

## **Ad Hoc Downtown Committee Meeting Notes June 24, 2009 – Draft Vision Plan Review**

**Committee Members Present:** Joseph Igbineweka (new CSUC Student representative), Barbara Mundy, TJ Glenn, David Halimi, Nick Ambrosia, Kaari Martin (new CSUC staff representative), Mary Flynn, Mike Thomas, Alan Chamberlain, John Merz, Katrina Davis-Woodcox

**City Staff Present:** Steve Peterson, Brendan Vieg, Meredith Williams, Shawn Tillman, Bob Summerville, Tom Varga, Tracy Bettencourt

**PMC Staff Present:** Mark Brodeur, Pam Johns

### **Initial General Comments**

- Make sure that the text always accompanies the Vision Plan (VP). Add text to the VP that mentions the accompanying text.
- The concept of marketing and branding Downtown is missing
- The concept of parking should be addressed separately as its own item
- Parking structures are too concentrated along Salem and there aren't enough in South Downtown

### **Notes on Questions**

#### **Question 1 - Do the draft Vision Plan and the accompanying text convey your long-term vision for Downtown Chico in 30+ years?**

*Group A* – Yes, but include more marketing of Downtown. Parking should be a separate concept. Also include the concept of a clean Downtown. Include more outdoor seating.

*Group B* – Yes. Overall we approve. The south downtown could be better defined. Show that the South Downtown lot interiors are for parking. The exact uses that make up mixed use projects should be listed: residential, commercial, etc., and show a cross-section.

*Group C* – Text is good, but the Plan seems too prescriptive and may confuse the lay person. The development shown around Big Chico Creek isn't preserving and enhancing the creek enough.

*Whole Group Comments* – Tie parking policies to the well-studied work (Access Plan). Don't think there's enough demand for all this development. The concept of after-dark pedestrian safety (with lighting) needs to be addressed. P-BID should be suggested in an Action policy of the GP.

#### **Question 2 - Of the sites identified as having the “greatest redevelopment potential”, are there any you feel should not be designated as such? Conversely, are there any sites you think should be highlighted that are not?**

*Group C* – Curious about the methods and criteria for determining which the sites with the highest development potential. The group is concerned about highlighting specific parcels for redevelopment potential. Maybe use a more general identifier

*Group B* – Utilize the Big Chico Creek area, beautify it, and use its assets to draw businesses. Consider including the triangle-shaped property between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> St. in the development potential here. Also, New Autos Inc. should be included as a potential site.

*Group A* – Prioritize the development opportunities into 2 categories: great and greatest potential. The Salvation Army Building and the east and west side of Wall Street between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets should be included. Maybe the sites with greatest development potential shouldn't be on there at all. Who is the Plan designed for? Who is the audience?

*Whole Group Comments* – Rename the yellow highlighted sites as “revitalization” sites; don't use the word “redevelopment” because it doesn't imply use of RDA funds. They are too parcel specific.

**Question 3 - Several mixed-use parking structures have been strategically identified on the Vision Plan to meet the demand of a residentially denser and more intensely developed Downtown. Given the long-term vision of the Plan, do you support this notion? Also, do you support the integration of the Farmers Market into the Municipal Center's current parking area, or should it be integrated into its existing location, or the Downtown Plaza?**

*Group B* – Would moving the market south hurt the surrounding businesses? The 2<sup>nd</sup> Street site is ripe for a large new development. The farmers market is not site dependent. Consider moving it to the plaza w/ temporary street closures. Also consider temporarily closing Wall St. from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> for the market.

*Group A* – Yes, integrate the structures with mixed uses that blend into Downtown. Don't occupy good parking spots with the market. The municipal lot is better suited, and the municipal building restrooms could be used during the market. Strongly believe that it should not be where it is now. Plaza will be ok if the merchants' needs are met by street closures.

*Group C* – No consensus on using the plaza as the location for the market. When we reach the 85% saturation that triggers structured parking, redevelop the current site with a park that includes a green alley where merchants can set up. Wherever it goes, make sure it's a permanent structure that serves multiple uses. Build a full-sized mixed-use office parking structure on the municipal lot.

*Whole Group Comments* – Don't be so distinct about how the market is represented. The group agreed that the Plan shouldn't show a specific location for the farmer's market on the VP. It doesn't have to be exactly replicated elsewhere. The VP should at least have some comment about the impact and reciprocal relationship of the market and existing retailers.

**Questions 4 & 5 - Would you like to see any different images used to illustrate the draft Vision Plan concepts? Did you have any additional comments on the draft Vision Plan or the accompanying text?**

- Specify the implications of being an “H” (historic building)
- Some photos don't convey the concepts well enough.
- Trees, and corner bulbing either needs to be referenced in the legend or take them away from the overall image
- Make the H2O towers icons larger
- Doesn't address bikes at all. Especially 2<sup>nd</sup> street. Make Downtown more bike friendly.
- Make the land use colors brighter to more easily distinguish

- Make the Vision more elaborate and inspirational
- Somehow illustrate vertical intensity
- Make the graphics less busy

### **Public Comments**

- Don't forget to put attention on Little Chico Creek and the southern entrance to Downtown.
- Balance the Downtown entrances by adding a nice entrance in the south.
- Get more creative with alternative transportation within Downtown.(bikes, the trolley)
- Support the careful transitions to the surrounding neighborhood
- Parking structures don't need to take up the whole block
- We need to market the use of public transit in and to Downtown
- Suggests we review the books, "The Most Beautiful Towns in England" or "The Most Beautiful Towns in Ireland" New styles of awning (2-foot projecting) signs can increase the beauty and safety of Downtown.
- Improve Downtown's public relations
- Improve the Municipal Sign Code to better support Downtown businesses
- Develop the bicycle valet program to encourage bicycling to work. Put our energy into this program first through a public-private partnership.