

URBAN COUNTY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE SUMMARY

April 15, 2008

CM Gorton chaired the meeting, calling it to order at 1:00 pm. All committee members were present except Vice Mayor Gray.

I. Streetscape Plan

Mike Webb, General Services Project Manager for Streetscape Master Plan, introduced the consultant and his team. Kinzelman Kline and Gossman is the consultant for this project with the principal being Clete Benken and other team members present are Mike Woolum, Strand; Phil Osborne and Vitale Buford, Preston Osborne; 2nd Globe and Brownstone are also sub contractors but didn't have anyone present. He stated they contracted with KKG for basically four phases and they are currently in the first phase the Streetscape Schematic Master Plan. Mr. Webb stated they entered into the contract with KKG the end of December and began work about mid January. He stated April 18th they will be doing a public presentation of a preliminary master plan.

Clete Benken, Kinzelman Kline and Gossman, made a presentation to the committee.

CM McChord stated this is one of the most important economic development projects we can do. He asked about the PR campaign.

Mr. Benken stated it has been their experience when they conduct the kind of strategy they have been conducting making private stakeholders part of the process at arriving what the priorities are then they are much more willing to step up and invest their own money.

Phil Osborne, Preston Osborne, stated when you do any kind of fundraising project on a capital campaign there is a study phase, decision phase and a solicitation phase. He stated in the study phase they are going to the key stakeholders with some of this information and make a decision about what the capital construction cost will be. He stated the challenges are a bad economy, competition from 2010 Games because they are going after sponsorship money.

Dr. Stevens asked if council should receive the final plan and adopt that or should council be involved before the finalization of it.

Harold Tate, Downtown Development Authority, stated they are meeting after this presentation to see what the possibilities are with the Streetscape Plan. He stated right now there is not an answer to that question.

Dr. Stevens stated having council educated as to what is in the plan before they start implementing it would be better. He asked if they should adopt this plan when it is finished.

Mr. Tate stated they council should consider the final plan.

CM James asked if there is any reference to sidewalk café's in the sidewalk plan.

Mr. Benken stated yes there is. He stated they have proposed standards for the placement of sidewalk café's relative to the building entry and the curb. He stated in so many downtowns the merchants have been the decision maker as to where the sidewalk café will go. Mr. Benken stated that with ADA the cities need to take control about the decision. He stated the Downtown Streetscape Plan will be making recommendations as to how the spaces will be addressed.

CM James asked if the Dept. of Building Inspections has been involved in the conversations as the plan has been developed.

Mr. Tate stated they have talked to people in building inspections, traffic and a couple of groups that are concerned about those with disabilities. He stated they are trying to get input from as many people as they can.

CM James asked if the transit stops and bus shelter placement can be firmed up on the plan.

Mr. Tate stated they had talked with Ms. Crews before she left but has not talked to Rocky Burke, LexTran General Manager, yet. He stated through GIS they are working on getting current locations of the stops and shelters.

CM James stated it is a difficult process for them to get a bus shelter approval. She asked if when they were researching other cities if they looked at what cities are taking care of their own sidewalks versus it being the property owners' responsibility. She stated she could see where people could be a little fearful to a Streetscape Design hitting their pockets. She asked what does our maintenance program or cost share program need to look like for this to be successful.

Mr. Benken stated they have discussed that and the answer is all over the board as to what other cities do. He stated what might make sense is to look at management districts as a way to collect monies that could be used for sidewalk and planting maintenance. He stated it is hard to find property owners that are willing to fund infrastructure. He stated a management district would be based on a vote of property owners in a geographical district.

CM James gave Mr. Benken and the committee a list of questions that she received from a constituent regarding the Streetscape Plan.

CM DeCamp stated they have been working on the news rack issue. He stated the committee is waiting to get their recommendations of locations. He stated they have decided the best way to go is with corrals. He stated they would also like their recommendations of design standards. He stated they are ready to go ahead with this.

Mr. Benken stated they do have recommendations for how corrals would go in. He stated they could set up a meeting to discuss the placement on configurations.

CM Beard asked about raising private funds and if they will be casting a wider net.

Mr. Osborne stated they will have to cast a wider net and possibly engage people in the equine industry. He stated that will be part of the investigative process.

CM Blues asked how the Centerpoint discussion figures into the study.

Mr. Benken stated he is not that knowledgeable of the Centerpoint project. He stated TIF money is an excellent target for street improvements. He stated one of the most desirable things about the downtown plan is having Vine St. becoming a true main street. He stated this can be accomplished a number of ways and the project could begin to accomplish some of the things to change the character of Vine St. He stated he doesn't want to leave the committee thinking that the PR will be the silver bullet to solve everything. He stated at the end of the day you will have a master plan that will be useful to go to state and federal representatives to say we need help to get where we want to be.

