very supportive, basically subsidizing the Avalon Project by providing staff, office, etc.

Recruitment

Business recruitment is ongoing. The DDA is the clearing house for inquiries. Activity is generally higher when there are empty spaces. Two or three businesses want to buy their buildings or get better downtown location.

There is a contract on 3rd and Rood - financing approved.

Half of the Brownson's building is rented. Several people are interested in the Fashion Bar.

The Incubator will probably stay where it is, because we probably won't have the court building in the next 5 years.

Facade renovation is not just for facades, but can be used to meet code requirements, including ADA. So far there have been a lot of inquiries but nobody has completed a loan application.

The idea of having Factory Outlet stores downtown was not well received at the Downtown Association meeting. There are several in Downtown Durango.

Bill - Business financing is available through the banks. Criteria is not rigid, but it is tough.

RLF is still making loans, looser criteria. Phone company got a loan; four years ago, they would have been turned down. \$350,000 getting new grant. Looking at job creation and retention. Banks will work with RLF. Original requirement was 20% own money, 20% RLF, 60% bank. Bank match is not a requirement on revolved funds if amount requested doesn't warrant it or it would force people to get a larger loan than they needed.

There will be a December 3 dinner meeting between DDA and City Council. The purpose is to present where we are and what we are doing. Barbara, Bill, and Joe should plan to meet before then to list priorities for Council meeting.

ADJOURN

Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.