



## **Rail Yards Advisory Board**

November 15, 2022

8:30 am

Council Committee Room

9th Floor, Suite 9081

Attendance is open to the public. The meeting can also be viewed via Zoom webinar by clicking on the following link: <https://cabq.zoom.us/j/81114964957> (Meeting ID: 811 1496 4957).

### **MINUTES**

I. Call to Order

II. Welcome & Overview

Welcome to Sen. Ortiz y Pino, Rep. Martinez. Sen. Padilla and Commissioner Quezada not in attendance. There is a quorum for the one action item. Petra Morris and consultants in attendance to present master plan update.

NM Steam Locomotive Society News – John Roberts

-Organization has signed agreement with the City for cleaning, maintenance and restoration at Rail Yards

-Started work on turntable and cleaning up of turntable for the evaluation for use of 29 26

III. Approval of Minutes: June 1, 2022 RYAB Special Meeting  
Approval of minutes passed unanimously.

Ms. Freed announced the Mayor gave permission to use the machine shop and adjoining land. WHEELS now has three grant writers. She is thrilled to have property move forward with their plans.

Rick Miera also in attendance as ex-officio member.

IV. Rail Yards Master Plan update – Review of draft updated plan

Copies of draft plan have been distributed to all board members.

Ms. Morris and Ms. Fishman present updates to the Rail Yard master plan update.

These hard copies are the result of Ms. Fishman's hard work over the past few months and since the last Rail Yards Board meeting when we talked about the scope of the update.

Ms. Morris explained that the changes in the documents presented on the update are based on that framework.

The biggest change was parcelization and it going away, meaning now the uses are allowed all throughout the site.

There is a new height diagram both in the plan and on the site plan. Access remains the same. There is no change in access points

The landscaping plan now is much more simplified with buildings as a base with plantings, no berms, and then shows the areas where, there are no structures or parking, those areas will have some kind of landscape treatment, similar to north end of the site.

The format we used is a red-line format to show changes.

Ms. Morris took questions.

Councilor Benton stated this was started with the intention of cleaning up the plan from what Samitaur did. The intention was to do a light touch on this, not anything drastic and be consistent with aspirational and regulatory language in the original plan. The process going forward, if this is approved, it will go to the City Planning Commission and then to City Council for final adoption.

Ms. Chavez said the berms were supposed to be sound barriers, which is what they wanted. How will you handle that now without the berms?

Ms. Morris noted that the berms were for the noise, but trees are also a really effective sound barrier. The trees will still meet the requirement for the noise barriers around the perimeter of site.

Ms. Chavez asked if this extends to South Broadway.

Ms. Morris said no, it won't extend to South Broadway. We are only landscaping the site. Outside of the master plan, that is something we can look at, public rights of way that run parallel to the site.

Ms. Chavez asked How does changing the plots change what can go in there?

Ms. Morris explained that it is the most fundamental question and that Samitaur envisioned their development of the site was based on ten parcels. Each parcel had a height associated with it and had a list of particular uses. Because Samitaur are no longer our partners and the parcel approach doesn't make any sense any more, and so we are proposing to remove the parcels. However, that leaves the

question of what we do with all of the uses. At the last meeting, the conclusion of the board was that we should allow the same list uses throughout site. Rather than limiting cultural facilities to maybe 3 of the sites, they could go anywhere. Same for retail and housing. They could be done anywhere on the site. It provides a lot more flexibility for users of the site.

Ms. Chavez asked if that changes the usage for someone who wants to go in for light or heavy industrial use.

Ms. Morris explained that for light industrial that would be limited to a few portions of the site. The site doesn't allow for heavy industrial use. The list of uses has not changed.

Mr. Garcia said his concern is the buffer between the Rail Yards and South Broadway and he gets a lot of complaints about noise. He wants an alternate solution to trees, such as a wall.

Councilor Benton asked to clarify whether the noise from the site or the railroad tracks is the issue.

Mr. Garcia said it is the noise from the site itself. Noise from events in the buildings travel down. Mr. Rael is supposed to come up with a phone number for someone to call when the decibel level is too loud.

Ms. Morris explained that the master plan does not cover noise levels but that the City globally covers that. If this is something that the board would like us to address, she can look into it more.

Councilor Benton noted that he received similar complaints. These complaints are under its operational uses, such as private events. This is separate from the land use issues. Noise regulation in the City is handled under the Environmental Health Department.

Mr. Rembe recommended using hours of operation to regulate when events can occur and not have loud events occurring past certain times.

