

Notes from Councilor Harris' District 9 Meeting

January 15, 2008 - Manzano Mesa Multigenerational Center

EAST CENTRAL DEVELOPMENT

Approximate boundaries: south of I-40, east of Zuni/Central, city boundaries

Discussed information from public comments in August 2007:

concerns: streets, bus services, drainage, community services, housing, education, recreation and open space, relationship with KAFB.

public wants: low crime, good transportation, good businesses and schools, landowners interested in their properties, restaurants and entertainment

City's focus: Beautify area, add more cops, create pedestrian-friendly access to businesses, assess effects of housing density, address anti-social behavior on Central, expand medical services, including bringing in emergency services.

Questions:

What about zoning that was in place when old neighborhoods were built. Will they be grandfathered? If an established neighborhood's zoning serves the area, they don't do anything.

Focus on transportation great, want nicer shopping & restaurants closer. She feels pretty confident that the study will show that that will be viable.

What about the word, "blight"? Has that been already determined to use that term? This is not about blight, but instead looking for strengths to help pull up things that aren't doing well.

Is this definitely a Sector Development Plan or just a Design Overlay Zone? It will be a Sector Development Plan, rank 3, may have Design Overlay Zone within it.

What if property is re-zoned from C-1 to C-3 so manufacturing can't continue? If it's doing fine, the City won't do anything.

Councilor Harris said that he wants this development to unfold within a year. He said that all businesses will be either able to be sold for manufacturing, or for something more expensive. No imminent domain – struck down by legislature.

Area from Moon to Tramway – no residential property is involved

Wants to use fed, state, city, and county funds together to address this.

No need to worry about declining property values since money coming in will make property values higher.

Possible ways to accomplish this:

1. **property taxes** – freeze taxes so owner can use money to improve
2. **impact fees** – owners in special area would have zero impact fees, since the City wants you to improve your property so you can pay more taxes
3. **improved infrastructure** – city would help to improve buildings to lure businesses to ABQ and provide more jobs (this was used successfully in Nob Hill)
4. **federal funds** – can be leveraged to maximize local funds
5. **buy/resell property** – City can buy dilapidated property to fix up
6. **Tax Increment Financing** – TIDDs (next)

TIDDs

Cummins (pro): TIDDs are important tools to help development. Post-war neighborhoods evolved in a coordinated way (schools, houses, businesses all in the community). But master plan developers were sidelined in the 80s. In the 90s, pent up demand led to housing explosion. Master plan developers now broke.

He sees all TIDDs the same, that new development should have as much right to it as infill development. No tax subsidy in TIDDs, ties money and planning together, not a bunch of subdivisions developed separately with no links between them.

Cadigan (anti): *this is a massive rip-off for taxpayer, e.g., you own Winrock, do improvements to increase tax base, but developer gets to keep 75% of it for 25 years. Now used for SunCal (largest private developer in the world), who wants to take a piece of desert, with small GRTs, and build mostly houses, then keep up to 75% of extra tax money to pay off his development costs. Developers should go to banks for financing, not the government. Developers claim that they'll bring in new jobs, but 80% of new jobs created by TIDDs come from out of state; now, without TIDDs, less than 50% of new jobs come from out of state. We'll have to pay for new developments to get cops, schools. We don't need to get government funds to get development.*

State Board of Finance rejected five of nine SunCal TIDDs on Westside.

Cummins: State approved four districts, SunCal had amended project to only ask for four districts. Agreed for 50% GRT, instead of 75%. Community has always invested in growth. Every taxpayer pays a portion of general obligation funds.

Cadigan: *State did reject five districts because of unrealistic projections of new jobs. This will be a massive development— like Santa Fe and Las Cruces out on the west mesa. Where will those kids go to school?*

Questions:

We have specific taxes we've voted on (like quality of life) that have been voted on by the public – will that be affected by the 75% that would go to developers? Maintaining everything that's mandated before getting development money.

Cadigan: AG has ruled that specific taxes won't be affected. GRT and property taxes will be generated and developers get 75% to pay off their bonds.

Is there a process for reviewing legislation to ensure standards?

Cadigan: Albuquerque requires smart, good quality growth – don't need to have TIDDs, can just require smart, good quality growth.

We can't just keep developing, where will we get drinking water?

Cadigan: The Rio Grande Water Authority has approved adding a pipeline from Paseo del Norte to Paseo del Vulcan.

Cummins: The area has 80-100 years of water even with current growth.

SunCal Dev estimating cost of infrastructure within each district. Who will issue those bonds and who's responsible to pay for them?

Cummins: bonds issued by individual district, which is responsible for paying for them; developer puts up 20% to establish infrastructure.

Cadigan: privately issued bonds – what happens if they default? Then the rest of us will have to pay to bring water and infrastructure for new homes. Irvine project going bankrupt, so Irvine will have to pay for the utilities for the new houses.

SunCal Development is estimating the cost of infrastructure within each district. Who will issue those bonds and who's responsible to pay for them?

Cadigan: is a concern. 40 years, San Juan/Chama doesn't cover demand.

Cummins: each district creates more taxes, so can't earn less revenue.

NM DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Abbo (841-2761, tony.abbo@state.nm.us) is working with APD to:

- handle congestion and closures during bad weather
- give people advance notice of problems
- put in gates across I-40 at Juan Tabo, Wyoming, Tramway to eliminate clogging up the highway by diverting traffic to Fairgrounds before it gets stuck at Tramway
- anticipate traffic by adding cameras at East/Westbound I-40, along with 3 cameras in canyon to anticipate changing weather conditions
- have big, permanent digital message signs at Carlisle and Juan Tabo
- provide weather stations able to detect snow and/or when ground freezes
- develop a way to move accidents out of the way while waiting for APD; he's working with APD to find ways to more quickly assess a scene and get traffic running. (Ohio DOT has 90 minutes to get road back open).

Questions:

Is there any coordination with Texas, since the highways from the panhandle to ABQ freeze up quickly? They're working to coordinate meetings, adding an 800 number, have already added newmexicoroads.com, which posts up-to-date road closures or construction projects.

RED LIGHT CAMERAS

(since this meeting, Mayor Chavez has suspended the red light camera program)

Councilor Harris DH sponsored measure to lower fines. Task Force report came out (can ask for digital edition).

Slow Down ABQ introduced to diminish accidents (280,000 people are affected each year); 21 states and 260 municipalities have implemented this. This program has been very successful here.

NM has no direct prohibitions to this, and is an owner-onus state (meaning the owner of the car gets the ticket even if he or she is not driving)

Redflex has been around 21 years, generated by a community that was a shortcut to Phoenix; they work with cities to implement photo systems to reduce accidents. They don't issue citations, they provide evidence for officers to determine whether or not to issue citation.

Cameras are triggered by a red light and a vehicle in intersection. Cameras captures six seconds before and six seconds after; like Tivo, cameras are constantly recording, so that when infraction happens they can go back and get pre- and post-red light.

Study released today shows 50% reduction in red light camera violations issued in last three years.

Their fees: flat fee + sliding fee per citation.

Public should know that APD reviews each violation and makes the final decision on whether to issue citation.

Questions:

What about attempts to cover license plates? Mythbusters did a segment on sprays, and the only way to obscure license plate is to physically obscure license plate, which is illegal.

Why wasn't this sent out for public bid? How many lobbyists in ABQ and have they contributed to local political races? They don't know (questioner claimed they did).

How much does Redflex provide in revenue to the city? Unknown

*Rebecca Loring, Secretary
Four Hills Village Neighborhood Association*