

**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
 PLANNING BOARD ACTION ITEMS
 OF WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2012**

Item	Page
2. STUDY SESSION Woodward Ave. Action Association Transit Oriented Development (“TOD”) Task Force Presentation of Final Report for review and comment	5
Motion by Mr. DeWeese Seconded by Mr. Williams to recommend acceptance of the Woodward TOD Corridor Study by the City Commission as the plan supports multi-jurisdictional planning efforts along the Woodward Corridor that seek to develop the corridor in a manner consistent with the existing goals and objectives of the City of Birmingham.	7
Motion carried, 6-0.	7

APPROVED

**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING BOARD
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2012
City Commission Room
151 Martin Street, Birmingham, Michigan**

Minutes of the regular meeting of the City of Birmingham Planning Board held February 8, 2012. Chairman Robin Boyle convened the meeting at 7:31 p.m.

Present: Chairman Robin Boyle; Board Members Scott Clein, Carroll DeWeese, Bert Koseck, Janelle Whipple-Boyce, Bryan Williams; Student Representative Kristen Thut

Absent: Board Member Gillian Lazar

Administration: Matthew Baka, Planning Intern
Jana Ecker, Planning Director
Paul O'Meara, City Engineer
Carole Salutes, Recording Secretary
Susan Weckerle, City Planner

02-19-12

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR PLANNING BOARD MEETING
HELD JANUARY 25, 2012**

Mr. DeWeese:

Page 5 - First sentence under "Other Business," add an "e" to "Comple."

Motion by Mr. DeWeese

Seconded by Mr. Clein to approve the Minutes of the Regular Planning Board Meeting of January 25, 2012 as corrected.

Motion carried, 6-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: DeWeese, Clein, Boyle, Koseck, Whipple-Boyce, Williams

Nays: None

Absent: Lazar

02-20-12

CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS

Chairman Boyle drew to the board's attention to the proposal for Walgreen's which will go before the City Commission next Monday evening. He proposed that the matter be moved up on the agenda in front of the study sessions, in that the applicant and his architect were present.

02-21-12

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Members of the board agreed to that change.

02-22-12

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATIONS

d. Other Business

34300 Woodward Ave.

Walgreen's (revisions per Planning Board approval conditions)

Ms. Ecker discussed the modifications made by Rogvoy Architects, P.C. to the Walgreen's SLUP Package for City Commission consideration. She explained the applicant wanted to make sure the Planning Board had a chance to comment on the changes that were made since the last meeting. They didn't want to risk going to the City Commission and then having to come back to this board for the changes.

Chairman Boyle thought the revisions definitely improve the circulation in the rear. The applicant has made some accommodations on the rear elevation; also the upper floor plan has been amended with regard to the windows.

Ms. Whipple-Boyce noticed the interior layout has changed significantly and she wondered how that will affect the check-out station, as it appears to be against three of the big windows off of the parking lot.

Mr. Jason Horton from Lormax Stern Development Co. was present with Mr. Mark Drane, Rogvoy Architects. Mr. Drane explained that when someone walks by they would be still able to see through into the store. Mr. Horton went on to highlight the revisions to the floor plan. They are concerned about their ability to make minor changes to the floor plan that do not affect the exterior elevations. Ms. Ecker explained that any change to the floor plan requires review and approval of the Planning Dept. A minor change could be made with administrative approval. Anything that is questionable is brought informally to the board. If it is not approved the applicant would have to go through the Special Land Use Permit amendment process to make changes.

There were no comments from the public at 7:45 p.m.

Mr. Williams commended the applicant for coming back before going to the City Commission. Chairman Boyle indicated they were encouraged to do so in order to

ensure getting their proposal through. Mr. Williams applauded how far they have come from where they were and how much they have listened and worked with the Planning Dept.

Chairman Boyle hoped the City Commission will listen to their proposal and give it their support so that this new part of the Triangle District can get up and running.