Mr. Garcia understands but is concerned with a lack of enforcement of these hours of operation due to City being too short-staffed.

Councilor Benton notes that the Administration is not present to answer the questions about operational noise.

Rep. Garcia noted that the noise is not just limited to the boundary of South Broadway with the Rail Yards. It is a justice and equity issue for South Broadway at I-25, as well. They are the only community without sound barrier walls

abutting the interstate. He stated that we need to look at the sound issue from that perspective, too, and urged a resolution on this matter.

Ms. Freed asked how would we control anything that BNSF does to the south.

Ms. Morris explained that we do not have any control of railroad activity to the south but mentioned the language Ms. Freed is referring to might be in reference that there is railroad activity to the south.

Ms. Freed asked for an explanation on what it means that it is the job of this group to invest in neighborhood stabilization.

Councilor Benton explained that the original intentions of the creation of the board was to allow for the two neighborhoods to be heard and have representation in the development of the site.

Ms. Morris explained that the master plan can only control what is on the site but it also needed to recognize that it will impact the surrounding neighborhoods. It recognizes both potential positive and negative impacts on the surrounding communities.

Ms. Freed reiterates her concern for affordable housing on the site and stated she does not know how to make that workable on a rail yard.

Ms. Freed stated her opinion that on page 66, there should be no demolition of the buildings that are mentioned. She was pleased with page 75 of the mention of keeping rail access. She stated that the landscape pages should be eliminated. She noted that she is appreciative of the cultural site on page 133-134 and of the tracks on the pages 135 and 137.

Ms. Morris had Ms. Freed's comments printed off for review by Karen Iverson and others to take into consideration. There is new language on page 19 and page 37. The demolition language is not covered. The way the master plan is set up is three tiers or categories for buildings: preservation and re-use, buildings to maybe being removed, and then buildings to be reconstructed. There is no proposal to move any buildings from their categories. The board can move buildings to other categories but that is beyond the scope of what we talked about initially. The buildings that are on the removal list are not required to be removed.

Mr. Rembe noted that he thinks this a good way for it to be represented and handled well with that type of flexibility.

Councilor Benton noted that Sen. Ortiz y Pino dropped off from the Zoom call. (No longer a quorum of the board)

Ms. Freed asked what is going on with CNM at the site.

Councilor Benton responded that there was no one from the Administration to answer the question, unfortunately.

Mr. Miera noted that Mr. Garcia has a point regarding the noise. He had a similar situation with the BioPark and their events. There were complaints about noise after the sound was amplified for neighbors further away. He recommended to look at how sound amplifies down the railroad tracks. He asked if we can re-look at tree plantings

Ms. Morris explained that the landscape plan does show trees along the east side of the site but not further east along Williams or Broadway. Those areas are not covered by the plan and would have to be looked at outside of this plan.

Mr. Garcia reiterated that sound travels and the noise causing the sidewalks and homes to crack is still a concern.

Ms. Chavez agreed with Mr. Garcia on the noise issue and how the noise amplifies.

Councilor Benton expressed his concern that for these City-sanctioned events, we still do not have a phone number or protocol to report noise violations. He reiterated that the noise was due to the operations on the site and it is hard to physically eliminate noise.

Mr. Rembe asked what language do we have in the master plan that addresses noise currently. He recommends some language be in there that addresses the noise concerns.

Councilor Benton does not know of any language in the plan that addresses noise concerns but agreed with Mr. Rembe that there should be.

Ms. Fishman searched the document and found that there is a note on the landscape plan that attenuates the noise.

Councilor Benton noted that there some areas on the site where a building is the perimeter, thereby not allowing enough for tree planting. He noted that specifically at the blacksmith shop and along Commercial St.

Mr. Rembe asked how far does the Rail Trail go down. He noted it may be an opportunity for more trees.

Councilor Benton noted that the Rail Trail comes only to the entrance to the site. He shared that he is supportive in having some language regarding noise to the Planning Commission.

Ms. Fishman noted that she worked on the Balloon Fiesta Master Plan and it had noise attenuation language in it that she can look at as a model.

Rep. Garcia noted a correlation between noise and what the City has done regarding air quality. He shared how the City put mobile air quality monitors in South Broadway and suggested something similar for noise monitors. He stated that residents could be affected by the culmination of noises from different sources in conjunction with new noises from the site, as well as the inversion factor of temperature changes.

Councilor Benton asked what the will of the board is regarding the noise issue. He suggested a memo to the Planning Commission directing them to pay particular attention to this one issue on what sort of language should go in.

Mr. Miera agreed.

