

ARENA DISTRICT MASTER PLAN

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TECHNICAL MEMO NO. 1: STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING NO. 1 + STAKEHOLDER ROUNDTABLE INTERVIEWS

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING NO. 1

On April 5th, the Planning Team met with the Steering Committee for the first of five meetings that will take place through this process. The meeting, held at the City-County Library, included the following agenda items:

- Introduction and project overview
- Public engagement synopsis
- Results of initial analysis
- Alignment plan - plans reviewed
- Initial opportunities
- Open discussion

STAKEHOLDER ROUNDTABLE INTERVIEWS

On April 5th and 6th, the Planning Team conducted a series of small group interviews with 68 key district, downtown, and community stakeholders. The stakeholder discussions engaged the following groups:

- Hotels in District
- City, County, INCOG
- Economic Development Agencies
- ODOT/Transit Agency
- Chamber of Commerce Tourism Office/BOK/Cox Business Center/Festivals
- Developers/Realtors/Entrepreneurs
- Landholders
- Federal Court/Post Office
- Downtown Institutions and Employers
- Downtown Professionals and Residents
- Twenty-Somethings

SUMMARY OF MEETINGS

Stakeholders and steering committee members recognized there is a need for an Arena District Master Plan to create a unified vision for the Arena District. Throughout discussions, consistent themes emerged regarding the issues and topics the Master Plan must address, including:

- Placemaking
- Hospitality/Convention Center
- Mixed-use Development
- Connectivity
- District Identity
- Parking, Transportation, and Transit
- Safety
- Catalytic Change
- Implementation

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PLACEMAKING

Participants agreed that the current state of the public realm in the District does not provide the best introduction to Downtown Tulsa and the Arena District. While the BOK Center and the Cox Business Center (CBC) provide a high-quality visitor experience within their buildings, this experience is not matched by the current condition of the district. As it relates to improvements to the public realm and placemaking, the plan must consider:

- Upgrades to existing vacant and underutilized public spaces (Civic Plaza, Plaza of the Americas)
- Adding spaces for gatherings and events
- Continuing to improve the district streetscape in similar fashion to the work being completed on 5th Street
- Adding more greenspace, murals, sculptures, public art, creative crosswalks, benches, and trees
- Additional lighting, signage, and wayfinding is necessary to connect and define the district edges and character
- Updates to the current wayfinding system

HOSPITALITY/CONVENTION CENTER

It was clear from our discussion hoteliers are significantly invested in the success of the Arena District. There also seems to be a general understanding that for the CBC to be successful and expand market share, additional space is necessary. That said, there are tensions and concerns between those already in the market and potential new competition. Concerns and observations include:

- Some hoteliers are concerned about the quantity of new product coming into the market, which they feel is unsustainable
- Limited service hotels and boutiques are entering the market, but they don't meet the need for room block and meeting facilities that the CBC has identified that would help attract new and retain existing conferences
- A full-service hotel is needed to expand business into regional and national markets, but this must be validated and the economics understood
- The current addition to the CBC is a baby step. There is a need for 350,000 to 400,000 square feet in order to be relevant in the marketplace
- Additional retail within the district is desired to better support the Cox Business Center and BOK Center attendees

MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

Stakeholders and steering committee members recognized the need to create a true mixed-use neighborhood in order to better serve existing uses and attract the desired entertainment and retail uses. However, there are concerns about the ability of the development community to deliver these products, especially at the price points currently supported within the marketplace. Concerns and observations include:

- There is a desire for a true mixed-use neighborhood with retail, restaurants, residential, and office
- More residential will be needed to support desired retail uses
- Residential needs to provide various types and price points to serve all demographics (YP, middle aged, empty nesters, families)
- Current residential leases well. However, there were complaints about parking, safety, lack of amenities, and cost
- To expand residential base, there is a need to attract more regional and national developers to invest
- There is not much momentum in the office market downtown

