

# **MEETING SUMMARY**

## **Downtown Neighborhood Area Sector Development Plan Update**

**10am to 12pm, December 16, 2009 – Hotel Blue**

There were 60+ attendees at this first public meeting for the Downtown Neighborhood Area Sector Plan Update. Attendees were asked to place a dot on a parcel map indicating where they live in the neighborhood – 16 were from north of Lomas and 34 were from south of Lomas. A few of those were from outside the DNA boundary, either from Sawmill, Wells Park, or Reynolds Addition (adjacent neighborhood associations were invited to this meeting).

The meeting started with an introduction from Councilor Debbie O'Malley welcoming people to the meeting and giving an overview of the Sector Plan and the update effort. Councilor Isaac Benton also spoke briefly about recent planning efforts regarding a redesign of Central Avenue, which is the DNA's southern boundary.

Jim Strozier with Consensus Planning introduced the project team – Nevin Harwick, project transportation engineer; Chris Wilson, project historic preservationist expert; Jackie Fishman, project manager with Consensus Planning; and Justin Montgomery, planner with Consensus Planning. He gave a brief overview of where we are to date in the planning process and then introduced Jim Clark, member of the sector plan update committee. Jim Clark gave a brief overview of the committee process and explained that the committee had been working with Consensus Planning on the project for several months prior to this first public meeting. Jackie Fishman then summarized the purpose of this first public meeting, and how it will relate overall to the plan. She explained that results of this meeting will help form the goals and objectives for the sector plan, which in turn will set the framework for the sector plan. She stated that this will be the first of four public meetings held throughout the planning process. Jackie also pointed out the project contact board which gave contact information for Petra Morris, City project manager; Kelly Sanchez-Pare, Councilor O'Malley's Policy Analyst in City Council Services (Councilor Isaac Benton's Policy Analyst, Kara Shair-Rosenfield, was also present); and Jackie Fishman; and web site information for City Planning, Council Services, and Consensus Planning. Jackie then asked that everyone split up into the four breakout groups as designated by color dot on the agendas.

Participants then went to the individual break-out groups, each with a facilitator and someone to record the comments on large note pads. The facilitators were Jim Strozier, Jackie Fishman, Petra Morris, and Justin Montgomery. The recorders were sector plan committee members – Jim Clark, Jennifer DeGarmo, Stephen Littlejohn, and Richard Deichsel (board member). An open discussion took place, centered around three questions:

1. What do you like about your neighborhood?
2. What would you like to change about your neighborhood?
3. What would you like your neighborhood to be in the next 15-20 years?

The break out group discussions lasted approximately 1 hour, 10 minutes. There was commonality among the four groups in terms of their likes, dislikes, and what they'd like

the neighborhood to be in the future. The following is not meant to be a comprehensive list of comments, but rather a brief list of areas of agreement.

The Downtown Neighborhood:

- Likes the historic properties and single family character of the neighborhood, though there's a need to educate realtors and buyers on opportunities and regulations
- Likes the walkability of the neighborhood, though, it should be improved to make it more walkable – better sidewalks, crossings, traffic calming
- Bike access good, but should be improved and expanded
- Likes the location and convenience of the neighborhood between Downtown and Old Town, and likes the proximity of the museums
- Likes the neighborhood commercial uses (former Sunshine Cafe) and would like more of them (restaurants) in locations along Central, Lomas, Mountain
- Would like a neighborhood grocery store and other small businesses like a bakery, laundry, coffee shops, bookstores
- Likes the sense of community, diversity of the neighborhood, and knowing their neighbors – “front porch living”
- Likes the mature trees, parks, and open space, though parks should be improved with lighting to increase safety and add more plantings; and need to plan for street tree replacement
- Likes the access to transit, though it should be expanded
- Has concerns regarding safety along Central Avenue, need for better lighting; concern for the bus station along Central
- Need for traffic calming along Lomas; wants Lomas to be a gathering area and not a barrier
- Need to reclaim and maintain alleys
- Surface parking lots should be developed with appropriately scaled infill
- Does not like the number of bars and thinks there should be more retail and restaurants instead
- Does not like bail bonds offices in residential neighborhoods

After the break-out groups discussions, everyone came back to the larger group and heard a summary of each group's comments from a group spokesperson. Jackie

Fishman then wrapped up the meeting with a reminder that participants can contact any one of the project managers on the team or from the City, and that they will be informed of the next meeting, where participants will be asked to weigh in on the draft goals and objectives written and based upon the comments received at this meeting.