

The Murray City Center District (MCCD) Review Committee met on Thursday, January 25, 2024 at 5:30 P.M. in the Cottonwood Conference Room (#250), 10 East 4800 South, Murray Utah.

Present: Zach Smallwood, Planning Manager
Susan Nixon, Senior Planner
Andy Hulka, Chair
Ray Beck, Vice Chair
Kiersten Davis, Committee Member
Matthew Givens, Committee Member
Samuel Ingram, Committee Member

Members of the public per sign-in sheet

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mr. Hulka called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Beck moved to approve the March 30, 2023, MCCD Minutes. Seconded by Ms. Davis. A voice vote was made with all in favor.

CONFLICT(S) OF INTEREST

There were no conflict(s) of interest.

BUSINESS ITEMS

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR FOR 2024

Ms. Davis nominated Andy Hulka for Chair. Mr. Hulka accepted the nomination.

Seconded by Mr. Givens. Roll call vote:

Y Andy Hulka
Y Ray Beck
Y Kiersten Davis
Y Matthew Givens
Y Samuel Ingram

Vote passed 5-0.

Ms. Davis nominated Ray Beck as Vice Chair. Mr. Beck accepted the nomination.

Mr. Givens seconded. Roll call vote:

Y Andy Hulka
Y Ray Beck

Y Kiersten Davis
Y Matthew Givens
Y Samuel Ingram

Vote passed 5-0.

GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT

MCCD AREA PLAN - Review and Recommendation of MCCD Area Plan

Mr. Smallwood provided background prior to his presentation to help the committee understand the context. He stated that in the past, staff have not taken text or plan amendments to the MCCD review committee. He reminded them that when they review things, they're reviewing it against an ordinance, that is written into the text. The phrase "text amendment" refers to any proposed change to the ordinance. In this instance, it will be an addendum to the General Plan. Previously there has not been a formal planning document created for the downtown area. This document focuses on what the community envisions for the downtown area. It includes recommendations for staff to ensure its implementation. Staff wants to make sure that the MCCD review committee is involved because this will have an impact on their role going forward as they review projects.

Mr. Beck asked if the planning document is a subset of the master plan.

Mr. Smallwood said that's generally correct. He said the General Plan directs the entire city and the planning documents, mostly area plans, are an addendum to the general plan. The planning documents are more narrowly focused. He emphasized that this planning document is not codified. The document is just to inform and provide staff direction to make changes to the zoning ordinance and other recommendations. Staff is asking for the MCCD Review Committee to make a recommendation to both the Planning Commission and the City Council. He noted this is different than what the committee normally does, which is making recommendations to the Planning Commission on a specific project. Because this is a legislative item, it goes to the Planning Commission and the City Council.

Mr. Smallwood proceeded to present the Downtown Area Plan. He informed them that this was developed with a steering committee made up of citizens, property owners in the MCCD, business owners, and a representative of the Historic Murray First Foundation. It was developed by Downtown Redevelopment Services, whose principal is Ben Levenger. This strategic plan is developed with block one in mind, but it is applicable to the entire MCCD. Block one was targeted because the Redevelopment Agency who funded this study owns block one. They want to have a good understanding of what the citizens want. He said to keep in mind some of the larger recommendations are made for the entire MCCD. Mr. Smallwood shared statistics obtained through a survey of Murray City residents regarding employment, purchasing, and commuting habits. The RDA wants to focus their efforts on vacant property in this zone. Downtown Redevelopment Services made several recommendations regarding existing conditions for surface parking areas, and pedestrian and bicycle-only infrastructure. Mr. Smallwood pointed out the area does lend itself to mixed use and already has some of that infrastructure. Downtown Redevelopment Services did a SWOT analysis of the MCCD. Strengths include the national recognition of the Murray Historic District in this area, the benefit of the new city center serving as a catalyst for change in the area, as well as the MCCD's proximity to the frontrunner and trax stations. Weaknesses include limited landscaping

throughout the district, the mismatch between urban design, mismatch between historic district and the design elements, the lack of well-designed pedestrian infrastructure, and the lack of bicycle-only infrastructure. Opportunities include the fact that Murray is a strong regional retail destination, and this can be capitalized on without having too much impact on large scale retail. Also, its proximity to frontrunner and trax. The land being owed by the RDA provides the opportunity for controlling what happens in the MCCD. Weaknesses include traffic on State Street, with speed limits of 40 MPH, excess surface parking, and high development costs for new construction. Next, Mr. Smallwood discussed the public input for the plan. Concepts were developed based on feedback received from surveys and an open house. Public support for downtown revitalization was high. Responses indicated that many residents walk, bike, or take public transportation. Residents indicated a perception of safety concerns in the area, which is theorized to be caused by the high level of traffic. Desired amenities for the area include restaurants, retail, boutique stores, entertainment venues, public spaces, and civic facilities. Residents shared that the elements of an improved downtown would include street trees, event programming, retail or service establishment, dining establishment, and historic building rehabilitation.

