

**CITY OF NORTH LAS VEGAS
SPECIAL JOINT CITY COUNCIL AND
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

August 31, 2005

CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 P.M.

ROLL CALL: **COUNCIL PRESENT:**

Mayor Michael L. Montandon
Mayor Pro Tempore William E. Robinson
Councilwoman Stephanie S. Smith
Councilman Shari Buck
Councilman Robert L. Eliason

PLANNING COMMISSION PRESENT:

Chairman Jay Aston
Commissioner Harry Shull
Commissioner Angelo Carvalho
Commissioner L. Dean Leavitt
Commissioner Dilip Trivedi

EXCUSED:

Vice Chairman Jo Cato
Commissioner Steven Brown

STAFF PRESENT:

City Manager Gregory Rose
City Attorney Sean McGowan
Assistant Finance Director Kay Godbey
Fire Chief Al Gillespie
Planning and Development Director Jory Stewart
Police Chief Mark Paresi
Public Works Director Jim Bell
Deputy City Clerk Anita Sheldon
Deputy City Clerk Julie Shields

VERIFICATION: Anita Sheldon
Deputy City Clerk

BUSINESS:

At the request of City Manager Gregory Rose, Item No. 2 was heard before Item No. 1.

2. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE DIRECTION ON DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NORTH FIFTH STREET TRANSIT CORRIDOR LAND USE PLAN WITH CONSULTANTS FROM PARSONS BRINCKERHOFF.

Planning and Development Director Jory Stewart advised Staff had been working since May 2005 with Parsons Brinckerhoff to create a land use plan for the North 5th Street Corridor that would be transit-supportive. This plan was intended to augment the Regional Transportation Commission's study that was done early in 2005 regarding the use of the North 5th Street Corridor for a transit system yet to be designed.

Planner Ned Thomas introduced Keith Liden and Patrick Sweeney, the consultants from Parsons Brinckerhoff who were working with Staff to create a land use plan for North 5th Street.

Patrick Sweeney, Parsons, Brinckerhoff, Quade & Douglas, 3930 Howard Hughes Parkway, Las Vegas, advised the project began by reviewing current trends, as well as the City's codes and plans. A planning workshop was held in May at which time a tentative vision was developed, followed by several workshops in June. Mr. Sweeney stated recommended plan concepts were being developed for consideration by the City.

During the workshops, citizens and Staff were asked to consider what the corridor would look like if future growth took advantage of the roadway high-quality transit. Mr. Sweeney stated some of the benefits of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) were a reduction in vehicle miles, transportation choices, a decrease in infrastructure costs and a potential increase in property value. He explained that typically six to seven dwelling units per acre were required to support a bus service and nine to 25 or more dwelling units per acre would be required to support rail service. In neighborhoods with 50 or more dwelling units per acre, the ratio for auto to non-auto transit would be equal. Each 10% increase in density would cause a 5% increase in transit trips.

Mr. Sweeney stated there would be a different demographic with TOD. A recently-conducted survey showed that two-thirds or more people who chose to live in a Transit-Oriented Development tended to be households without children. He advised if the trend were to continue, there would be approximately 15,000,000 households in the country in some type of Transit-Oriented Development.

Mr. Sweeney presented four examples of successful Transit-Oriented Development areas

in other cities throughout the country. He pointed out as transit continued to succeed and more people starting using it, there would be less of a need for parking areas which would provide an opportunity to redevelop the parking lots in the future. Mr. Sweeney explained each of the projects in the four examples had four TOD principles in common:

1. There was a greater than average density in each community.
2. Each community had a mix of uses, such as residential, retail, employment, etc. fairly close in proximity.
3. A quality pedestrian environment was created in each instance to encourage residents to walk.
4. There was a defined center in each location.

Another concept developed during the workshops was the creation of charrettes and TOD typologies that were consistent with the TOD principles. The workshops were broken down into four groups that included property owners, developers and Staff. The groups were then tasked with developing ideas for future development in the North 5th Street Corridor. The ideas were then grouped together into one vision and drafted into a number of distinct development districts which started in the north at University Village at the future UNLV campus, an area called "Uptown" which was the Deer Springs Corridor, Midtown which would be 5th Street and the southern part would be technology, employment, industrial and the Redevelopment District.

Mr. Sweeney emphasized the land use was transit-supportive but not transit-dependent. He stated it was important to develop what works today but also what would work in the future. The corridor is a mile wide (a half-mile on each side) which was considered the maximum distance people were willing to walk for transit. The next step would be the design of the corridor, followed by the mix of uses, development of a quality pedestrian environment, placement of buildings and, finally, how to deal with parking.

Mr. Sweeney submitted renderings of various TOD typologies being proposed for the corridor. Suggested options included Urban Center with a minimum density of 40+ dwelling units per acre with a land use mix of ground floor offices, retail, entertainment and multifamily housing. The Urban Neighborhood consisted of some residential, retail and commercial with a minimum housing density of 20 units per acre. Suburban Center, Suburban Neighborhood (medium density) and Suburban Neighborhood (low density) were the other options described by Mr. Sweeney.

