

# RAIL YARDS MASTER PLAN PROCESS COMMUNITY KICK-OFF MEETINGS

## “Comment Card” Comments

(August 2012)

This document contains the full set of written comments (Comment Cards) that were submitted by participants at the three community kick-off meetings for the Rail Yards Master Plan that were held on August 23, 2012, and August 25, 2012. They have been grouped together by the five “break-out station” categories that were used at the public meetings: 1) Public Spaces and Attractions, 2) Community Connections, 3) Housing, 4) Historic Preservation, 5) Commercial/Employment Uses.

### **I. Public Spaces and Attractions (also Arts-related uses)**

1. 587 to 579 Arts District -- Beijing / old factory facility turned arts district for all arts types
2. A monumental public artwork that also functions as a canvas/backdrop for other artistic activities, i.e. projection of moving images, performances, temporary installations.
3. Housing for the creative economy sector that includes work and retail space for jewelers, sculptors (which manes built w/light manufacturing infrastructure). Painters, etc. (electrical & ventilation).
4. Use Public Art to symbolically pay homage to the now gone Round House. Use its shape as a spring board for other design elements.
5. Visual Arts, Visual Artists & Arts Organizations have been catalysts & implementers of economic revitalization & historic building renovations. These projects have been individual buildings, as well as neighborhoods and districts. What comes to mind is the Venice Biennale which hosts the most prestigious contemporary arts exhibition that is held in centuries old buildings- rope shop/ sail shop. When the Biennale is not going on there is the Architecture Biennale & other exhibits. The point is that N.M. and ALBQ has a long history of the Arts & Culture being a part of this community. My proposal- recommendation is that the ABQ Rail yards be ----- as the ABQ Biennale.
6. Amphitheatre; art galleries; music venues; small theater space.
7. Could the building with a crane system be used for some sort of foundry/ welding/ public art sculpture/ large scale casting construction facility? There is probably a need for large spaces for artists who work on the kinds of sculpture that end up in places like the Interstate and public parks.
8. Play spaces for all ages (toddler to seniors); Day and night activities (not empty after 5:00 PM); Athletic and art activities; Smaller, quiet spaces; Outdoor studio spaces.
9. Public spaces: 24 hr public space, well lit, walkable from Barelmas, not connected to bar scene

### **II. Community Connections/Site Access/Transportation Connections**

1. The Guadalupe Bridge is an existing jewel. It is an access across the tracks between Barelmas and South Broadway. It would be economically prudent to develop and

- refurbish to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists. The bridge is an essential link in the artery, Avenida C. Chavez, between Tingley Park, Hispanic Cultural Center, the new UNM student housing and sports complex. Think of Avenida C. Chavez as a cultural/economic corridor that is essential to the outcomes of this plan.
2. I live at the northern end of the South Broadway neighborhood, and I am interested in pedestrian access to the Railyard site, and to Downtown, and Baretas beyond. The Cesar Chavez bridge and the Coal Avenue bridge are options right now, and they are dangerous and unsightly thoroughfares that are also not particularly close to where I live. I would suggest a pedestrian bridge or tunnel at Pacific, for example, but I am open to many suggestions.
  3. Access from South Broadway Neighborhood important -- maybe pedestrian bridge (s) / Providing enough parking spaces
  4. Guadalupe Overpass needs upgrade for safety and appearance. It links many important sites including the Railyard.
  5. Currently, the rail yards are a major obstacle separating Baretas from South Broadway. Coal & Cesar Chavez bridges are the only pedestrian/ car access. I think if the site were opened through the center, the would change access, for example from my house to South Broadway library. Also, are there any ideas about extending streets/ walking access across the tracks that are actively used, or would the train lines remain fenced off?
  6. Maximize non car access. Pedestrian access - especially over tracks from South Broadway. Maximize connections to Downtown, surrounding neighborhoods, airport. Bicycle, pedestrian, city bus and hopefully streetcar.
  7. Connectivity - ease from and to surrounding communities.
  8. Numerous "entry" points for vehicles and pedestrians - if possible to align with existing east-west streets.
  9. "ZipCar" type rental agency or options for short-term visitors or residents who don't own cars.
  10. Light rail + modern streetcar.
  11. It'd be wonderful to see this development accomplished with a great deal of connectivity and respect for the surrounding neighborhoods. One day I imagine everyday working families walking to/from/through the Rail Yards and loving the space. This could be accomplished through welcoming pathways, open spaces, parks, and streetscape/landscape that is blended with the surrounding community.

