



## **INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PLAN KICK-OFF MEETING**

**Thursday, July 8, 2010  
Cesar Chávez Community Center**

### **M E E T I N G   S U M M A R Y**

**City Councilor Rey Garduño** thanked everyone for coming and provided the following opening remarks about the sector plan process:

*This process must be deliberative, and hopefully we will have a good outcome. District 6 is very diverse and has a lot to offer. No one person will be heard above any other person. No person will be kept from being heard. I want to make sure that we all have the sense that this is our community. Throughout the process, everybody is as important as everyone else. All of us together are much smarter than any one of us separately. Let's think together, let's act together, and let's make sure this part of the city is heard and represented. We came together to call ourselves the International District – that was deliberative.*

**Russell Brito**, manager of Long Range Planning in the Planning Department, introduced the people who will be involved in the development of the plan and gave an overview of planning and zoning in the city:

*My staff person Maggie Gould will be the planner, and Strata Design will be the consultant. Most land in this area is zoned R-1, which allows single-family detached dwelling units. Regulations for different zones generally include things like height, uses, setbacks, etc. Examples of other zoning categories: C-1, Commercial, O-1, Office. All zones have regulations: setbacks, landscaping, parking requirements, etc.*

*We also have policies in the City of Albuquerque – most are contained in the Comprehensive Plan for ABQ/Bern. Co., which is our only Rank 1 planning document. Contains intents/desires for what we want in the city. They are fairly vanilla policies because they are intended to apply*

citywide. Rank 2 plans are Area Plans – e.g., the West Site Strategic Plan. Rank 3 plans are Sector Plans – they blend policy statements with regulatory language for a neighborhood or group of neighborhoods. Existing SDPs in this area are the La Mesa and Trumbull SDPs. They are older plans and don't have much in the way of specific regulations that reflect the special character of the area that provide teeth to help implement policies/desires.

*In developing a new SDP, you tell us – where do you want to go with development, with businesses, with recreational opportunities. We take your input and try to create regulatory language – laws – to help realize the vision. Do the regulations further the vision? That is what we will ask you.*

*The blue handout (Handout #1) has some information about SDPs including citations from City Ordinances. All lower ranking plans have to comply with higher ranking plans. All plans must comply with the City's Rank 1 plan – the Comp. Plan. Page 2 of the handout has a comparison of "Straight" zoning and "Special Use" zoning. Sector Plan zoning is SU-2 Special Use zoning that is customized for an area. For example, if you wanted mother-in-law quarters with a kitchen, that is not currently allowed in R-1. You could customize a zone called SU-2/R-1 for the International District that would allow that. "Mixed-use" is another zone that might be appropriate for certain areas. Preservation of special characteristics can be addressed through SU-2 zoning in a SDP. Coordination of development can be facilitated through the development of a SDP via a market study. Infrastructure upgrades are sometimes needed to support new development. Coordination of zoning, policies and infrastructure improvements can happen through the SDP process. Also on page 2 of Handout #1, there's a citation of what an SU-2 zone is. Please read this at your leisure. Any questions?*

*(The following Q and A responses from Councilor Garduño and Consultants)*

**Q:** Is there an already-existing sector plan in this area?

**A:** There are two – the La Mesa and Trumbull SDPs. Some might say they're a little dated. Half of the area is not currently covered by a Sector Development Plan.

**Q:** Are you suggesting to make a new plan that would supersede both of those plans?

**A:** Yes, but not before encompassing and incorporating the good parts of those existing plans.

**Q:** What is wrong with those plans?

**A:** The answer to that is going to be relative. It's going to depend what you think. We could leave those plans alone. We want to find out what you think is good

about those plans but also what you think is lacking in those plans and try to improve upon them.

**Q:** How were the boundaries determined for this SDP?

**A:** Through a long series of meetings. The International District concept has been going on for several years. The process was that folks got together and talked about what the area should be and include. Some folks thought it should go to San Pedro, some to San Mateo, some to Louisiana, some to Wyoming. There was nothing magical about it.

**Q:** Our HOA has never heard about renaming this area the International District. When did the conversations take place? Who participated in the process?

**A:** Info went out to many of folks. The International District was codified at three levels: the state, the county and the city. The discussion now is about the International District SDP. The designation of the International District has already occurred. We're not going to go back and redo that unless there is a groundswell of opposition, which I have not seen happen. We're about to embark on a new process. This is the kick-off. Nothing is set in stone.

**Nancy Bearce** with the La Mesa Community Land Trust and District 6 Coalition explained, in detail, the history of the process to develop the "International District" concept.

**Q:** Clarifying question. My understanding, having been a part of the process that asked for the SDP, we asked for specifically for the three neighborhoods that aren't currently covered by a SDP. We don't have sector plans in three specific neighborhoods. If the neighborhoods that already have sector plans don't want a new sector plan, how will that affect the neighborhoods that don't currently have a sector plan?

**A:** If existing neighborhoods that have SDPs want to opt out of the process or hold off, that will not trump the planning effort for the other areas. I would hope that La Mesa and Trumbull would choose to participate because there is a lot of positive that can come about even for areas with pre-existing SDPs.

**Q:** Whatever is decided by the people, whatever changes are made through this SDP, how long will I have to comply?

**A:** It depends on what the plan ends up saying. You can say everything that's "noncompliant" gets grandfathered in. You can set trigger levels. It all depends on what the community thinks is appropriate. You need to look at both where you are and where you've been as well as where you want to go. Non-conformance in the zoning code has different periods – 20 years, 40 years. The SDP can dictate the compliance period.

**Comment:** Need to address existing zoning code violations. It is a War Zone – it's called that for a reason. You hear shooting in the middle of the night and

return fire. I want codes enforced that are on the books now. I don't want fancy new planning.