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CONNECTIVITY

Given its location adjacent to highways and railroad infrastructure, many recognized connectivity in the Arena District is an issue of primary importance. The entrance experience needs to be improved, as does the connectivity between existing Arena District uses. Enhanced walkability between the district and downtown and surrounding neighborhood, districts and the riverfront is also a key concern. Concerns and observations include:

- CBC has no true front door
- CBC needs better connectivity and open space
- Better connections are needed between the Arena District, the CBD, Tulsa Arts District, Blue Dome District, etc.
- We must find a way to connect to the riverfront and the Gathering Place
- Other districts have better amenities, restaurants and nightlife
- Once visitors get in a cab and leave downtown, you have lost them

DISTRICT IDENTITY

It was clear from our discussions, Tulsans do not see the Arena District as a “district.” There is a need to establish an identity, but it must be done in a way that doesn’t infringe on the success of current districts and neighborhoods. Concerns and observations include:

- Don’t compete with surrounding districts (Blue Dome, Tulsa Arts District, etc.)
- Must provide authentic experience
- Match needs of current district users (familiar and comfortable; access and capacity), plus attract others (upscale and authentic)
- Move beyond boom and bust: support daytime and evening uses; needs to be a neighborhood not just entertainment
- It may be appropriate to create a cluster of national brands in the Arena District to differentiate it. However, the CBC sells an authentic experience as its pitch for Tulsa, so this must be incorporated

PARKING, TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT

Parking, transportation and transit issues also abound within the Arena District. Current parking supply seems to be well-matched to demand, but clearly needs to be better managed. As redevelopment occurs it will need to provide additional parking. Participants also brought up current plans and initiatives impacting the district in terms of planned improvements and/or changes to transit operations, streetscape improvements and bicycle infrastructure. Concerns and observations include:

- Comprehensive Operational Analysis Plan will define route needs and opportunities and could be an opening for discussion of the transit center location in downtown
- Improve bike infrastructure and access—particularly to the riverfront
- Lack of parking is a perception issue, there is plenty of supply
- On-street parking system is not user-friendly
- Desire to have a distinctive circulator that ties districts together with dependable service (trolley or designated bus)
- Walks between parking areas and destinations are not pedestrian friendly and feel unsafe

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SAFETY

Throughout all meetings, safety was a consistent theme. In some cases this was in reference to a perception of safety, in addition to the fact that there are many social services within or adjacent to the district that draws a daytime population that makes some uncomfortable. While some of these issues are being addressed by other projects, one key takeaway was that if the Master Plan can revitalize the Arena District and increase overall activity levels, the safety issue will begin to fade away. Concerns and observations include:

- Too many homeless/social services are scattered throughout the District – need to consolidate
- Need to add lighting and improve streetscapes
- Civic Plaza parking is dark, unattractive, and unsafe
- Walking from district to district is perceived to be unsafe
- Transit Center presents a perceived safety issue for many downtown visitors
- The police presence could be improved

CATALYTIC CHANGES

Throughout our discussion, participants raised critical questions that must be considered by the Master Plan in order to enable catalytic change, including:

- How can we move or repurpose government/civic uses?
- What is the future of the state office complex?
- Could transit center move to the Jazz Depot (historic train station)?
- Should Civic Plaza be replaced or removed?
- How do we create an 18-hour mixed-use district?

IMPLEMENTATION

All participants agreed this plan must focus on creating an implementable vision. Success will hinge on the following:

- A clear and actionable plan helping us change the dynamic of the district, and better connect it to the rest of downtown
- A path to move forward getting all parties on board, including government, institutions, anchors, and private businesses
- A plan within reach for the City, and can be used to incentivize development
- A re-imagining of the public realm helping transform the district into a walkable destination

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STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING NO. 1 + STAKEHOLDER ROUNDTABLE INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING NO. 1 PARTICIPANTS

Thursday, April 5 | Steering Committee Meeting | 4:30pm-6:00pm

- Karen Keith, Tulsa County Commissioner, District 3
- Kyle Johnson
- Chase Rohivas, Doubletree
- Jane Ziegler, INCOG
- Theron Warlick, City of Tulsa, Planning
- Ray Hoyt, President, VisitTulsa
- Nick Doctor, City of Tulsa, Mayor's Office