### **III. Housing**

1. Housing: permanently affordable.
2. Off-grid housing to reduce the long term cost of housing. Green belt buffer zone. Green building. Sustainable living. Inclusive of any of community members (economic profit, incentives - to be announced to community). Runoff collection of water for gardening in community.
3. Any housing done with relation to the Rail Yards should try to incorporate the permanently affordable/community land trust model and strive to provide housing for existing families from the surrounding communities. Unfortunately, a project of this size has the potential to "shock" the community and be an origin of gentrification. In San Francisco's Mission District, between the three years leading

- up to the dot.com boom, rents tripled in the neighborhood. We should strive to preserve the stability of Barelás with this development.
4. Housing: need sufficient density of housing to make business sustainable and this must come first.

#### **IV. Historic Preservation**

1. I like the weathered patina look of the Railyards. Unfortunately, there are some renovated buildings such as Memorial Hospital that lost their historic look and appeal in the renovation.
2. The buildings are important in and of themselves - architecture and history. But what took place in them is just as important - how, why, when and where. Scale and movement through the site is important.
3. We should try to keep all buildings on the site unless they are no longer viable and those should be carefully documented. The history of what happened on the site is important! Whatever happens on the site needs to include ways to tell the original story. Keep the transfer table and round house tracks. We need engines and rail cars on site - can be a part of the museum.
4. Would like to see all buildings preserved as much as possible - outside appearance, and any new construction be consistent with architectural styles of the current buildings.
5. Keep windows. Keep each \_\_\_ like Blacksmith Shop. Pictures of men that worked. Paint murals in connection. Names of workers. Water fountain decoration.
6. The Rail Yard facade and history are such an integral part of Barelás' unique sense of place. Any economic development on the site should revitalize that key role in the community and continue to build on what's great about the neighborhood's character. Historical elements should be a prominent focus of the redevelopment.

#### **V. Commercial/Employment/Other Uses**

1. Commercial uses -- light manufacturing for the creative economy: black smith, jewelry, glass blowing, brewery/winery -- special use zoning or manufacturer, production of food or body products, i.e. lavender soaps & oils, salsa boutique manufacturing.
2. It would be nice to offer incentives for a grocer. I vote for a Trader Joes or something of the like.
3. Steam Loco # 2926 ABQ Land Mark / Operation Center / Maintenance Center / Housing Center of Locomotive.
4. Market would be great - presence at Rail Yards year round.
5. Rebuild parts of the Roundhouse to provide an operations headquarters for what will be the largest 4-8-4 northern steam locomotive operating in the world. It would provide historical education opportunities and tourist dollars. The Steam Locomotive 2926 visions excursions operating around our state and beyond. What better way is there to preserve the historical aspect and original purpose of these buildings.
6. Don't turn open spaces into a flea market.

