



SAMITOUR CONSTRUCTS



Rail Yards Master Plan Frequently Asked Questions December 1, 2012

This document is intended to provide background information to help the public better understand the Master Plan process and proposed concepts. It attempts to answer many of the frequently asked questions that have arisen since the Master Planning process commenced in August, including questions about the concepts that were presented in a public meeting on October 25, 2012. Questions and answers are grouped by topic with some questions relating specifically to the October 25th presentation and other questions being more general in nature.

The Master Planning team hopes this document is helpful and welcomes additional questions that may not have been covered here. As the process continues, additional questions will be addressed in future documents. The information provided herein represents our best knowledge at this point in the process and may be revised and/or expanded in the future.

I. Questions about Development Process & Phasing

1. What is a Master Plan, and what's in a Master Plan?

A Master Plan is a roadmap for future development. It is an adopted planning document that provides a conceptual framework to guide the development of a site. The Rail Yards Master Plan will provide, among other things, for the general organization of the site with respect to land uses, access and parking, internal and external connections, special site features (e.g., the proposed reconstruction of the iconic smokestack), landscaping, and general design standards. A Master Plan is a living document that must be able to accommodate diverse development opportunities based on natural evolution of the site and in response to economic conditions over many decades.

A Master Plan:

- *Identifies general land uses, including preferred locations, but does not identify specific tenants for any portion of the site.*
- *Can identify possible financing mechanisms and approaches but does not provide a financial plan that describes how the project will be funded.*
- *Can contain architectural concepts, including general design standards, but does not contain individual building designs.*

Examples of other Master Plans adopted by the City:

- *Alvarado Transportation Center*
- *Sandia Science & Technology Park*
- *Balloon Fiesta Park*

2. How is the Master Plan being developed and by whom?

The Master Plan is being developed by the selected Master Developer, Samitaur Constructs, in partnership with the City of Albuquerque through a public process. The Master Planning team, comprised of City staff and representatives of Samitaur, held initial public input and stakeholder meetings in August and September of 2012 to receive general feedback about the needs of and desires for the redevelopment of the Rail Yards. That feedback was used to develop initial concepts regarding the organization of the site that were presented at a public meeting on October 25, 2012.

Revisions to the concepts continue to be made based on ongoing feedback from the public and interested parties. The narrative portion of the Master Plan that contains the policies that will guide future development decisions is currently in development.

3. When will a complete draft of the Master Plan be available?

The project schedule anticipates that the complete Master Plan, including conceptual ideas and policies, will be submitted to the Rail Yards Advisory Board for its review in early January, followed by submittal to the Environmental Planning Commission for review and the City Council for review and adoption.

4. What's the overall timeframe for adopting the Master Plan?

The anticipated approval process and schedule, subject to change, is:

- *Review by the Rail Yards Advisory Board: January 2013*
- *Submittal to the Environmental Planning Commission: Spring 2013*
- *Review/adoption by the City Council: Summer 2013*

5. What happens if / once the Master Plan is adopted?

The City and Samitaur, guided by the policies of the Master Plan, will continue to work in a public-private partnership to prepare the site for development (including environmental remediation), secure funding, and attract potential tenants.

It is anticipated that the City, with the input of Samitaur, will move forward with seeking a developer of Workforce Housing, which is a requirement for the site, through a competitive RFP process.

6. Do things have to happen in a phased order?

A general phasing plan is needed in order to provide an overall framework for redevelopment of the site. The Master Plan will likely include recommended phases of development, but there will be ample flexibility to respond to changing conditions.

7. Who will develop the different parts of the site?

Samitaur has been selected as the Master Developer to implement the Master Plan, though this doesn't preclude the involvement of other entities, such as a developer who specializes in Workforce Housing. The Master Plan will provide direction for development of the different parts of the site. There are expected to be a number of distinct types of development, each with a different type of development model. For example:

- *Private, revenue-generating development (e.g., a job-generating use developed by Samitaur)*
- *Private, non-profit development (e.g., Workforce House or cultural venues developed by Samitaur, a private, or non-profit organization)*
- *Public use development (e.g., park/open space, transportation, cultural and/or community facilities developed by Samitaur or a governmental organization)*

8. How do interim uses relate to the Master Plan's development phasing?

The City's proposal for interim uses is intended to help activate the site on a near-term basis and was developed prior to the commencement of the Master Planning process. There would not be a long-term entitlement for interim uses to continue to exist in a particular location should another, more permanent user come along that furthers the objectives of the overall Master Plan.

The City will continue its efforts to make the site accessible to the public by improving selected buildings and/or areas in conformance with the policies of the Master Plan.



II. Questions about Site Considerations

Zoning / Land Use

1. What is the zoning of the site and what does that zoning allow?

The site has special zoning, SU-2/Historic Locomotive Shops, that allows for a wide range of permissive uses, including multifamily residential (R-3),

office (O-1), community commercial such as retail, restaurants, services (C-2), and light industrial (I-P). See the Barelvas Sector Development Plan (2008) for details.