Mr. Sweeney explained the Uptown area would be the most intense mixed-use community in the City and would include retail, a Civic Center, a regional mall and a Veteran's Hospital on the east side.

Mayor Montandon commented if the City were going to proceed with the Transit-Oriented

Development (TOD) concept for the North 5th Street Corridor, it should be pursued aggressively, completely and quickly. He asked for comments on the pros and cons of the project.

In response to a question by Mayor Pro Tempore Robinson, Mayor Montandon stated the project was consistent with Visioning 2025. He further commented the Visioning 2025 concept was a very generalized document and TOD was taking the general concept from Visioning 2025 and moving it to a more specific action plan.

Councilman Buck asked if the City could be hurt by the 50 units-per-acre density if the MAX bus system were utilized rather than the light rail. Mayor Montandon felt the MAX bus was better technology than the light rail and the City would be negatively impacted more if only the light rail were utilized. Councilman Buck felt more people, when given a choice, would ride the train rather than the bus.

Planning and Development Director Jory Stewart commented the City would be hurt more if higher density were not allowed. City Manager Rose expressed concern that the MAX bus system might not accommodate the higher density if the City did not employ the light rail.

Public Works Director Jim Bell stated Jacob Snow, Managing Director of the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC), projected a strong future for the MAX bus system. North Las Vegas was the first route to be used by the system and it was found to be more effective than a standard bus. Director Bell felt the system would be more effective if the transit lanes were increased and advised the RTC was investigating successful MAX routes and transit-supportive land uses.

In response to a question by Councilman Eliason, Director Stewart responded the light rail project would be not be marketable without the 50 dwelling units per acre density. Mr. Sweeney agreed with Director Stewart's response.

Mayor Montandon commented the current MAX bus route ran through a developed area where the opportunities for light rail were not available. He felt the opportunity for mass transit was most available on North 5th Street. The key was not only to have enough people to use light rail but that they would have places to go, i.e. to work, to shop, to dine out, etc. which necessitated a mixed-use development.

Councilman Buck expressed concern that transit decisions had to be made soon in order for development to proceed in the area.

City Attorney Sean McGowan advised decisions regarding rights-of-way should not be discussed at the time. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss Master Plan decisions. **Scott Sauer, 5629 Midnight Breeze Street, North Las Vegas,** stated he lived within

three-quarters of a mile of North 5th Street and spoke in favor of the project. He suggested that Centennial Parkway was wider and could be used for east-west travel rather than Deer Springs and would provide better access to the Veteran's Hospital and the University of Las Vegas campus. He also suggested Council consider zoning and routing for mass transit on the opposite side of the Beltway to create a loop. Mr. Sauer felt the MAX bus system would benefit from the project because the stops would be generated and spaced upon the development that would occur. He also suggested the City consider the zoning and mixed-use density being used by the City of Las Vegas and Clark County.

Mayor Montandon advised all the zoning, including mixed-use, in the County, Las Vegas and Henderson was reviewed by Staff, some of which was incorporated in the proposed plan. He explained the Corridor runs from Centennial to the Beltway and there was no available right-of-way on Centennial.

Commissioner Leavitt felt public transportation should be available 24 hours a day in mixed-use developments.

Commissioner Shull agreed the proposed density would be the best use of the land and was in favor of the project.

Councilman Buck commented she liked what was presented and felt the project would be a success. She was very anxious to move forward with the plan.

Planning Commission Chairman Aston inquired about the quickest way to move forward with the plan after the final draft was adopted. Director Stewart responded it was time to develop design concepts with such options as mixed-use overlay district, part and parcel, Planned Unit Development and Transit-Oriented Development which would help facilitate the developers in gaining the flexibility to move forward with these types of innovative designs. She advised the Master Plan was in the process of being updated which was a lengthy process; therefore, solutions would have to be made in the interim for long-term implementation of the new Master Plan.

Mayor Montandon noted some zoning codes in the presentation were highly graphically based and addressed the specific building types rather than what was in the building. He stated that was a radical departure from what was normally done and new zoning categories would have to be created in order to expedite the process.

Chairman Aston expressed concern about future permit applications that were zoned correctly and consistent with the existing Master Plan but not consistent with the direction the City was headed.

Janet Combs, 555 El Campo Grande Avenue, North Las Vegas, stated she had a problem with having a “bullet” road going down 5th Street and felt four lanes should be enough to handle the traffic. She felt too much of the taxpayers’ money was being spent to save 20 minutes.

Mayor Montandon responded that no matter how wide a street was made, it would still not be able to control the traffic as much as multiple north-south corridors. He explained the goal of the City was to improve the quality of life and it was the consensus of the people less travel time and having to drive less helped constitute quality of life.

Councilwoman Smith pointed out that 20 minutes less driving would have a huge impact on the amount of air pollution generated by automobiles.

Mayor Montandon stated no motion or action was to be taken at the time but that the City Council and Planning Commission were going in the same direction.