7. The large spaces should be made available as soon as possible. A wide variety of uses will come forward. Think worldwide! This can be the major public space in New Mexico.
8. Bring back the horn that sounds off the 2926 at 8 AM, 12 noon, and 6 PM.
9. Rebuild Roundhouse for museum and to store 2926.
10. Wheels Museum needs to hang a locomotive from the crane!!!
11. Increase grocery store/organic food. Decrease liquor sales. Free area wide internet access.
12. We need a neighborhood bar since the A&P was unfortunately closed. We need a grocery store. We need a restaurant open after dark.
13. I envision a manufacturer of sleek modern prefab dwellings, some of which are made from Cargo Containers, keeping the overall theme of the railyard. The railyard would be a great match for an Albuquerque firm to manufacture them here.
14. Growers market. Outdoor theater.
15. Post-war - 1st Street had multiple markets and present downtown is desperate for an "Albertson's." Something in the form of: dry goods, hardware, household, grocery, deli. Could serve as outlets for local milk, cheese, farmers market...
16. Hotel: I have heard that underusage of our Convention Center is linked to unavailability of lodging close to Downtown.
17. Job training or workforce development would help sustain a diverse workforce in S. Broadway and hold off gentrification.
18. A 7 day multipurpose space- gallery during week, performance space in evenings, house of worship on Sundays.
19. There should be opportunities for neighborhood cottage businesses.
20. Bring back the 2926 steam engine that lived at the yards! We are working to restore it to run again. We could have a classic operation that could help educate our children and adults in its operation and people could watch it in action. We are also a non-profit organization. Please help bring us a HOME!!

## **VI. Other/Multi-topic/Miscellaneous**

1. Interim use to familiarize the community with the site. Use the trolley bases to tour the site and drive through the machine shop across temp bridge or transfer table. Through boiler shop then end at blacksmith shop. Introduce "sound effects" of the operating shops -- perhaps a short video viewed them both nodes? of being inside trolley when first going into boiler shop or paint shop.
2. Incorporate solar + wind energy in planning process.
3. Maximize open/community spaces. Places to walk, sit, gather, commune. Multiple accesses. Attract all ages. A true central gathering place. Mixed uses, mixed income, mixed retail. Target all demographics. Bicycle/pedestrian/transit friendly! Rebuild Roundhouse!
4. Rename 2nd Street as Railroad Avenue.
5. Mural in Blacksmith Shop; pic of workers; keep windows; water falling in front of building.
6. Opportunities to broaden the impact of the development here to other communities within the state - tourism for railroad trips on state owned rail ABQ to Raton - extension of Biopark connection to downtown via NHCC site.

7. It's so important to create a vibrant project that strengthens the stability and sense of place of the surrounding neighborhood - ideally, providing jobs to the people of Barelás and having first source hiring components, etc. I hope that the project incorporates a "Community Benefits Agreement" such as the one at the Staples Center in Los Angeles. Since public funds are being used, there should be a special focus on the benefits of the project to existing families in Barelás. Ideally commercial development in the Rail Yards will complement the small businesses on 4th Street, not suck the life out of them. This shouldn't be an "Uptown ABQ" upscale development - it has the potential to be a very culturally vibrant hub for everyday people in ABQ.

## **VII. Questions:**

1. How is [the redevelopment of the site] going to affect our neighborhood businesses?
2. What transit improvements are in the works [to serve the site/redevelopment]?
3. How can the goal be to provide living + high wages when you want to make it completely private? How will that be regulated? Why not add focus on ways to promote existing industry in the neighborhood? (ex. An industrial co-op kitchen for the tamale ladies.)
4. What is best pedestrian connection between the site & downtown? Bike? It appears that many people may be unwilling to walk through the undeveloped/ blighted area. What can be done to make the connection more attractive? Can a path be located within the railroad R.O.W. between the site & the Alvarado Transportation Center?
5. RailRunner stop?
6. Grocery store?
7. What kind of documentation of the buildings in their current condition will be done before they are altered?
8. Are there any ideas about extending streets/ walking access across the tracks that are actively used, or would the train lines remain fenced off?
9. If and when the Railyards will be on National Historic Register will that impact the progress of the development- or will the National Registry stymie & stop some of the work & progress of the Railyards? The National Register can be terrific & positive ----?
10. What kind of jobs do the people in the community want?
11. Are there plans for parking structures?
12. What opportunities might exist for BNSF to establish an employee training and/or research center at the site? Railroad use and/or expansion has not reached its zenith. What are the #'s on employee numbers? What are present trends vs. last 5 years vs. projection for next 10 -- How could this be related to operations of BNSF in Belén?