02-23-12

1. STUDY SESSION

Alleys and Passages

Review and comment on conceptual presentations for selected alleys and passages downtown

Mr. Baka noted the 2016 Plan identified the alleys behind commercial buildings and cut-through passages between them as underutilized assets within the City. The 2016 Plan recognizes the service value of the alleys as an essential function of the downtown and states the importance of that function. However, it also identifies the potential of these spaces to add a unique and vibrant aspect to the City. The recommendations contained in Circulation 5 of the 2016 Plan state that alleys and passages should be held to higher aesthetic standards, similar to sidewalks, given their pedestrian function.

Since the time that the 2016 Plan was written there have been significant developments which have provided the opportunity to improve these spaces. Most notably, the Willits Building was erected on a former parking lot. Standard streetscape elements such as streetlights and landscaping were installed. Over the past few years several other properties have come through the site plan or design review process and have been approved for alley and passage improvements.

In an effort to further implement the goals of the 2016 plan the City has contracted the architectural firms of Ron and Roman as well as Krieger/Klatt to create conceptual plans and design standards for these areas. Similar to a master plan, these concepts are intended to set a cohesive direction for the alleys while allowing for creativity and flexibility on a case by case basis.

Mr. Baka presented a PowerPoint that reviewed the passages being discussed:

- Willits Passage
- Willits Alley
- Café Via Passage (strictly for pedestrians)
- Social Passage
- Hamilton Alley
- Commonwealth Passage
- Merrillwood/Pierce Alley
- Churchill's Alley improvements
- Bates Alley
- Brooklyn Pizza Alley

- Peabody Alley
- Henrietta Alley
- Edison Passage (private property)
- Daines Passage

Mr. Ron Rea from Ron and Roman Architects advised that the City hired them to do a study on how to improve the Willits Alley, the Hamilton Passage or the Social Passage, as well as the alley that connects Hamilton and drives through to Park. In each of the cases they took a very simple approach. Most important is adding a lit Via marker on the street at the head of each passage saying where it leads. Other elements are:

- Enhanced pavement
- Exposed earth pockets for Boston Ivy
- LED spotlights to bathe ground and facades of the Via
- Creative signage not governed by the street rules
- Great art pieces at key locations
- Property owners to paint alley elevations of their buildings, remove bars, add awnings, signs, add windows and illuminated vitrines, etc.
- Private parking pockets to be organized to allow for a tree or two
- Provide a central trash compactor with a screenwall

Mr. Baka pointed out a main concern with the illuminated via markers is they would need to work through DTE to hook up to their electricity. Additionally, different standards would have to be initiated to allow for rear signage.

Mr. Rea went on to advise that the architectural firm of Krieger/Klatt was asked to create conceptual guidelines for the Merrill St. Via behind Pierce and Pierce to Henrietta. The two firms' concepts include much of the same thought processes.

Mr. Koseck thought there is an opportunity for each via to be a different experience if each one has a different design. Mr. Ecker said that is why she suggested guidelines. Each passage would not have to be exactly the same, short of the pavement. Mr. DeWeese thought the biggest thing is to get the alleys clean and add some variety to make them attractive.

Chairman Boyle noted that Code Enforcement needs to police trash disposal. Further he wondered if there is a way to work with DTE to improve the overhead wires which are an absolute mess. Mr. O'Meara advised that won't happen unless there is a lot of money and he doesn't know where that would come from. Pavement improvements are 100 percent assessed to the building owners. The chairman proposed that naming rights could be given to alleys in return for re-doing the surfaces.

Mr. Williams suggested putting up maps inside the parking structures which outline streets along with alleys and passageways. They would inform visitors how to get around town.

Ms. Whipple-Boyce thought consistency getting into the alleys is important. A significant next step would be to engage with a specific alley and start to check with the building owners and tenants to find out their needs and what they might like to see.

The chairman invited comments from the public at 8:33 p.m.

Ed **Bosse**, the wine merchant in the alley behind Cristions, thought there has to be some continuity in the structural aspect. The diversity would come from the merchants. Greenery and nice signage cost very little and they work for everyone concerned. His input is to pick a few things and do them as soon as possible.