CM Gorton asked if Downtown Development Plan is the Downtown Master Plan. She stated it is important to keep all the terms the same.

Mr. Tate stated that is the master plan.

CM Gorton asked if they anticipate lane conversion to two way streets will come as a recommendation to council.

Mr. Benken stated they have had meetings with internal staff and transportation cabinet. He stated the downtown transportation plan stops short of making a recommendation. He stated they want to push up a notch and are leaning toward saying there is good reason they should begin to apply the conversion strategy starting with the easy streets and incrementally convert those. He stated in order to do that they will have to conduct a supplemental engineering study that will look at the individual intersections. Mr. Benken stated the first thing council needs to do is have a comfort level of advancing that strategy. He stated they need to weigh in on whether or not they want the process to begin.

CM Gorton asked how that will come forward to council.

Mike Woolum, Strand, stated that as part of this process they have had meetings with representatives from the transportation cabinet. He stated anything they would do with the streets would require the involvement of the Transportation Cabinet. He stated they will have to develop a strategy to go forward.

CM Gorton asked if they have surveyed Fayette County.

Mr. Benken stated they have surveyed those that attended the meeting. He stated one of the recommendations is to authorize the study of Main St and Vine St. He stated you can take that one step forward and include the conversion of Short and Second St. They have heard there is not much standing in the way of converting those streets. Mr. Benken stated the best thing they can do is develop a case history and track record on the conversion.

CM Gorton stated council hasn't had any discussions on the conversion of streets. She asked if LFUCG has done any post conversion studies of 3rd and 4th St.

Mr. Tate stated he isn't aware of a study being done of those streets. He stated he will check on it.

CM Gorton asked how to get public input on two way streets.

Mr. Tate stated the emails came in when they were doing the Downtown Master Plan regarding the conversion of streets.

Mr. Benken stated there is evidence out there that two way streets are easy to turn into commercial streets and store fronts that bring in revenue.

Mr. Osborne stated unrelated to this project they are assembling a group of stakeholders to conduct surveys of downtown and one way versus two way streets will be a subject. He stated they will share the results with the council when it is completed.

CM Gorton asked during discussions did they discuss street lighting versus sidewalk lighting.

Mr. Benken stated what we have today is what we will see in the future.

CM Gorton asked how much money Covington/Cincinnati was able to generate through private funding for curb/sidewalk replacement.

Mr. Benken stated the city of Covington generated 30% from private.

CM Gorton asked about the discussion as to why you would put diners next to the curb in an outdoor dining area.

Mr. Benken stated in a downtown area you have to accommodate pedestrians so they are saying it is an acceptable standard to move the sidewalk café space out to clear zone by the curb.

CM Gorton asked what cities are doing that.

Mr. Benken stated Cincinnati and Columbus.

CM James asked what will be on display this Friday, April 18th.

Mr. Benken stated they will have the latest version of the standards for all the streets as well as the information in the packet.

CM James asked for that to be put as a link on the website.

Mr. Tate stated sure.

CM Gorton stated the final draft will be ready in May and asked if they would like to come back to the committee to show the changes. She asked to be informed when it is finished and they will place it back on the agenda to see the changes.

2. Newtown Pike Extension Update

Andrew Grunwald, Division of Engineering, gave an update on the Newtown Pike Extension. He stated due to the rain they are currently about the same place they were a month ago. They hope to by mid summer have the construction complete and the temporary homes established. At that time they will begin the relocation of the people living in the Davistown area. Mr. Grunwald stated that within a month they hope to get the consultant on board so they will be up to speed when they get finished with construction. He stated other aspects of the project are moving along okay. He stated the work on the bridge and the Phase IV (from Main to Versailles Rd) is still ongoing. He stated they are waiting on right of way authorization to begin buying right of way from Main St. to Versailles. He stated this is the authorization from the Transportation Cabinet.

CM Beard asked how much of the right of way is available without having to purchase additional right of way. He asked if we are relocating the park and doing other things in that right of way.

Mr. Grunwald stated the Southend Park is approximately 5 to 6 acres and that is the right of way where they are building the temporary construction area. He stated they are going to purchase some abandoned railroad lines that are not being utilized. Mr. Grunwald stated besides those there are two other parcels that the

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet owns. He stated he believes that is all the property that is in the government control.

3. Items Referred to Committee

No motions came out of this issue.

Planning Committee meeting adjourned at 3:00 P.M.