Mr. Givens asked how the RDA for Murray City is organized.

Mr. Smallwood stated that in Murray's RDA, the mayor is the executive director, then Phil Markham, the CED director, is the staff director. He said the City Council is the board. He also said that some of the CED staff are support staff for the RDA.

Mr. Givens wondered why someone from the RDA wasn't not in attendance at the meeting.

Mr. Smallwood said they will see this same presentation at City Council and it would be inappropriate for an RDA board member to be in attendance in an official capacity.

Mr. Smallwood then shared the conceptual design recommendations, emphasizing that what will be shown is only illustrative, and not representative of what an actual project will look like. He shared some renderings of potential concepts for the area, taking into consideration the public's desire that no building be over four stories. The renderings are based mostly on what buildings they anticipated would be kept and those that could be torn down. He expects that most of block one to be torn down, due to the dilapidated state of the buildings there. He pointed out three buildings in the renderings – the Murray Mansion, the Cahoon House and the Townsend House. He said that the Murray Mansion will become the Murray Museum during the next year. He addressed the issues with moving the Townsend house and that the RDA decided not to have it moved, but to restore it instead. The funds set aside for the move will now be diverted to creating a green space in that area. The Tea Rose Diner will potentially be demolished and relocated downtown, allowing for the Cahoon House to be restored and creating a space for a plaza. The RDA is in the processing of getting bids.

Mr. Ingram asked what would be done with the remodeled houses.

Mr. Smallwood said they haven't decided yet, but the space could possibly be leased to businesses or organizations. He said that currently the Townsend House is being used by NeighborWorks, who will probably stay there.

Mr. Smallwood then presented the recommendations. The first one is to implement a form-based code in the MCCD zoning district. He said that this needs to be done soon. A form-based

code is different than traditional zoning. He showed a map with traditional zoning, indicating the heavy use of color. A form-based code is more focused on how buildings relate to one another, to create more of a cohesive district. It looks at the types of buildings as well. It shows the core, a general district and edge district. It lays out the street types and the open space types.

Mr. Beck asked if this type of code looks at use.

Mr. Smallwood said it does, but that's not the primary function. In form-based code, the form is the most important aspect.

Mr. Beck asked what's the reason for doing this and what are the benefits.

Mr. Smallwood said that form-based code provides a more cohesive look and feel to a zone. Murray residents have shared that they desire a historic look and feel for the MCCD. The results indicate that it isn't necessarily about a specific building itself, it's about the overall feel. That's what prompted the recommendation to implement a form-based code because that's what the goal is for this type of code.

Mr. Beck asked what would happen if a property owner in this zone wanted to use different building material than was part of the code.

Mr. Smallwood said that it's up to the community, telling the city what they want to create the look they're going for. Staff is still in the development phase of the form-based code. This recommendation is to approve the strategic plan, then the committee would be involved in the development of the code.

Mr. Beck asked if this is the planning trend to move towards form-based code.

Mr. Smallwood said no. This code works well in this type of a smaller district such as the MCCD. Form-based code would be too heavily detailed and focused for other districts or the city as a whole.

Mr. Givens said this is the kind of code that uses the same design language, that works best when you're trying to create a feeling of being in a specific place -- more cohesive with the whole area, such as a college campus.

Mr. Smallwood agreed and continued with the list of recommendations. The second recommendation is to update and enforce the downtown design guidelines, so that they are standards. This recommendation is meant to make the code more enforceable. The third recommendation is to perform a parking warrant analysis over the next few years. This will help determine how much parking the MCCD area truly needs. This will help determine where the RDA could invest in parking areas or structures. The fourth recommendation is to create an infrastructure schedule to outline a work schedule for installation of shielded street lighting, bike racks, benches, and trash receptacles. The fifth recommendation is to partner with UDOT to improve multimodal accessibility on State Street. This will take quite a bit of effort on the city's part, as this is delicate subject with UDOT. Recommendation six is to program public spaces within Downtown Murray. He cited the City Hall Plaza having the Christmas tree and Santa as example of programming that brought the public to that space. Recommendation seven is to negotiate and enter into a master development agreement for the RDA-owned property downtown. This would be working with a developer to take care of the property and develop it.

Recommendation eight is, if the downtown revitalization efforts are successful, to expand the scope of the study to the east side of State Street. He noted that when they start looking at the form-based code, it will probably be for the entire district. This will make the most sense since this is a costly change.