Mr. Rob White said he owns Made, a custom leather business on the Willits Alley. He believes that all of the alleys are a treasure. However, one thing that strikes him is the unsightly building with green peeling paint. The other thing he notices is the hodge-podge of wires that really don't need to be there. DTE shouldn't want anybody to see electricity delivered that way because it looks unbelievably antiquated.

Mr. Fred Lavery, 440 Lake Park, suggested an action step. Signage, directional and for the merchants, would be very easy to accomplish relatively simply. He assumed most of that would be done by the City. That would be the seed to create some of the additional things that Mr. Rea has proposed.

Ms. Ecker and Mr. Baka wanted to see a complete document for alleys and passages downtown before submitting anything to the City Commission.

Mr. DeWeese thought it would be a great student project to address the issue of how does a city provide incentives to encourage development in an urbane way and gets away from the suburban straight model. Look into how to encourage people to do things that are in their ultimate self interest but not in their short-term.

Mr. Baka said staff could develop some clear defined guidelines and have a complete package for the board to review before it goes to the Commission.

Mr. Williams noted for the record what a great job Mr. O'Meara does in representing the City of Birmingham.

02-24-12

2. STUDY SESSION

Woodward Ave. Action Association Transit Oriented Development ("TOD") Task Force Presentation of Final Report for review and comment

Ms. Ecker recalled that as discussed at the August 10, 2011 Planning Board meeting, LSL Planning was hired to conduct an assessment of how well existing master plans and ordinances in each of the five participating jurisdictions in the Central Woodward

Ave. Corridor promoted transit-oriented development, identified gaps and opportunities, and provided recommendations for the future of the Woodward Ave. Corridor.

LSL Planning prepared a draft plan entitled the *Central Woodward Avenue Transit-Oriented Development Corridor Study* ("Woodward Ave.TOD Corridor Study"), which was reviewed by the Task Force, and reviewed by the Planning Board at the September 21, 2011 Planning Board meeting. The findings of this report were also presented at a public meeting that was held on October 13, 2011 at 6:00 p.m. at Birmingham City Hall. All Planning Commissioners/Board members, City Commission/Council members, City Managers and planning staff in each of the five participating municipalities were invited to this meeting to review the Woodward Ave.TOD Corridor Study, to engage in discussion and build relationships, and to provide comments and feedback on the Corridor Study.

As previously discussed, the draft report and the public comment received on the report were passed along to the Lawrence Technological University ("LTU") students in the Detroit Studio class last semester who studied TOD in the Woodward Ave. Corridor for their class project. Throughout the semester, three design teams from the Detroit Studio toured the corridor, conducted research on existing conditions, socioeconomic data of residents, traffic counts, etc. and developed innovative and creative master plans to encourage the redevelopment of the corridor. Currently, two interns from LTU are working to compile all of the data prepared and documented by the students, and to publish a report with their findings, master plan concepts and recommendations for implementation. The final LTU report should be complete by the end of February, 2012.

At this time, the Woodward Ave.TOD Corridor Study (prepared by LSL Planning) is presented to the Birmingham Planning Board for recommendation of adoption by the City Commission. Once the study has been adopted, the Planning Board will then work toward the implementation of this study in Birmingham.

Given the progressive nature of our planning efforts already underway in Birmingham, only minor changes will be required to our Zoning Ordinance and master plans to implement the Woodward Ave.TOD Corridor Study. However, the study also recommends significant changes to Woodward Ave. (road diet, lower speeds, access management and parking restrictions), that are not currently in place in Birmingham. Should the Planning Board support adoption of the Woodward Ave.TOD Corridor Study, the 2012-2013 Action List should be updated to include implementation of this study.

As this is the beginning of the implementation stage of the TOD Task Force's efforts, Birmingham is one of the first communities to begin the adoption and implementation phase. The only other community that has entered the implementation phase thus far is the City of Royal Oak. Because they were already in the process of updating their master plan, the City of Royal Oak was able to incorporate some of the concepts and recommendations of the Woodward Ave.TOD Corridor Study. Further implementation will be undertaken. The City of Ferndale's Planning Commission is also scheduled to

review the Woodward TOD Corridor Study at their March meeting, with the intention of amending their master plan to incorporate the TOD Study findings and recommendations.

