



Meeting Minutes

City of Davis

Downtown Davis Plan Advisory Committee Meeting

Senior Center Activity Room, 646 A Street

Thursday, February 21, 2019

7:00 P.M.

Committee Members: Meg Arnold (Chair), Michelle Byars (Vice Chair), Judy Corbett, Mary DeWall, Chris Granger, Larry Guenther, Darren McCaffrey, John Meyer, Eric Roe, Carolyn Stiver (for Rob White), Deema Tamimi, Randy Yackzan

Liaison Members: Ryan Dodge, Matt Dulcich, Cheryl Essex, Matt Williams

Not Present: Catherine Brinkley, Josh Chapman, Sinisa Novakovic

City Council Liaisons: Dan Carson

City Staff: Eric Lee, Heidi Tschudin

Consultants: Mitali Ganguly, Dan Parolek

Please note: The numerical order of items and estimated times on this agenda is for convenience of reference. Items may be taken out of order.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

2. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved by consensus.

3. Approval of Minutes

Approval of minutes by consensus with abstentions by Stiver and Williams.

4. Brief Announcements from Chair, Committee Members, or Staff

Staff announcement of a historic preservation training session at the February 25 Historical Resources Management Commission meeting open to interested DPAC members. Staff announcement of the City's Environmental Recognition Award nominations.

5. Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

None.

6. Draft Downtown Specific Plan Key Highlights

Staff presentation a summary and highlights of the key sections of the specific plan, which is still being drafted. The presentation focused on the proposed land use categories, building forms, and regulating plan map. Two regulating plan map options were shown.

DPAC clarifying questions included:

1. Whether recommendations from the Sustainability Working Group were incorporated.
2. Clarifications about whether the design guidelines would remain in place for Old East and Old North.
3. Central Park being envisioned as a residential area and no longer as central.
4. Whether the entire downtown be fiber enabled.
5. How many residents are needed for downtown to be financially sustainable?
6. Downtown branding.
7. Clarification about maximum number of stories and building height allowed.
8. Should plan regulate height rather than number of stories?
9. Clarification about designation of Amtrak Station.
10. Clarification about scope of and coordination with separate Amtrak Study
11. Clarification about the edge opportunity sites and about Option 2 of the regulating plans.
12. Response from Opticos staff mentioned that 4 story height reference in Neighborhood Medium zone was a mistake and that they would get back to DPAC with clarification and that there was no other mention of that issue by city staff one way or another.

Public comments were made including:

1. Support for Option 1 and limiting 3 stories on parcels east of the railroad tracks. Adverse impacts to Old East.
2. Impact of increased density north of 5th Street impacting Old North and concern about being able to absorb additional density proposed. Build infrastructure first then density.
3. Need to clarify building height and confused about the edges sites being included or not included.
4. Carbon neutrality as a city goal and need for CEQA analysis to address consistency with City goals. Mobility section should address changing technologies and a transition plan to autonomous vehicles, EV charging, need for storage of personal mobility devices. Need for 5G infrastructure which requires extra space.

5. Need height maximums not just number of stories. 3 story maximum in transition zones with stepback to one-story structures. Label Amtrak Station as an edge opportunity or clarify what is being advocated there. 3rd Street provides main vehicle access through downtown.
6. Four stories in Old East is too much.
7. Need good architecture and should be open to taller buildings and better designed buildings. Next generation is more open to change – if plan is too strict we will lose opportunities.
8. Prefer Option 1. Five stories on west side in Option 2 is too high.
9. Downtown has limited areas to build. Don't need a hard cap on building height in downtown area. Restrictions may not be necessary. Why cap height outside of core?
10. Team has confirmed that four to six story buildings in core are feasible.
11. Part of Option 2 is good. Need to look 20 or 30 years down the road. Taller buildings may work later on.
12. Need to protect historic character of downtown.

DPAC discussion included comments regarding:

1. Need for more information such how many units there will be.
2. Rationale for increased density towards east. Why not also around Central Park or on C Street.
3. Appreciate increased density and more residential downtown. 5-stories at Davis Commons abuts cottages. Can ease up density near Richards Blvd and increase towards the park.
4. Need for flexibility.
5. Plan should provide clarity and predictability. Need to show property owners before and after results. Provide numbers for both Option 1 and 2. Central Park should be used more.
6. Need to consider how to attract students downtown. Important to continue 3rd Street improvements. Not good to move downtown eastwards, keep it centered around the square.
7. For density, if we can have smaller units with more people, other goals we want can also be achieved.
8. Think about spreading more height to west. If there is a cap on the building height, it caps the value of the site. On west side of the train tracks, better to err on the taller side which could make the difference in making a project work. Also think about where the City can help developers such as lowering fees or allowing more height.
9. Encourage to walk around downtown with the plan to test out the zones on the ground. Appreciate the thoughtfulness of Option 2 and the higher density near the Amtrak Station. Option 1 a bit light. More focus on what can realistically be built at the train station would be good. Consider putting density on C and D near Central Park.
10. Look at improvements to City gateway; improve underpass.
11. Clarify flex district.

12. Instead of a street hierarchy, a hierarchy that prioritizes modes and puts people first would be better. Question about University Avenue PD to remain or not. It was clarified that DPAC had previously opted to leave that PD as it is.
13. Comment that a number of members indicated an interest in greater building mass towards Central Park and less towards the east. Additional clarification about not being opposed to greater density towards the east, but wanted to understand why higher density is proposed there and not towards the west.
14. Interest in reconvening the sustainability working group to review the sustainability items. Another substantive item is the concept of parking maximums on the transportation list.

Staff clarified that DPAC input was helpful and that an official DPAC position at this stage is not necessary. DPAC will be asked to formally weigh in on the Public Review Draft expected to be released in May.

Motion for an annotated list of the DPAC's sustainability recommendations to the sustainability working group, which will reconvene and provide any additional feedback to DPAC.

Motion approved unanimously.

Additional questions were asked about the proposed transportation measures, the status and input on policies in the Downtown Specific Plan for affordable housing, and a request for an update on any additional community engagement process.

7. Working Schedule

Current working schedule was briefly reviewed

8. Future Meeting Dates

Next meeting date to be determined. The general timeframe for a meeting was described by staff, but no specific future meeting date set.

9. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 10:00 PM

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