2. What will the Master Plan say about zoning, land uses, and particular tenants?

The zoning of the site is controlled by the Barelvas SDP. The Master Plan will discuss the overall organization of the site, including appropriate and preferred locations for general land use categories, but will not identify a particular tenant for any specific building or portion of the site.

With respect to the WHEELS Museum, the Master Plan, as currently proposed, calls for the near-term retention of the WHEELS Museum in their current location in the Storehouse while they build up patronage, their collection, and funding commitments for ultimate construction of a new facility. As with any particular tenant, it is premature to designate the actual design or boundaries of a specific user's facility within the Master Plan.

3. Will public access to the main historic buildings, in particular the Machine Shop, be maintained?

It is unknown if the Machine Shop will ultimately house a single private or public user, multiple private or public users, or a mix of the two. Therefore, the Master Plan will contain a high degree of flexibility in how the buildings may be used as well as policies that address public access.

It should be noted that Samitaur's proposal showing the majority of the interiors of historic buildings being reserved for private, economic-generating employment uses is in response to the goal of providing extensive employment opportunities in the redevelopment of the site that was established in the City's RFP. Samitaur's proposal also shows many new covered and uncovered public spaces, such as the Transfer Table, the Gantry Market, the Seasons Courts, the Paseo, and the Turntable plaza. Samitaur believes that commercial re-use of the historic structures will draw credit tenants and provide both jobs to the local economy and an economic foundation for the redevelopment of the site as a whole.

The City will consider requests to transfer or lease property based on individual proposals that are submitted and their compliance with the Master Plan's goals and policies.

Design

1. How will the design of new structures be controlled?

The Master Plan will primarily focus on laying out the process for future design approvals that will be needed. It will contain policies and a limited

number of regulations related to architectural design. The Master Plan will detail architectural controls and guidelines.

2. Are the features presented by Samitaur (e.g., “The Scoop,” acoustic mounds/berms, interpretive smokestack/tower, Transfer Table water feature) required components of the Plan?

The features represent Samitaur’s ideas for addressing certain elements of the overall site design. Such components may ultimately take on a different form and are not required.

The features are intended to represent concepts. For example, “The Scoop” feature represents a desire to create an all-weather space in the Transfer Table area, which is viewed as the primary community space that connects the adjacent neighborhoods to and through the site.

3. How will the actual design and impacts of the berms along the South Broadway (east) side of the property be determined?

Should it be decided that the berms are a feature that should be included in the development of the site, the Master Plan will establish the required process, including engineering analyses, that must be followed to identify and mitigate noise and air quality impacts.

Historic Preservation

1. Is the Rail Yards site officially recognized as a historic place?

For the purpose of the implementation of state and federal historic preservation laws, historic properties are those properties that have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places or the State Register of Cultural Properties, or a property that has been determined to be eligible for listing by the appropriate state or federal agency. These registers are the official inventories of “districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture.”

Only the Fire Station building is currently recognized officially by virtue of its City Landmark designation. However, there is no doubt that the site was pivotal in the early history of the city and its emergence as the leading city of New Mexico and, therefore, holds significant historic value beyond just the structures on it.

2. Are there plans to seek additional recognition of the site?

As a matter of adopted policy, the Barelás SDP specifically calls for City Landmark designation of the site. Such a designation would require the Landmark and Urban Conservation Commission’s recommendation and action by the City Council.

The City has a strong history of recognizing, acquiring and preserving properties that are important to Albuquerque's cultural heritage and has designated many City-owned historic properties as City Landmarks. Such properties include the Old Main Library, Old Albuquerque High School, the Ernie Pyle Library, the Kimo Theater, the Heights Community Center, the Old Airport Terminal and the De Anza and El Vado Motor Courts.

Following with adopted policy, the City has hired a consultant who has prepared an application for the site's listing on the National Register of Historic Places. In addition to the honor of official registration, such listing qualifies the project for federal tax incentives for rehabilitation that contribute substantial, and often critical financial equity to redevelopment projects of this scale. The City and Samitaur will continue to work towards the appropriate protection of the site and its redevelopment.

3. How will it be determined which buildings are historically significant and which buildings will be preserved?

Part of listing a multiple-building property on the National Register is deciding which buildings are significant and which ones aren't. Buildings may be considered significant not only for their physical design and construction, but for their association with an historic event as defined by the historic context.

Transportation Connectivity, Parking, and Traffic Impacts

1. What kinds of off-site improvements to the area transportation system will be made?

While the Master Plan is limited to addressing the 27.3-acre site itself, it will discuss the relationship of the site to the adjacent neighborhoods, the greater downtown area, and the Albuquerque region. A wide range of off-site improvements (e.g., pedestrian and bicycle improvements to the Guadalupe Overpass, connections on 1st and 2nd Streets to downtown, side street connections to 4th St.) will be needed to support the long-term success of the project. Such improvements will be subject to funding availability.

2. Is transit service going to be provided to the site?

Yes, providing transit and alternative transportation options (walking, bicycling) are elements that are fundamental to integrating the site with the larger community and making the project work. Transit service will be planned and programmed as the site develops.