The report reviews the master plans and ordinances in each community, tells us where we stand, and gives recommendations on where to go from here to consolidate efforts along Woodward Ave. It talks about five key areas: safety, zoning overlay district, parking, transit framework, and future coordination.

Ms. Heather Carmona, Director of the Woodward Ave. Action Assoc., advised that the City of Royal Oak is moving forward very quickly. Several communities moving something forward consecutively could be very instrumental in making significant change.

Mr. DeWeese said the goals for the strip from Fourteen Mile Rd. to Lincoln need to be clarified and action needs to be accelerated. A sub-plan on that transit corridor could be done that could become a part of the Master Plan. It might be a requirement that construction should include second and third floor residential.

Mr. Clein said he is very supportive. He noticed the Executive Summary is different than the body of the report. Road diets in the Summary talk exclusively about transit. However, other ideas are discussed in the back of the document such as bikes, sidewalks, etc.

No one from the audience wished to comment at 9:07 p.m.

Chairman Boyle thinks that a neighborhood plan is needed for the problem area. Also the potential for something happening along the Woodward Corridor needs to be accommodated. Lastly, he thought the quality of the LSL presentation was really good. Ms. Carmona spoke to recognize Ms. Ecker for her leadership. Her action has really set the bar for other communities.

Motion by Mr. DeWeese

Seconded by Mr. Williams to recommend acceptance of the Woodward TOD Corridor Study by the City Commission as the plan supports multi-jurisdictional planning efforts along the Woodward Corridor that seek to develop the corridor in a manner consistent with the existing goals and objectives of the City of Birmingham.

No one from the public wished to discuss the motion at 9:10 p.m.

Motion carried, 6-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: DeWeese, Williams, Boyle, Clein, Koseck, Whipple-Boyce

Nays: None

Absent: Lazar

02-25-12

3. STUDY SESSION
Triangle District Plan Implementation
Courtesy Review of the Hazel St. vacation

Ms. Ecker advised the request for the vacation of Hazel St. was submitted by Mr. Fred Lavery, the property owner both north and south of Hazel St. between Woodward Ave. and Elm St. This application is coming before the Planning Board for a courtesy review of the proposal prior to consideration by the City Commission.

The Triangle District Urban Design Plan ("Triangle Plan") was adopted by the City Commission in 2007 to establish a vision for the redevelopment of the Triangle District. One of the key circulation recommendations outlined in the Triangle Plan was to close the segment of Hazel St. between Woodward Ave. and Elm St. to minimize the number of access points along Woodward Ave. and to minimize cut-through traffic in the neighborhood.

The Triangle Plan suggests that this area could be used as open space or could be conferred to a property owner or developer in a beneficial exchange. Key circulation and streetscape improvements, including the vacation of Hazel St., were recommended for implementation in the first phase after the Triangle Plan was adopted.

Based upon this recommendation, the City approached Mr. Lavery about applying to vacate the segment of Hazel St. between Woodward Ave. and Elm St. Mr. Lavery met with City staff on numerous occasions and has now requested a vacation in accordance with the Triangle Plan recommendations. Mr. Lavery has agreed to close off Hazel St. at Elm St., and install a continuous sidewalk, street trees and grass along Elm to soften the commercial edge of his property for the benefit of the neighbors to the east. Mr. Lavery is also proposing to narrow the entrance off of Woodward Ave. by installing landscaped bump-outs that will slow traffic and improve the aesthetics of the Woodward Ave. right-of-way. This will provide a greater buffer between Woodward Ave. and the neighborhood.

This request will go to the City Commission on February 13, 2012 for review and consideration.

Mr. DeWeese said that full pedestrian connectivity needs to be maintained and Mr. Williams concurred.

Mr. Lavery explained the area that is designated for new vehicle display is where they mass park their vehicles for display and is not a part of the minimum parking requirement for the buildings that now exist. Discussion contemplated that with the vacation there will be a net loss of two parking spaces.

