

MINUTES

Springfield Planning Commission
Work Session
Springfield City Hall
Jesse Main Room
225 Fifth Street, Springfield

March 18, 2003
6 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair; Steve Moe, Vice Chair; Tim Malloy, William Carpenter, jr., Jim Burford, Greg Shaver, members; Greg Mott, Mel Oberst, Mark Metzger, City of Springfield staff; Joe Leahy, City Attorney; Terry Moore, consultant.

ABSENT: Marilyn Phillips, Lee Beyer, members.

1. Nodal Selection and Implementation Project

Presentation by Terry Moore, consultant to the City on the evaluation of Springfield's proposed nodes.

Mark Metzger, Planner III explained that based upon the City Council's selection last Spring of five sites for nodal development consideration, the City had obtained a grant from the Department of Land Conservation and Development to hire a consultant to develop an implementation strategy. He said ECO Northwest was the consultant, and the presentation would describe the progress of the project to delineate and evaluate the proposed node sites. A question and answer period with the Commission would follow the presentation.

Terry Moore, from ECO Northwest, gave an overview of the project. He said that nodal development was required by state and regional planning goals and by planning criteria in the Trans Plan and Metro Plan. Additionally, he said, nodal development was consistent with the City's desire to promote economic development and livability.

Mr. Moore said the five sites evaluated for their potential for nodal development were 1) Downtown Springfield; 2) Glenwood; 3) Jasper-Natron; 4) Mohawk; and 5) Riverbend. He said that a number of steps in the project had been completed, including selection of the areas, review of recent planning work, transportation analysis, and implementation workshop. The draft and final report remained to be done and he estimated it would be completed by late April or early May.

Mr. Moore described the characteristics of node as located at a transportation crossroads, relatively higher density, walkable pattern of grid streets, pedestrian-friendly, and public spaces. He said the Trans Plan described three types of nodes: the neighborhood center, commercial center, and employment center.

Mr. Moore discussed the tools available to implement nodal development. He said tools fell into two categories: planning and regulatory tools, and all other incentives. Under the planning and

development category, he said there were standard planning and zoning tools and new tools, both existing and potential.

According to Mr. Moore, standard tools consisted of the Metro Plan, which defined in broad general strokes regional planning goals, followed by concept, refinement, and specific area plans, which defined use in increasingly specific terms. Standard tools also included standard zones, plus planned unit development (PUD), which was not currently used in Springfield.

Commissioner Moe arrived at 6:08 p.m.

Mr. Moore next described three relatively new or possible tools for nodal development. The first, mixed use zone under Article 40 of the development code is consistent with the defining characteristic of nodal development. As an example, he said a standard commercial zone could be designated mixed use, which would allow for other types of development in a predominantly commercial zone. Another tool under Article 41 was the nodal development overlay zone, Mr. Moore noted. He explained that the tool overlaid other zoning and if the initial zoning was not mixed use, the overlay would apply mixed use to the underlying zoning. He said the overlay also applied certain design principles.

Mr. Moore said the final new tool was creation of a new plan designation at the refinement plan level. He said this would differ from the Metro Plan nodal designation and the nodal development overlay; it would be more a more general way to accomplish some initial planning and retain flexibility for the future.

Under the category of other incentives, Mr. Moore cited several methods to encourage nodal development:

- Public investments, such tax increment financing for infrastructure and amenities to support density of development
- Expedited permitting
- Waiver of development fees
- Reduction of parking requirements
- Multi-family tax credits

Mr. Moore went on to discuss evaluation of the five Springfield sites. He said prior to establishing site boundaries, the concept plan (land use and transportation, market component) and current implementation for each site was reviewed. He illustrated on a map elements of the evaluation and potential overlay boundaries for each site and used a table to show how each site was assessed in terms of current land use patterns, level of planning, and implementation options. He suggested that the Metro Plan nodal development designation be adopted for all of the sites.

He said the designation at the Metro Plan level was quite general and adoption would satisfy state and regional requirements while maintaining maximum flexibility, and achieve consistency with the Metro Plan.

Mr. Moore concluded his presentation by summarizing the potential implementation strategy or strategies for each site:

Downtown Springfield – zoning adjustments using a nodal development overlay zone

Mohawk – zoning adjustments using a nodal development overlay zone, or create a new refinement plan

Glenwood – use new plan designation of “nodal development” that includes certain nodal development and performance standards, or wait for completion of refinement and specific area plans and establish overlay zone

Riverbend – same strategies as for Glenwood

Jasper/Natron – wait for development of refinement plan, or possibly establish a floating nodal plan designation that would establish nodal development expectations for the area

Mr. Moore said detailed specific recommendations for each site would be contained in ECO Northwest’s final report.

Commissioner Carpenter asked if there were ways to prevent incompatible use of property adjacent to a nodal development that would decrease the value of the nodal development. Mr. Moore replied that the situation varied depending on the level of development of a site. For example, he said, in developed areas such as downtown Springfield, a developer could be confident that there would be little or no change in the surrounding properties. In areas that are in transition or developing from a greenfield, master planning for all or a portion of a site, with performance standards, would give developers some assurance of what is in proximity to their properties.

Commissioner Carpenter asked how incompatible existing uses within a potential nodal site, such as industrial, could be addressed. Mr. Moore responded that the only options for addressing uses that were considered nodal inhibitors were to accommodate those uses as long as they existed or use of eminent domain.

Commissioner Shaver observed that designating five sites could dilute the City’s nodal development efforts and asked if it would be better to focus attention on one or two sites with the greatest potential. Mr. Moore agreed with the concern and said developing all five sites within a twenty year period was not possible. He said the issue would be further addressed in detail in the final report and noted that Glenwood and Mohawk showed the most opportunities for nodal development.

Commissioner Shaver asked what percentage of residents within a quarter mile walking distance supported retail business with a nodal development. Mr. Moore replied that it would depend on the type of business. He said that the quarter mile distance could contain up to eight hundred households and major new grocery store typically required a base of four thousand households. He said the location of nodes on major transportation crossroads did not require either residents or businesses to reply exclusively on the area within the node to meet all their needs.

In response to a question from Commissioner Shaver about the types of individuals or families who were attracted to a node, Mr. Moore said that while a mix of family types and income levels was desirable, generally nodes attracted people who were seeking amenities and transit access. He said the location of node, such as near a large employment area, would also affect the type of resident and that the residential development within a node, while dense, was not necessarily low cost.

Commissioner Moe asked if there was nodal development without residential features. Mr. Moore said that the Trans Plan identified employment nodes that allowed, but did not require, residential use within the node.

Commissioner Shaver asked what percentage of residents lived and worked within a node. Mr. Moore responded that nodes generally did not attract residents because of an employer within it. Mr. Metzger commented that nodal development was intended to reduce dependence on the automobile, not necessarily eliminate its use, and nodes would attract residents who wanted the convenience of being able to access on foot or bicycle various services and amenities, but still drove to work or for major shopping. He suggested visiting the Nanaimo, British Columbia website, which described a series of nodes with different characteristics along a transit loop.

Commissioner Shaver asked if nodal development could be a catalyst for redevelopment of an area. Mr. Moore expressed reservations about viewing nodal development on its own as a tool for redevelopment, but did see it as a tool to achieve greater livability in an area.

The Work Session adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

(Recorded by Lynn Taylor)

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