Mr. Givens said he feels the biggest obstacle to Downtown Murray being more vibrant is State Street. He proposed having a lane of state street given back from UDOT, where trees could be planted. This would provide a visual aesthetic that could help drivers slow down.

Ms. Davis proposed having a middle lane that alternates, depending on the time of day, as well as bike lanes on both side of state street. She then asked how the mixed use would work in the MCCD. She asked if the top floors would be living spaces and the bottom floors would be commercial.

Ms. Smallwood said, yes, mixed use development encourages that. It could be expanded to also allow office use on the top floor. He anticipates the code will allow for very flexible use. The goal is to encourage a lot of daytime and evening activity in the zone, which mixed-use should facilitate. What you don't want to see is lack of activity in the day or evening, this gives the sense that the area isn't vibrant or safe, which continues to discourage use. It's desired to have a balanced daytime and evening usage.

Mr. Hulka asked to discuss historic preservation.

A citizen, Ms. Margaret Pahl indicated she would like to speak and doesn't know when she will get the opportunity.

Mr. Smallwood clarified that typically the MCCD committee does not take public comment, because they're a recommending body. That usually goes to the Planning Commission or the City Council, where that will be opened as a public hearing. It's up to the board if they decide that they want to allow for public comment they can.

Mr. Hulka expressed concern regarding the number of historic buildings in contrast to new buildings. He stated that The National Historic District has a requirement of fifty percent of the buildings needing to be historic. He's concerned that if too many older buildings are demolished, then the overall district may not meet the standards. He reached out to the State Historic Preservation Office, who said that is a potential issue. If the number of historic buildings goes below fifty percent, there's the potential for the MCCD zone to get delisted, then the existing historic buildings will lose their tax benefits and other potential benefits.

Ms. Davis suggested tying in architectural elements from the existing ones that were keeping on State Street, such as picking one or two architectural elements to tie into the new buildings.

Per Mr. Hulka's request, Mr. Smallwood showed the map of which historic buildings will be staying.

Ms. Davis suggested that the planters and benches that will be installed should match all along that side of State Street. She asked if there is one standard of style for street lighting.

Mr. Smallwood indicated that there is. That standard will need to be reinforced with some updates through form-based code.

Ms. Davis asked about the possible future parking structure.

Mr. Smallwood says that idea is not fleshed out yet and is not sure where it would go.

Mr. Hulka stated concern about parking, too. Looking at the new plan, he sees mostly parking, but no buildings. He said this was identified in the report as a problem. He says there's a lot of places to put a new building that don't have to necessarily tear down historically contributing structures.

Ms. Davis noted that it seems like we're keeping the ones that are more historically important.

Mr. Smallwood stated that's been the focus, citing examples of the Murray Theater, the chapel, the Murray Mansion, and Townsend House and the Cahoon House. They are working towards trying to keep what we can, as well as balancing what makes the best financial sense for the city. He said that they do have to respect public dollars.

Mr. Ingram asked if the buildings have been inspected for structural integrity.

Ms. Nixon indicated yes and said the buildings in yellow on the map have been deemed unsafe, due to so many previous remodeling efforts or old age.

Mr. Beck stated his concern that the form-based code is only being applied to one side of State Street. He feels this doesn't make good sense. He sees a strong mismatch in having what the city wants and then across the street having exactly what it doesn't want. He feels the code needs to cover both side of the block on State Street.

Mr. Smallwood said if the form-based code is adopted, it will apply to the entire district. They are starting with block one because the city owns the most properties there and can have the most impact. He acknowledges that there will be a mismatch until the code is applied to the entire MCCR zone.

Mr. Givens said the work being done on 7th and 8th South State will help set a precedent for what Murray can do and does feel that Murray can get help from UDOT to facilitate changes they want. He does agree that the focus should be taken away from State Street and diverted to more side streets. He'd like to see more street improvement on Vine Street and 4800 South, because those streets aren't controlled by UDOT, Murray City has more control over what they can do there.

Mr. Smallwood said they have started to look at that and is included in the plan, to divert traffic onto 4800 South. He pointed out that the Regional Plan includes adding BRT to State Street, so it would be challenging to get UDOT to agree to changing the lane structure on State Street.

Mr. Givens feels this would be a good area for a neighborhood grocery market, especially since people will be living there and you want to discourage commuting.

Mr. Smallwood said that's the goal of the RDA to have a small grocery market in this area. The challenge is that they are balancing the needs of the Murray North Station, which also needs grocery access. They won't be able to two markets so close to each other.

Mr. Farrell pointed out that grocery store developments have their own calculations and would not want two markets so close together, as that has a big impact on the sales of each market.

Ms. Davis pointed the logistical issues of having semi-truck deliveries with pedestrians and cars around.

Mr. Smallwood said there are creative solutions to those issues. Other urban areas manage those situations, and they will be dealt with when the time comes.