Mr. Garcia noted his appreciation for the attention to the noise issue.

Councilor Benton stated he thought this issue had been taken care of but, since it hasn't, it is still an issue.

Mr. Chavez expressed her liking Rep. Garcia's idea of the mobile noise monitoring.

Ms. Freed expressed her sympathy for the noise issue and knows that the development will be noisy. She asked if there is a solution to the noise problem other than trees and walls.

Councilor Benton shared his experience with sound walls in South San Jose and near the BMX facility along Buena Vista.

Mr. Rembe agrees with Councilor Benton's suggestion for the memo to the Planning Commission to address the noise issue.

Ms. Chavez suggested sound barriers inside of buildings to keep sound from escaping the buildings.

Mr. Garcia suggested for the site limit the number of events allowed per week.

Councilor Benton confirmed that any business and individual is subject to the noise ordinance and noted that, between a reference to the issue and Ms. Fishman's example of the Balloon Fiesta Master Plan, we can put that in the memo to the Planning Commission if the plan approved.

Mr. Miera explained the importance of taking multiple noise readings at different locations since the noise can amplify.

Councilor Benton noted that there will be reference to possible sound detection equipment and he will contact the Administration on the failure to provide a phone number.

Ms. Morris drafted a fifth action on the amendment for the group to consider. It read, add a section in Section 7 on noise, similar to language used in the Balloon Park Master Plan, to address and consider noise.

Ms. Morris asked the group if the red-line format is preferred. She would like direction on whether a red-line version or clean version should be prepared for the Planning Commission.

Mr. Rembe preferred the red-line format to see the changes.

Mr. Garcia preferred the clean version.

Councilor Benton asked if EPC would require both.

Ms. Morris explained that they could do both. She suggested putting the red-line version on the RYAB website and the EPC would get the clean version.

Ms. Morris asked about parking. At the last meeting, the direction was to stick with the parking directions that were in the plan and the plan referenced the sector plan. The sector plan referenced that the site would have to accommodate 1000 parking spaces. She asks the board whether board is okay with that or wants to reduce that number.

Ms. Chavez recommended to add an estimate number of parking spaces due to increased neighborhood traffic and safety.

Councilor Benton asked Ms. Fishman if there are individual parking requirements for the project.

Ms. Morris referred to the Barelás sector plan that talks about providing parking on an incremental basis as development goes in. This language gives flexibility as the site is very big and is unlikely to provide all parking on the site. It gives the flexibility of parking to be supplemented by multi-modal transportation.

Ms. Fishman noted that having the 1000 spaces would require a multi-level parking structure.

Councilor Benton explained that was part of the plan but that 1000 spaces seems like an arbitrary number. He also noted that there was going to be underground parking with the berms.

Ms. Chavez suggested parking further out so as not to crowd the site.

Ms. Morris suggested the potential for parking at the southern end.

Rep. Garcia asked what is the role of the city is regarding the shuttles to the Balloon Fiesta and the River of Lights event and suggested a similar plan for the Rail Yards.

Councilor Benton explained that there has been discussion of that.

Rep. Garcia suggested partnering with UNM or the Zoo or shopping centers for park and rides to alleviate parking at the Rail Yards.

Mr. Garcia noted that the Balloon Fiesta and River of Lights are only seasonal, and it would be extremely expensive to run the shuttles to the Rail Yards.

Mr. Rembe suggested to use the rail line as the access point and have the train take people to the Rail Yards.

Mr. Rembe asked about the word “adequate” in the language is too restrictive.

Ms. Morris said that was in the sector plan but the intent is for flexibility.

Ms. Fishman noted that the word “appropriate” is hard to implement by the EPC but the word “adequate” is commonly used and understood.

Councilor Benton moved to vote to remove the 1000 space parking language number, but there was no longer a quorum without Sen. Ortiz y Pino.

Ms. Morris suggested to instead use the notes from this amendment to update the Rail Yard Master Plan draft and not have to vote on a separate amendment at the next meeting.

Councilor Benton apologized to the board for not having a quorum and suggested for the next meeting to have a few extra board members to spare.

Ms. Morris explained action 1 that the site plan shows the front of the flue shop with an addition that was added in the 1960s but has now been removed. The site plan still currently shows it and this would remove it. The breezeway between the CWE shop and tinder repair shop has been removed and we need to show that it is not there anymore. There is text on page 137 proposed to be struck as part of a parcel description but is an important policy statement. We are proposing to move that to page 134. It clarifies about access to WHEELS. Action item 4 is to add new text to page 119 related to new activities at the site.

V. Adjourn