Mayor's Ad-Hoc Committee on Downtown Planning
Meeting Notes • Wednesday, September 29, 2010 at 8:30 am

PROCESS

QUESTIONS (to be answered by City staff)
1. What is the process used by other Cities, including implementation?
2. Is there adequate urban design expertise in the current process?

COMMENTS
• Be sure to learn from past studies.
• Both sides of the tunnel need to be involved in traffic review. Everything is related.
• A missing element of the process is the input of visitors. They shouldn’t drive the plan, but we should understand visitor needs and preferences as part of the planning.
• A Finance Study/Cost-Benefit Analysis/Business Plan is needed in order to implement the plan and establish priorities based on return on investment.

KEY ELEMENTS THAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE DOWNTOWN PLAN

THE BIG PICTURE – CREATE AN EXCITING DESTINATION THAT COMBINES INVITING AND SAFE PUBLIC SPACES WITH VIBRANT EXPERIENCES THAT ATTRACT VISITORS AND LOCALS ALIKE
• Create an environment downtown, taking into account public spaces, the retail mix, and programming, that encourages adults to “hang out”, shop and spend money.
• Consider the Santana Row experience as an example. People want to go there, and it combines great public spaces with an interesting mix of shops, restaurants and entertainment.
• Provide a clean, safe, adult “Disneyland”.
• A great public environment attracts tenants, and strong retail attracts people. The public spaces and tenant mix are interrelated and need to support each other.

PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT
• Provide outside seating for restaurants and public gathering places.
• Consider making Alvarado Street a walking street with no cars.
• Create an inviting and safe pedestrian friendly environment: wide sidewalks, street trees, site furnishings, good lighting.
• Provide safe and inviting pedestrian access between Downtown, Custom House Plaza, Fisherman’s Wharf and the Recreation Trail.
• Have consistent way-finding/pedestrian signage.
• Maintain Downtown over the long-term: clean sidewalks, litter control etc.
TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING
- Consider relocating the transit hub.
- Evaluate where employees and residents park.
- Consider the relationship and connections between Downtown and other parts of the City.

PROGRAMMING
- Create experiences/events so that tourists want to spend the night or extend their stay.
- Take control of Custom House Plaza programming.
- Consider Friday afternoon concerts for employees.

LAND USE / TENANT MIX
- Incorporate market rate rental housing and condominium housing.
- Have a leasing strategy to achieve the appropriate tenant mix.
- Identify and protect existing assets, such as MIIS.
- Based on current tenant mix, there is a big difference between day users and night users of Downtown. Consider the current customer base and how that can be expanded/improved.
- Provide incentives for the Jazz Festival to locate Downtown.
- Downtown needs a bookstore.
- In this economy retail leasing is tough. There is a lot of competition and retail is changing rapidly. It takes creativity. Have a flexible plan that can accommodate change.
- Consider future use of the State Theater.
- Consider a Cultural/Performing Arts Center located in Downtown (Alvarado and Bonifacio).
- Incorporate Convention Center planning into the overall Downtown plan. Different Convention Center outcomes (relocation vs. expansion) will have different implications for the Downtown.
- Consider alternative uses for Sim neau Plaza if the transit center relocates.

REGULATORY/IMPLEMENTATION
- Consider incentives to encourage merging of small lots.
- Build in flexibility for implementation.
- Water supply and allocation policies need to support intensification of uses.
- Consider incentives to encourage development of vacant/underdeveloped lots.
- Look at zoning limitations, density/FAR etc. to support intensification.
- Start with a small implementation project and build out from that.