Ms. Davis asked about an area on the rendering located inside the green space and wanted to know what that would be.

Mr. Givens suggested to make that space into public space.

Mr. Smallwood pointed out that, at this point, everything is just conceptual.

Ms. Davis asked about there being a food truck area, since you would have the green space close by to sit and eat food.

Mr. Hulka expressed concern about the lack of bike lanes or trails. He asked if there are any on the plan.

Mr. Smallwood stated that those are not on this plan because it focused on the massing, scale, and materials. It is part of the recommendations, however, to install protected bike lanes on city-owned roads. The proposed plan is just to help develop code going forward.

Mr. Hulka said that it's scary to make a recommendation on something where there's all these above-mentioned problems identified but then the design doesn't appear to solve those problems. He asked if they could make recommendations that include changes to the plan.

Mr. Smallwood said that many of the recommendations are called out in the text, just maybe not graphically. He said that the committee could cross out certain vague language and write in specific recommendations to provide more direction in the plan.

Mr. Hulka asked if they could make changes to the renderings.

Mr. Smallwood said it is possible.

Mr. Beck asked for more clarification on what they are supposed to be recommending.

Mr. Smallwood said they can recommend whatever they'd like and then those recommendations would be presented to the Planning Commission and City Council for consideration. If they see warrant in it, they can make that change.

Mr. Hulka said to Mr. Beck that they have the option to approve, deny, or approve with some suggestions.

Ms. Davis said, as an example, that they could ask for at least two architectural elements from the buildings that the city is keeping must tie in with the new construction.

Mr. Hulka said he feels that the DAR building specifically deserves to be restored and showcased, for its historic significance, and would like to build around it.

Mr. Smallwood reminded him that he understands the desire to do that but asked them to keep in mind that what's presented in the plan is only a suggestion and not meant to show specifically what buildings may be saved.

Mr. Givens asked if they could recommend that the DAR building not be demolished.

Mr. Beck suggested to keep the Elks Lodge, or at least elements of it, because he feels it also has historic significance.

Mr. Smallwood said that this is a planning document, which is looking at implementation strategies, not at recommendations for any specific building. If they want to make those kinds of recommendations, that this meeting's conversation will be recorded, and the minutes will document which buildings they recommend. The Planning Commission and the City Council both read these minutes while considering the plan, and they'll see the specific recommendations. There's just nowhere in the plan to take a recommendation for a specific building.

Mr. Smallwood said that, now that he thinks about, they could recommend that 4840 and 4836 buildings be changed or kept.

Mr. Givens asked a question regarding historic status of these buildings. He wanted to know if they are all contributing.

Mr. Hulka said that most of the ones in yellow on the screen, are considered contributing to the historic nature of the district. Most of the ones below that, except for Day Murray Music, are not historically significant.

Mr. Hulka reiterated that he'd really love to try to preserve the DAR building, due to its long and significant history, and have it be part of any motion that they make.

Mr. Givens echoed the desire to keep the DAR building. He feels it fits better with the form-based code than the one-story buildings. He also stated that he'd like to see a parking structure in the recommendations.

Mr. Smallwood said the parking structure recommendation should be added to recommendation number three. He said to add that they'd like to recommend structured, as opposed to surface parking.

Mr. Hulka thanks Mr. Smallwood for the presentation and commended him on his work drafting the plan. He is excited and thinks it will be amazing to see something different in that area. He then asked for a motion.

Mr. Beck made a motion to recommend approval of the strategic area plan with the following modifications: (1) Include a dedicated bike lane on 4800 South and Vine in recommendation 5.5, (2) a recommendation for a preference for parking structures as opposed to surface parking, as part of the parking warrant analysis, (3) that the DAR and Mercantile buildings be changed from the yellow category "to be torn down" to the green category "kept".

Ms. Davis seconded the motion. Roll call vote:

Y Andy Hulka
Y Ray Beck
Y Kiersten Davis
Y Matthew Givens
Y Samuel Ingram

Vote passed 5-0.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Smallwood informed the committee that the code dictates the committee must meet at least once a quarter, not once a year, as previously thought. He said they'll meet the first month of each quarter – January, April, July, and October. These meetings can simply be a check-in, but he anticipates more tangible items to be addressed as they move forward with the form-based code and with the Murray Tower development, the committee's input will be needed early and often.

Mr. Smallwood welcomed Mr. Givens and Mr. Ingram to the committee.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 29th 2024 at 5:30 P.M. That meeting will most likely be cancelled, due to lack of applications. The next mandatory meeting will likely be held on April 25th, 2024 at 5:30 P.M. Mr. Smallwood confirmed that committee members may attend virtually.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Hulka adjourned the meeting at 7:06 P.M. All were in favor.



Community Development Director