Mr. Lavery observed that presently the street works fine for him. The vacation doesn't necessarily harm or help in his existing use of the property. However, at some point in the future if these parcels are developed in accordance with the Triangle District Master Plan, then having this property will be beneficial in achieving that objective.

Mr. Koseck thought there should be something to terminate Hazel St. as opposed to a short hedge. He would give up the four parking spaces and create a berm or node which has some substantial significance, defines a terminus going west on Hazel, and doesn't look like the end of Chester as one drives south.

Mr. Clein announced he thinks this recommendation of the Triangle Plan does not add any benefit and makes no sense to him. The chairman noted it makes the simple transfer of some of Mr. Lavery's cars between his facility and the storage on Bowers more difficult.

There were no members of the public that wished to comment on at 9:30 p.m.

02-2612

4. STUDY SESSION Planning Board Action List

Ms. Weckerle advised the Action List was updated as a result of Planning Board input from the last meeting. Ms. Ecker indicated that some of the City commissioners have expressed a desire to re-do the Master Plan as a whole. Therefore staff has been encouraged to put a review of the Master Plan in the budget for next year. In the budget for this year they are looking at doing the Multi-Modal Complete Streets plan.

Mr. DeWeese did not think the City has the money or the political will to re-do the Master Plan at this time. But an incremental plan could be done, and maybe as part of that a re-write or a cleanup would work.

Mr. Williams said he would hate to embark upon this as a priority if the City Commission is not in accord with it as part of the whole review of Woodward Ave. Chairman Boyle asked if conversations between City staff and the city manager might reveal the intent of the Commission. Ms. Ecker agreed they could try that approach.

Mr. Koseck thought if the board directs attention to the Woodward Ave. corridor between Fourteen Mile and Lincoln then maybe developers will, and that is important. Mr. DeWeese said the neighborhood needs to get involved so they will have security as to what will happen.

Chairman Boyle summed up the discussion and made recommendations. The board will focus its attention on Item (1), Woodward Ave. Gateway Plan. Item (2), Complete Streets. will be moving ahead in many areas. Staff will be asked to reconsider the

wording of Item (3), O-1 and O-2 Zoning Amendments, get it to the City Commission, and then bring it back for further work. The board will go forward on Item (11), Alleys and Passages.

Board members determined that Item (11) should be moved up to where Item (4) is. Items (1), Woodward Ave. Gateway Plan and Item (8), Re-examine a workable model for higher buildings on Woodward Ave. (TOD Plan), will be kept separate but there will be some overlap.

02-27-12

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA (none)

02-28-12

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATIONS

a. Communications

- Mr. DeWeese reminded everyone that next Monday evening the City Commission will discuss Complete Streets for Maple Rd. He suggested board members should attend and be supportive. Chairman Boyle cautioned that members should only speak as individuals and not on behalf of the board. There was agreement that the logical person to give a general supportive statement on behalf of the board is the chairman.
- Mr. Koseck initiated discussion about the City logo. He feels it doesn't represent Birmingham in any way. Others agreed that it does not look urban at all.

b. Administrative Approvals

- Ms. Ecker advised that Tim Horton's and Mobil Gas Station have requested approval to open up the display windows that are lining Woodward Ave. and Oak so that daylight enters the building. When someone is in the drive-through they can look out and see what is going on outside and vice-versa. The windows will still be used for display. Consensus was the windows are a lot better without the drywall at the back.

c. Draft Agenda for the Regular Planning Board Meeting on February 15, 2012

- 503-529 W. Brown, Peslar House Final Site Plan Review
- MI Kitchen Bistro transfer
- Rugby Grille outdoor dining

02-29-12

PLANNING DIVISION ACTION ITEMS

- a. Staff report on previous requests (none)
- b. Additional items from tonight's meeting (none)

02-30-12

ADJOURNMENT

No further business being evident, the board motioned to adjourn at 10:10 p.m.

Jana Ecker
Planning Director

APPROVED