3. Is the underground parking in the proposed Master Plan really feasible?

The water table under the site is at approximately 25-28', which would conceivably allow one level of underground parking. The underground parking is a proposed feature that, as a concept, reflects the need to provide parking and the preference that it not be a visibly dominant feature

of the site. Redevelopment and implementation of the Master Plan is not contingent upon the ability to construct underground parking, which will depend on whether or not there is a user that creates the demand that justifies the cost.

The Master Plan will not mandate or preclude underground parking or alternatives to underground parking. It will include policies regarding the need to provide parking that will guide future development approvals.

4. How will traffic impacts be addressed?

Since there are sure to be changes in traffic patterns and impacts as the site is developed, a goal of the Master Plan is to include policies that will minimize such impacts and mitigate them through good design and a thorough review process.

Additionally, traffic impact analyses are a standard requirement in the City's development review process. The Master Plan itself cannot include a traffic impact analysis since there is no actual development proposal for a particular use or uses; however, the Master Plan will describe the additional studies that will need to be completed when specific development proposals are brought forward.

Housing

1. Why is housing included as part of the development, and is it appropriate and safe to develop housing on a former industrial site?

There is a requirement to provide a minimum of 30 units of Workforce Housing, as defined by City Ordinance, in the development because of one of the funding sources (the Workforce Housing Trust Fund) that was used in the acquisition of the property. Furthermore, housing is considered an appropriate and desirable use to help achieve a true mixed-use project that provides opportunities for people to live, work, and play, all on the same site.

Housing exists directly across from the site, both across 2nd Street in Barelás and on the east side of the railroad tracks in the South Broadway neighborhood. If placed in the right location on the site, housing would help create a transition between the neighborhood and the interior of the site. Environmental reports that have been completed for the site conclude that it is possible to remediate the site to residential standards and make it safe for residential development.

2. How much housing will be developed on the site?

A minimum of 30 units of Workforce Housing must be developed per City mandate. The exact number of units of workforce and/or market rate

housing will be determined through the anticipated City/Samitaur RFP process to select a housing developer for the site.

3. In what phase will the Workforce Housing be developed?

As discussed in the “Development Process & Phasing” section above, the Master Plan will include a general phasing plan and may also contain specific recommendations regarding the phasing of development. When Workforce Housing is developed will depend on many factors, including when a housing developer is selected and when sufficient funds for the project can be secured.

The first draft of the Master Plan showed the housing being developed in a later phase of the project based on considerations such as the timing of constructing underground parking and preserving an open area of the site for construction access. However, based on clear feedback from numerous different stakeholders, the Master Plan has been revised to provide for housing development in an earlier phase.

The timing of housing development will need to take into consideration various factors, including but not limited to the nature of ongoing development activity on the rest of the site and the impacts that future on-site residents may experience if housing is developed in an early phase.

4. Who will develop the Workforce Housing?

It is expected that the City, in partnership with Samitaur, will select a workforce housing developer through a competitive RFP process.

Environmental Issues

1. What is the environmental status of the site?

Since the Rail Yards was an industrial site, there are contaminants that need to be remediated. The City has been working with the New Mexico Environment Department and the Environmental Protection Agency to determine the extent of environmental issues at the site through a Voluntary Remediation Plan.

2. How will environmental impacts be determined and addressed?

The Phase 2 report, which identifies contaminants and provides a work plan for remediating the site, was completed in July of 2012. The level to which different portions of the site will be cleaned (e.g., residential vs. commercial standards) will be determined based on the Master Plan and the nature of specific proposed developments.

Community Connections and Public Spaces

1. How will the site connect to the community?

Providing a high level of physical access to the site is a fundamental principle of the redevelopment. Connections for all modes (driving, walking, bicycling, transit) will need to be provided for both the immediate communities and the region as a whole.

Specific connection points and types of access will be determined as the site develops, based on the policies of the Master Plan.

2. Will public spaces be incorporated?

Providing not only public access to the site but also community gathering spaces on the site is an essential goal of the project. The overall concept for the site that Samitaur presented on October 25th showed public spaces being incorporated throughout the site. The Master Plan will contain policies that will allow flexibility to determine the exact location and use of public spaces through the development process.

3. Is direct access from South Broadway to the site via a pedestrian bridge over the tracks feasible?

It is critical to the success of the project to provide a safe and convenient direct connection from the South Broadway neighborhood into the site. Construction of the bridge feature that Samitaur is proposing, or similar structure, is a significant public infrastructure investment that should be prioritized in an early phase.

4. How will the redevelopment of the Rail Yards impact or relate to redevelopment efforts on 4th Street in Barelmas and Broadway Blvd. in South Broadway?

One of the guiding principles and fundamental philosophies of the project is to complement, not compete with, redevelopment efforts in the surrounding neighborhoods. A significant reason for the City to acquire the property was to be able to ensure that redevelopment of the site would support ongoing redevelopment initiatives in the neighborhoods, in particular on 4th Street in Barelmas and Broadway Blvd. in South Broadway.