



M E E T I N G M I N U T E S

Project: Menaul Redevelopment Study

Date: September 16, 2021

Subject: Presentation of Draft Study

Meeting Date/Time: September 14, 2021; 6:00 – 7:30 PM

Attendees:

Councilor Diane Gibson
Petra Morris, City Council Planning Manager
Abigail Stiles, Policy Analyst, Councilor Gibson
Diale Fomukong, Metropolitan
Redevelopment Agency
Brad Bingham, AMAFCA
Zach Bingham, Line-X
Ruvi Gunawardena
Deepesh Kholwadwala, La Quinta
Robert Avalos, Business Owner
Jeff Rich, Safety Flare
Ben Shaw, Archetype Tattoo Studio

Carolyn Tobias, Keshet Dance & Center for
the Arts
Marcus Bowan
Robert Reule, Ruele Sun Corporation
Steve Rowan, Pace Audio
Chris Damon, Absolute Powder Coating
Mike Worner, Wheels Up
Patricia Santistevan, Zia Automotive
Joani Jones, Crown Plaza
Jackie Fishman, Consensus Planning
Charlene Johnson, Consensus Planning
Markie Anderle, Consensus Planning

SUMMARY

The City of Albuquerque and Consensus Planning hosted the second online public meeting to present the draft Menaul Redevelopment Study. Councilor Diane Gibson gave a brief introduction, which was followed by an overview of the project from Petra Morris. Jackie Fishman presented a summary of the draft study document and discussed the planning process, data research and analysis, and recommendations. She explained that Phase 2 would include designation of a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) and Phase 3 would include development of an MRA Plan. Petra Morris explained that all the documents generated during the project have been placed on the City Council webpage and written comments on the draft report would be accepted for the next two weeks. The discussion is summarized below, with comments and questions by the participants followed by responses, as applicable, by the Project Team:

Comments:

- The City should restrict access to the alleys so that trespassers cannot access businesses through the alley. This is an issue for the La Quinta property.
- Participants expressed that they were excited by the study, but wary of it producing any real impact.

- The property at the southwest corner of Menaul Boulevard and University Boulevard [Quonset hut] is a problem, and while they moved out some vehicles about a year ago, it continues to attract crime.
- Businesses have been leaving the area because of criminal activity and lack of safety.
- The police are understaffed and do not have time to appropriately resolve the criminal activity in the study area.
- Creating a police substation in the study area would be beneficial for issues with crime and safety.
- People will go to other areas for commercial needs because of crime in the study area.
- When customers come to a business location and feel unsafe, they will not return. This is a problem for the study area.
- Police bike patrols could help with crime and safety issues.
- The asphalt trails along the North Diversion Channel and the Embudo Channel are licensed to the City of Albuquerque, and improvements to the trail for safety could include:
 - Having local businesses adopt parts of the trails to keep track of maintenance;
 - Host community cleanups of the trails;
 - Add moveable police cameras;
 - Steel or outdoor suited artwork;
 - Add blue light emergency stations like those around the UNM campus; and
 - Add benches and outdoor fitness equipment.
- Brad Bingham (AMAFCA Engineer) explained that AMAFCA controls the Diversion Channels, but the City is responsible for maintaining the paved asphalt trails. However, AMAFCA would be open to the safety and beautification measures discussed during the meeting.
- The property to the west of Maverik could be used for City purposes like a visitors center.
- Bel-Air/Miramontes Park located to the north of the shopping center at Carlisle Boulevard and Menaul Boulevard needs attention, and frequently is unclean (needles, vagrants, etc.).
- The building located adjacent to I-25 on the Menaul Road cul-de-sac is currently vacant and has tall overgrown weeds. The building appears to be owned by the ABCWUA. One suggestion was to use it for something that draws people to the area, like a large sign or notable structure that can be seen from I-25.
- Brad Bingham asked about the proposed trail crossing the North Diversion Channel shown on the map in Jackie's presentation and who would be constructing it.