Commissioner Trivedi cited the problems the City of Las Vegas had been having with the Monorail and felt North Las Vegas should learn from their mistakes and not repeat them.

Craig Cerny, commented it would be more cost-effective to begin construction as soon as possible to bridge the gap between what was in place today and what was envisioned for the future. Mayor Montandon emphasized the right-of-way issues had not yet been established and careful negotiations had to occur with each developer to accommodate something that may or may not happen in the future.

City Manager Rose felt the joint meeting was a tool to inform the public, as well as the developers and builders, of the direction the Council and Planning Commission were taking.

Mayor Montandon concluded the discussion on Item No. 2.

1. **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE DIRECTION REGARDING AMENDMENTS TO THE SMALL LOT DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS AS OUTLINED IN TITLE 17, SECTION 17.24.215 OF THE NORTH LAS VEGAS MUNICIPAL CODE ARISING FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP HELD MARCH 1, 2005.**

City Manager Gregory Rose advised that on March 1, 2005, the Planning Commission held a workshop to discuss the Small Lot Development Standards with various representatives of the development community. Via a memo dated April 13, 2005, the Planning Commission requested a joint meeting with the City Council to discuss the results of the

workshop and to gain direction regarding possible amendments to the Small Lot Development Standards.

Planning and Development Director Jory Stewart explained approximately ten representatives from the development community attended the workshop and discussed various aspects of the design standards with the members of the Planning Commission.

Chairman Aston advised it was time to look at different layers within the community. For a long time the City was focused on acquiring larger lots and he felt there were now too many.

Councilwoman Smith felt the philosophy regarding small lots had changed and the ordinance needed to be revisited. The increased costs in land had forced a review and possible changes to the ordinance.

Mayor Montandon suggested some of the guidelines discussed in the previous item on Transit-Oriented Development be adopted regarding small lots.

Councilman Eliason commented the product would depend on the marketing. Families with no children wanted single-story homes with a zero lot line. He was also concerned young families were being forced to buy homes that would not accommodate them because of the price.

Commissioner Shull stated the average working person in the Las Vegas Valley could not afford an average single-family home at today's prices. Another alternative would be attached or apartment-type housing, although that type of product would leave the builder subject to litigation by the Homeowner's Associations. He suggested a detached product with a density not as high as apartments but higher than 5.8 dwelling units per acre.

Mayor Montandon advised the 80-acre provision was originally designed to have a variety of housing types across the Valley. Based on the land situation in North Las Vegas, he suggested the elimination of the 80-acre provision. He expressed a concern that allowing a higher density smaller lot would cause the homes to resemble barracks. Commissioner Shull suggested the design standard guidelines be modified to develop a better quality product.

Mayor Montandon stated he would be in favor of modifying the guidelines and stated Staff and Council were in agreement to create form-based zoning after which the 80-acre requirement would be eliminated.

Chairman Aston stated one of the purposes of having the small lot workshop was to gather information from the developers and obtain feedback from Council as to whether it was worth review and possible change.

When asked by City Manager Rose if Staff should be directed to move forward with changes or the form-based guidelines, Mayor Montandon stated both could be done simultaneously. He directed City Manager Rose to return with form-based zoning guidelines with the possibility of two attached units or a zero lot line and lot size recommendation. If the guidelines were accepted by Council, the changes could be made at the time.

Director Stewart advised Staff had evaluated the small lot ordinance which created the mechanism through Planned Unit Development to attach design standards at a higher level of scrutiny. The elimination of the 80-acre provision would enable the higher design standards and principles to be applied to smaller lots. Director Stewart stated, as a result of input from the community, the design standards could be modified more in depth and move easily toward a more form-based zoning.

Nora Meyer, Centex Homes, stated she took part in the discussion in March 2005 and agreed with the elimination of the 80-acre requirement. She agreed that the design principles should be in place that would utilize every square foot of the home. Ms. Meyer was anxious to move forward with the changes as quickly as possible.

ACTION: DIRECT STAFF TO CREATE GUIDELINES FOR SMALL LOT DEVELOPMENT AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL AS TO SIZE OF SMALL LOTS AND REDUCTION OR ELIMINATION OF THE 80-ACRE PROVISION

MOTION: Mayor Montandon

SECOND: Mayor Pro Tempore Robinson

AYES: Chairman Aston, Commissioners Leavitt, Shull, Trivedi, and Carvalho

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

The Planning Commissioners were in unanimous agreement with the motion.

Commissioner Leavitt commented the joint meetings between the City Council and the Planning Commission were too infrequent and should be held more often.

PUBLIC FORUM

There was no public participation.

ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:40 P.M.

MOTION: Mayor Pro Tempore Robinson

SECOND: Councilman Eliason

AYES: Chairman Aston, Commissioners Leavitt, Shull, Trivedi, and Carvalho

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

APPROVED:

/s/ Jay Aston
Chairman Jay Aston

ATTEST:

/s/ Karen L. Storms
Karen L. Storms, CMC
City Clerk