

Medical Corridor Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes (2/17/11)

10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Committee Members Present:

Rodney Bailey
James Batenhorst
Carol Bode
Sharon Bond
Joe Brown
Patricia Cleere
Ruth Cohen
Alicia Dorsey
Eleanor Ebanks
Chuck Ellison
Ed Hard
Frank Hartman
Anne Hazen
Tom Jackson
Shane Lechler
James Mason
Nick McGuire
Jan McMurrey
Tim Ottinger
Sheila Rinard
Marsha Sanford
Julie Schultz
Jon Turton
Kirsten Walker
Gentry Woodard

Committee Members Absent:

Dennis Anderholm
John Anderson
Bobbyn Barnes
Denise Barnett
Angela Clendenin
Rajesh Harrykissoo
Jim Morgan
Doug Phillips
Bill Rayburn
Chuck Sanders
Garland Watson
Randy Yates

City Staff:

David Gwin
Debbie Eller
Eric Stein
Randall Heye
Jennifer Prochazka

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Guests:

Mayor Nancy Berry
Councilwoman Jana McMillan
Councilman Dave Ruesink

David Gwin welcomed everyone in attendance and thanked the members for their service on the committee. He then recognized Mayor Nancy Berry for her welcome and opening remarks.

Mayor Berry thanked the members for their participation and suggested that they view the medical corridor project as an engine for community growth. She emphasized that the City Council was looking forward to seeing the result of the fruits of the committee's labor.

Mr. Gwin then asked that each member briefly introduce themselves and provide their affiliation within the community.

After introductions were made, Mr. Gwin began his introductory remarks and mentioned that there would be a section of the City's website dedicated to the Medical Corridor project. He then provided a brief PowerPoint presentation to frame up the corridor study project and how the committee is expected to contribute. Mr. Gwin then recognized Victor Baxter to introduce the project team.

Victor Baxter, SRA, introduced the project consulting team of SRA, Townscape, and Leland Consulting. Members on hand included Linda Jordan, SRA, Clint Wofford, SRA, Victor Baxter, SRA, Dennis Wilson, Townscape, Jim Richards, Townscape, and Lee Bodenhamer, Leland Consulting.

Mr. Baxter delivered remarks to frame up the study project from SRA's standpoint. He then introduced the consultant team members and gave their brief background and experience in the industry. He then introduced Linda Jordan.

Linda Jordan, SRA, laid out the initial work plan including the analytical steps, preliminary conceptual design and ultimate development of a master plan for the corridor. She emphasized the need for wayfinding, streetscape enhancements, pedestrian safety, and visual quality associated with medically-oriented development. Ms. Jordan discussed the general timeline and mentioned that the corridor Master Plan would be in draft form prior to the 2011 Christmas holidays. She then introduced Lee Bodenhamer.

Lee Bodenhamer, Leland Consulting delivered the overall corridor viewpoint. He emphasized the need for detailed market analysis, focusing on the idea of increasing strategic premise and adequately analyzing the region. He explained that the corridor study and future study area expansion should benefit both existing and entering providers.

Mr. Bodenhamer also explained some of the economic benefits of a medical corridor, specifically in regards to job creation, branding and identity, generating public revenues, and meeting current and future community need. He drew comparisons to existing medical corridors in Texas and surrounding states in terms of how those developed areas benefitted their respective communities. After discussing

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the basic medical district elements and what types of public-private partnerships enhance corridor feasibility, Mr. Bodenhamer introduced Dennis Wilson.

Dennis Wilson, Townscape, discussed the numerous opportunities to develop a competitive medical district that has the flexibility to grow and change over time, acting as a major economic driver for the community. Most similar projects and infrastructure for such corridors, he stated, is redevelopment rather than simply new construction. Mr. Wilson introduced Jim Richards.

Jim Richards, Townscape, discussed the project team's initial observations, specifically from a large scale urban landscape and architectural standpoint. Mr. Richards discussed the general study area and how it interacts and revolves around existing structures and facilities. He explained their initial observations for gateways and approaches that would tie into opportunities for recreational amenities, community image and corridor branding.

The floor was then opened for comments and feedback from the committee members.

CM Jana McMillan inquired about the interchange at Highway 6 and Rock Prairie Road, specifically asking if this intersection has been addressed. Mr. Wilson acknowledged her question, stating that highway intersections and other improvements would be addressed through the corridor master plan.

Kirsten Walker applauded the team's presentation. She expressed her excitement for the project and for the potential improvements it would provide for an aging population.

Anne Hazen expressed her desire for the City of College Station to act quickly in developing a catalyst to bring in additional medically-oriented development to prevent resources from leaving the community for other destinations closer to existing medical corridors.

Chuck Ellison spoke in favor of protecting existing providers and expressed his concern that the presentation did not clearly identify what providers the team's presentation provided for. Mr. Wilson addressed his question, explaining that the corridor would create an identifiable market, meeting the market demand for medical and support services inside and outside the initial identified district focus.

Marsha Sanford emphasized the need for additional housing and support services, and stressed that any development should be sensitive to the local climate and environment. This would include all ranges of residential housing to attract a wide variety of retirees and working professionals.

Alicia Dorsey expressed her concern that the current corridor vision would cost a significant amount of money, and was unclear as to where the investment would originate from. Mr. Wilson reminded Ms. Dorsey that the study is only designed to see what elements of a corridor are desirable, and that this work must be done prior to discussing funding mechanisms for potential development.

Mr. Ellison inquired again as to why the team's presentation focused on larger metropolitan areas rather than other cities that are commonly used as benchmark cities. He is concerned that College Station does not have a significant enough draw. The project team reminded him that planning for the expanding population is paramount to any corridor success and that only those services that are demanded would be included in the eventual master plan.

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Shane Lechler mentioned that the study should take a “hard look” at the serviceable population, including residents from surrounding towns, cities and adjacent counties, before making recommendations, which the team agreed was their intention.

Mr. Bodenhamer interjected and stated that, with the College Station Medical Center and the new Scott & White hospital, the College Station market has already created a functioning medical corridor. He explained that any master plan that emerges from the corridor study would only serve to make the area a better, more readily identifiable district.

Ms. Sanford reiterated that she would like to see an increased draw for specialty physicians into College Station. Mr. Bodenhamer and Mr. Baxter assured her that this would be addressed.

Jennifer Prochazka suggested that, although the student and senior population will likely remain constant, there currently is no draw for the middle segment of the population. She explained that this middle segment includes those physicians that we are interested in drawing into the community. Therefore, she would like to see any new services within the medical corridor include those that would be attractive to this middle population segment.

CM Dave Ruesink inquired as to where the hard corridor boundary exists. Mr. Wilson and Mr. Richards reminded the committee that there is no hard boundary, but rather only a general boundary exists until feedback is received from the committee and detailed analysis generated by the consultants.

Mr. Wilson stated that right now, the City is at a crossroads with the amount of developable property currently available within the proposed corridor, and that the City must take steps to oversee the managed growth of this area to prevent disjointed future development.

James Mason suggested that this project is a great idea to develop a master planned area that continues the natural southward expansion of College Station towards the Navasota River. He explained that he thinks this sort of expansion is natural and inevitable, and that the City should be proactive in developing this area.

Mr. Gwin and Mr. Baxtor wrapped up the question and answer segment and adjourned the meeting.