**Q:** With the district, does it fully encompass the La Mesa and Trumbull neighborhoods? And the Fairgrounds too?

**A:** Yes, the proposed boundaries include all of La Mesa and Trumbull. We don't control the Fairgrounds since it's State-owned property, but it is technically still within the plan boundary even though we can't control the zoning of the property.

**Q:** Where is La Mesa? What areas are not covered by a SDP?

**A:** The La Mesa neighborhood is between Louisiana and Wyoming from Central to Lomas. The neighborhoods between San Mateo and Louisiana from Lomas to Gibson are not currently covered by a SDP.

**Comment:** We have a lot of unfinished work from the La Mesa and Trumbull SDPs. We'd like to see the things that haven't been completed get completed.

**Comment:** There are buildings being torn down in Trumbull, one was right next to my property, and there's still rubbish on the land. Trumbull between Zuni & Espanola – City property. Have been looking at it for 2 years.

**A:** We'll ask the question about why the rubble hasn't been removed yet.

**Q:** There was a sector plan from Wyoming east. If a person has a commercial building that is sold, does it lose the right to grandfather in?

**A:** You're talking about the East Gateway SDP, which is still pending adoption. Just change of ownership does not cause a property to lose its legal non-conforming status.

**Q:** I have something that's been bothering me for quite some time – blind intersections. Bushes and fences in the way. I'm concerned about this. What can be done?

**A:** That is something that is regulated under existing ordinance. You can report those kinds of issues to 311 and it will be directed to the appropriate City department.

### **Introduction of Strata Design, Consultants**

**Michelle Negrette** provided an overview of what to expect during the planning process. See, also, Handouts #2, 3, and 4.

*Strata Design is an architecture, landscape architecture, and planning firm. Lola Bird, Jill Reisz-Westlund, Dory Wegrzyn, and Elvira Lopez are the other members of our team. We want to know how to get your participation. Please fill out the survey (Handout #4).*

*The process of gathering information won't stop. We want to make sure you understand that we work from a bottom up process. We are going to work with people and neighborhoods individually to hear the concerns of your immediate local community as well as the larger community. We're going to meet with one neighborhood at a time. After 3-4 months working with individual associations and businesses, we're going to invite everyone to come together to a "workshop" to hear from each area about their concerns and goals.*

*As a larger group, we'll start to look at the larger issues like the Base, the Fairgrounds, the Hospitals, traffic problems, etc. After that workshop where we hear major concerns for whole area, we'll develop Steering Committees so that people can work on specific issues/area. All meetings will be open to everybody.*

*After several months of collecting information and establishing goals, we'll start working on how we want to get things accomplished through, for example, zoning/rezoning. After all of that work is done, we take the information and develop a draft document. The community will then have opportunities to review the draft, and we'll have more meetings to discuss the draft. After about three drafts, the plan will then enter the City process – EPC, LUPZ, Council. Public comment is taken at all steps in the City hearing process.*

*It's a fully community-drive and participatory process.*

*(Q and A responses from Councilor Garduño and Consultants)*

**Q:** Will down-zoning be possible?

**A:** Yes, but so is up-zoning. Anything is possible. It will depend on what we hear from people who participate.

**Q:** What if we want to put the funding that's going into this process into existing enforcement instead? I think the money would be better spent on enforcement.

**A:** We're talking about different pots of money. We need enforcement, too.

**Q:** In the SDP, will we be able to work on getting more parks and green space? Some parts of the city have one park for every 1800 residents. This area has one park for 8000 residents.

**A:** Those are issues that are definitely present and that can be discussed and addressed through this process.

**Q:** I'd like to know if we can get APD to participate in this process. We have a problem. This process is great, but there needs to be teeth on the other side.

**A:** That's one of the side benefits of this process. Large groups of people can speak loudly. And we will provide you with the mechanisms to be heard. This process allows more people to come together to back each other up.

**Q:** At the beginning of this meeting, a man back in this corner said that he didn't know he was in the International District. How many people did not know before this meeting that they were in the International District?

**Show of hands:** 14 people did not know about the "International District."

**Q:** How long has the area been the "International District"?

**A:** 1 ½ years – since January 2009.

**Q:** Is this area part of the Metropolitan Redevelopment Area? Will the MRA remain in place?

**A:** Yes, the MRA will remain in place. SDPs and MRAs are closely related.

**Q:** Someone needs to explain how hard it is to pull a permit for an SU zone. You don't even understand unless you're a contractor.

**A:** For a SDP, it's an SU-2 zone, not an SU-1. It doesn't mean that you have to go to the EPC for a permit. An SU-2 may or may not require you to go to the EPC. The SDP dictates. There are different kinds of SU zones. It all depends on what you tell us you want. There are a lot of options, and we need to hear from you.

**Q:** I would like to add another room in the back of my house. Can we change things to be able to add to our homesteads?

**A:** That's possible, but again, it will depend on what we hear from people in terms of what new regulations they'd like to see.

**Q:** I know a lot of people who want to have small community gardens on their property. Is this a place to ask for some of that stuff?

**A:** That issue has come up a number of times. That is something we can do throughout this process and the City has had a study group meeting on this issue.

**Q:** Being that this falls entirely within your district (District 6), are there any politics involved?

**A:** Most sector plans fall within a single district. There are no politics involved. The neighborhoods approached the city and requested this process.

**Senator Tim Keller:** I'm just here to help from the state level and support anything that helps our neighborhoods. This is YOUR plan. We can do with this as a community whatever we want. I want to encourage you to come to follow-up sessions. We're hoping this can be the next step in the revitalization of our community.

**Councilor Garduño** closed by thanking everyone for coming, encouraging everyone to continue to participate, and mentioning that State Representative Al Park had been in attendance at the beginning of the meeting.