- *Jackie Fishman replied that the proposed trail was shown in the City's AGIS system. Petra explained that the existing and proposed trails are a layer from the City's Bikeway and Trails Master Plan.*
- It was asked whether a freeway exit ramp for I-25 at Menaul Boulevard would be possible because freeway access is currently inconvenient.
 - *Petra Morris responded that the NMDOT has jurisdiction over the freeways, and it generally does not add new access points.*
- Landscaping around the I-25 exit at Comanche Road should be improved. Heavy trucks leaving the freeway exits cause wear and tear on the road.
 - *Petra Morris said the City could work with NMDOT on landscaping, but the City does not have jurisdiction over the freeway exits.*
- What pushes development for vacant buildings and lots? What happens to vacant spaces that are not up for lease?
 - *Jackie Fishman stated that the City requires property owners to maintain vacant buildings and noted most vacant properties in the study area looked like they were for lease or sale, with the exception of the Quonset property at the southwest corner of Menaul Boulevard and University Boulevard.*
 - *Petra Morris noted that there is direction from the City to maintain vacant properties and keep them safe by boarding up windows, but that the City cannot force private property owners to lease or sell their properties.*
- Who owns the property at the southwest corner of Menaul Boulevard and University Boulevard, and whether the ownership comes to any City meetings.
 - *Jackie Fishman responded that she thought the owners had been approached to sell the property in previous years, but that they have not been interested in selling.*
 - *Abbie Stiles noted that if there are visible issues with that property, the owners can be issued a citation.*
 - *Joani Jones also explained her ownership team from Crown Plaza owns the building to the west of the Quonset hut building and has been using it for storage. There may be interest in selling the building. She also noted that the Crown Plaza has been undergoing improvements and is always for sale.*
- Diale Fomukong asked what the plans are for the vacant lot [one of the two opportunity sites identified in the draft study report] at the northeast corner of Menaul and Vassar. She explained that there are brownfield incentives to take advantage of for future development if the property qualifies under the EPA brownfield criteria.
 - *Jackie Fishman replied that she knows the property owner, and that she and Diale could speak offline about any future plans that he may have in mind.*
 - *Petra Morris noted that an MR designation would help with public-private partnerships.*
- Will there be benefits for businesses located out of the final MR designation?

- *Jackie Fishman clarified that there are several recommendations in the study report that are not dependent on the MR designation. Businesses within the study area will benefit from the recommendations in the report.*
- Is the boundary for the potential MRA set?
 - *Jackie Fishman replied that what is included in the report is just a recommendation for the MRA, and that there is room for revisions. She also clarified that an MRA must exhibit blighted conditions, as defined by the NM Metropolitan Redevelopment Act.*
 - *Petra Morris added that the next phase will include designation of the MRA, which will involve public meetings to ask property owners whether they want to be in the MRA, and will then be followed by the creation of an MRA plan.*
- *Is there a downside to being within a designated MRA?*
 - *Petra Morris noted that there is sometimes a concern about perception of being within an area determined to be "blighted", but being located in an MR is generally a positive thing that benefits property owners.*
- How can property owners who are not located in Albuquerque get information on MRA incentives?
 - *Jackie Fishman responded that Consensus Planning typically includes an appendix with funding sources that is regularly updated by the firm to be geographically relevant. Phase III would include investment strategies and opportunities.*
- How can sidewalk issues be addressed, specifically around the intersection of Menaul Boulevard and University Boulevard?
 - *Petra Morris responded that sidewalks are generally the responsibility of the property owner, and that there are anti-donation restrictions for sidewalks that do not apply in an MR designated area. She also noted that next steps would be to identify problem areas and pursue getting them fixed in subsequent stages of the project.*
- How were the problem areas identified?
 - *Jackie Fishman explained that the areas were identified by the Project Team based on research from on the ground surveying and commercial real estate analysis from NAI Sun Vista Commercial Real Estate.*

The meeting was concluded with a reminder that written comments can be added to the City Council's webpage for the next two weeks or by contacting Petra Morris, Abbie Stiles, or Jackie Fishman.