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5-19-05



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Alice Glasco, Director
Neighborhood Planning and Zoning Department

DATE: May 18, 2005

SUBJECT: Transit-Oriented District Station Area Planning Process

The purpose of the Transit-Oriented District Station Area Plans (SAPs) is to define a vision for the station areas along the Capital Metro Commuter Rail line that is financially feasible and responsive to community goals and market forces. The Station Area Plans and resulting development have the potential to contribute significantly to the success of the Capital Metro Commuter Rail line as well as enhance the livability, sustainability and tax base of the city.

At the March 3, 2005 meeting the City Council requested information on the proposed Station Area Planning process. Since that time City of Austin and Capital Metro staff have met and refined the proposed process. An overview of the process is provided below and in the attached flowchart.

At the March 24, 2005 meeting Council also requested a description of any regulations included in the draft TOD Ordinance that will modify existing zoning and site development regulations. This information is provided in the final section of this memorandum.

Public Participation in the Station Area Planning Process

Public involvement and participation is an essential element of the Station Area Planning process. The process described below will be open to all participants. Notification of the initiation of the process and major milestones will be provided to residents, property and business-owners, neighborhood associations, neighborhood plan contact teams, where applicable, and other interested citizens.

With the exception of the Saltillo Community Advisory Group (CAG), which was created to advise the Council and Capital Metro Board on the development of a masterplan for the 11-acre property owned by Capital Metro, staff does not propose a separate stakeholder group for the SAPs. Instead staff is recommending a process similar to the neighborhood planning process that is open to all participants.

Overview of Proposed Station Area Planning Process

City of Austin and Capital Metro staff have developed a process that, in general terms, consists of an initial phase of staff and Consultant research followed by an approximately 12-month public planning process. A general overview of the proposed process is provided below.

- Initial Staff and Consultant Research Phase:
 - Notification of potential participants;
 - Staff research and compilation of information on demographic characteristics of the areas, existing land use, zoning, and environmental conditions;
 - Staff analysis of utility and infrastructure capacity and conditions;
 - Consultants begin market assessment and housing analyses.
- Approximately 12-month Station Area Planning Process:
 - Task 1 – Informational Public Meeting
 - Introduce and review Transit-Oriented Development concepts, goals and Station Area Planning Process
 - Identify major issues with participants and stakeholders
 - Review demographic and physical analysis
 - Review Consultant studies, if complete
 - Task 2 - Public Meeting
 - Design workshop focusing on potential land use, urban design, open space and transportation elements of the plan
 - Task 3 - Compilation and analysis of public input. Preparation of preliminary SAP
 - Task 4 - Public Meeting and Open House
 - Presentation and review of preliminary SAP
 - Additional public input
 - Identification of potential amendments to adopted Neighborhood Plans, if applicable
 - Task 5 - Compilation and analysis of public input
 - Task 6 - Public Meeting and Open House
 - Presentation and review of revised SAP
 - Additional public input
 - Task 7 – Compilation and analysis of public input
 - SAP Finalized
 - Neighborhood Plan amendments initiated, if applicable
 - Board and Commission review of SAP and Neighborhood Plan amendments
 - Council review of SAP and Neighborhood Plan amendments

The process outlined above may be refined to reflect best practices once Consultants are selected.

Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Consultant Services for SAPs

Staff is proposing three separate RFQ's for consultant services to assist in the SAP process. One RFQ to conduct market assessments for all six TOD's will be issued and funded by Capital Metro. The second and third RFQs, to conduct housing feasibility studies and Station Area Plans for all six TOD's will be issued by the city.

The RFQs are currently under development. Staff anticipates issuing these within 2-4 weeks of final Council approval of the Transit-Oriented Development ordinance.

Schedule/Timeline for SAPs

Staff is proposing a staggered schedule for the Station Area Plans. Under this schedule three SAPs would be initiated beginning in summer 2005 with three additional plans beginning approximately six to eight months later. Under this schedule all six SAPs should be complete by Spring 2007 approximately one year prior to the beginning of service on the Capital Metro commuter rail line.

Summary of Step 1 TOD Ordinance Standards

If adopted, the following regulations included in the TOD Ordinance will modify existing zoning and site development standards within the six TODs. These regulations are included in the ordinance to insure that any development occurring within the TODs before the adoption of a Station Area Plan will not negatively impact the transit and pedestrian environment. During the Station Area Planning process these standards may be reviewed and revised as needed.

25-2-766.12 Use Regulations

Land uses listed in this section will become prohibited, conditional or permitted as noted in the draft ordinance.

25-2-766.13 Site Development Regulations

- Establishes a maximum front yard and street side yard setbacks of 15 feet within the TOD, with exceptions for building additions, protected trees and historic structures.
- In the Gateway Zone of a TOD:
 - 1) Building entrances are required:
 - (a) on the principal street; and
 - (b) on a street with transit service, if any.
 - 2) Minimum first floor building height of 15 feet is required.
 - 3) For a commercial or mixed-use building minimum glazing requirements for the front façade of a building are established.

25-2-766.14 Parking Regulations

- 1) Prohibits parking in the front setback of a building.
- 2) Reduces minimum parking requirements by 40% within a TOD.

If you have questions or need additional information please contact George Adams at 974-2146 or Greg Guernsey at 974-2387.

Attachment

c: Toby Hammett Futrell, City Manager
Laura J. Huffman, Assistant City Manager

PROPOSED STATION AREA PLANNING PROCESS

