



MEMO

To: Christine Primiano Date: April 10, 2009
From: Martin Hull Steno: mdh
cc: Steve Strichman, Sree Nampoothiri, Anne Benware File No: 25038

Subject: ***Schenectady Transit Gateway SAC Meeting 2 Notes***

Date and Time: March 11, 2009 1:30 pm

Attendees: Patrick Campbell - CDTA, Lyn Gordon - Stockade, Susan Rank - Chamber of Commerce, Alanna Moran - CME, Martin Hull - IBI, Steve Caruso - City Engineering, Steve Strichman - City Planning, Christine Primiano - City Planning, Jim Phelps - AAA Northway, Michael Dussault - GE, Mike Wyatt - NYSDOT, Pat Godlewski - SCCC, Anne Benware - CDTC, Sree Nampoothiri - CDTC

The meeting began with a presentation on the findings of the existing conditions research including land use and transportation. After the presentation the committee was asked for ideas for how the project should be approached. The following items were discussed.

- SCCC is planning on constructing a new 315 bed dormitory on the existing parking lot site across Washington Avenue by 2010. This will allow SCCC to attract students from outside the area primarily to the three flagship programs, music, aviation, and culinary arts. The dormitory will have limited parking on the site. Additional parking will be needed for students.
- A footbridge across Washington Street is unlikely, given the project's cost.
- The YMCA is discussing alternatives to their present location with Center City being the most likely option. No timeline has been set. The residency program run by the YMCA at their present location has led to difficulties for the Stockade in the past due to the unruly behavior of some residents. The future of the residency program is unknown.
- Alternative uses for the former YMCA building include offices and condos. The Stockade neighborhood would prefer uses that have a positive effect on the neighborhood.
- The intersection of Washington and State presents a significant barrier to development in the study area. Without changes to this intersection "we are just talking" about improving the study area. High levels of traffic, noise, congestion and the difficulties faced by pedestrians crossing the street make the intersection an unpleasant environment.
- Troy once faced a similar problem at Russell Sage College but solved it by building a tunnel under the street to accommodate through traffic coming across the Congress Street bridge. Money is not available for this type of solution.
- One possibility is to move the Washington Street off ramp from I-890 farther west behind SCCC.
- An interim solution is required that calms traffic and improves safety for pedestrians in the near term.
- New condos are being created by converting an older building at 43 Washington Avenue just north of State. This could provide an example for how to approach new residential projects in the study area.
- GE is not currently moving large numbers of staff from other locations, so the need for housing for new GE employees is not great at the present time.
- Basic Census demographic data for the study area and surrounding neighborhoods would be useful.

- Although the goal of this study is to create a long term vision for the study area for 20 or 25 years in the future, it is also necessary to have a series of achievable interim steps to achieve that goal. The plan will include an implementation plan that provides this information.
- Parts of the study area are below the flood plain and will limit development.
- AAA Northway has 50 employees in the study area but is outgrowing their facility and may be looking for a new location in the near future.
- A grocery store is badly needed in downtown Schenectady to serve surrounding neighborhoods including the Stockade.
- Other small retail and service businesses are badly needed in the area.
- Add to the vision statement a sentence about the ability of future residents of the area to be able to go about all of their daily activities, commuting to work, shopping, and basic services, without needing a car.
- A new deli that serves the needs of students and residents is needed at the western end of the study area near SCCC. A deli recently closed in that area due to conflicts with residents at the YMCA.
- Closing Railroad Avenue would create a more streamlined street network, allow for larger more developable lots, and reduce the cost of street maintenance to the city.
- The 1980's Mill Street redevelopment was looked at as good idea but coming at the wrong time as other economic factors were in decline in the Schenectady.
- Stimulus money is planned on being used for improvements to Route 5 between Albany and Schenectady. Most of this money is intended for pavement resurfacing and ADA intersections. There is some interest in seeing if it is possible to repair broken sidewalks as well in the study area.
- The new Green Market at Proctor's theatre is a huge asset to Central Schenectady. Many residents of the stockade use it and it provides a social as well as a practical event each weekend. It could be used as a model for other new features of the study area.
- A mixed use building is desired for the Robinson site.
- Washington and State is a key location to begin the transformation of the study area.
- The next meeting will be held in about six weeks after the market study is completed. A copy of the presentation and any other relevant materials will be provided one week in advance.