STAKEHOLDER ROUNDTABLE INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Thursday, April 5 | Session 1A – Hotels in District | 9:00am-10:15am

- Brad Venerable, Hyatt Regency
 - Chase Rohivas, Doubletree
 - Shelby (Snyder) Hendrick, The Mayo Hotel & Aloft Hotel
 - Macy Amatucci, The Mayo Hotel & Aloft Hotel
- (10 stakeholders contacted and invited)

Thursday, April 5 | Session 1B – City, County, INCOG | 9:00am-10:15am

- Jane Ziegler, INCOG, Transportation Planner
 - Tammie Osborne for Kelly Brader, City Court Administrator
 - Dawn Warrick, City of Tulsa, Planning & Development
- (7 stakeholders contacted and invited)

Thursday, April 5 | Session 2A – Economic Development, City/County | 10:30am-11:45am

- Jim Coles, City of Tulsa, Economic Development
 - Nick Doctor, City of Tulsa, Mayor's Office
 - Jeff Nickler, SMG General Manager
 - Kerry Painter, SMG - CBC Asst. General Manager
- (6 stakeholders contacted and invited)

Thursday, April 5 | Session 2B – ODOT/Transit Agency | 10:30am-11:45am

- Chris Phillips, INCOG
 - Glen Sams, City of Tulsa, Engineering
 - Philip Berry, City of Tulsa, Planning
 - Peyton Haralson, Director Tulsa Parking Authority (TPA)
 - Jane Ziegler, INCOG
 - Randle White, ODOT Division 8
 - Lisa Simpson, City of Tulsa, Traffic
 - Liann Alfaro, Tulsa Transit
- (10 stakeholders contacted and invited)

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Thursday, April 5 | Session 3 – Chamber of Commerce Tourism Office/BOK/Cox Business Center/Festivals | 1:00pm-2:15pm

- Ray Hoyt, Visit Tulsa President
 - Vince Trinidad, Tulsa Sports Commission Executive Director
 - David Jeter, BOK and DCC Board SVP BOK
- (8 stakeholders contacted and invited)

Thursday, April 5 | Session 4A – Developers/Realtors/Entrepreneurs | 2:30pm-3:45pm

- Janet Pieren, Tulsa Economic Development Corporation (TEDC)
 - Jennifer Smith, Tulsa Regional Chamber & The Forge
 - Jonathan Belzley, New Leaf Development – Developer/Urbanist
 - Pete Patel, Promise Hotels (Hampton Inn & Suites)
- (9 stakeholders contacted and invited)

Thursday, April 5 | Session 4B – Downtown Professionals & Residents | 2:30pm-3:45pm

- Malachi Blankenship, Utown App
 - Nimish Dharmadhikan, Tulsa’s Young Professionals (TYPros), INCOG
 - Ren Barger, Tulsa Hub
 - Annina Collier, Tulsa Community College (TCC)
 - Adam Doverspike, Tulsa’s Young Professionals (TYPros), lawyer
 - John Paganelli, City of Tulsa, Planning
 - Amber Wagoner, City of Tulsa, Planning
 - Bill Leighty, Smart Growth Tulsa, Realtor
- (12 stakeholders contacted and invited)

Friday, April 6 | Session 5 – Landholders | 9:00am-10:15am

- David H. Sanders, Jr., Sanders & Sanders, Attorney
 - Elliot Nelson, Nelson + Stowe Development (DC Chair)
 - Steve Grantham, Up with Trees, Exec. Director
 - Dennis Larsen, City of Tulsa Police
 - Gary Kramer, Tulsa Housing Authority
 - Chris Bumgarner, Boston Avenue
 - Tom Shelby, SP Plus
- (10 stakeholders contacted and invited)

Friday, April 6 | Session 6 – Federal Court/Post Office | 10:30am-11:45am

- Bill Aldridge, CBRE, Belcher Facilities Manager
 - Leon Davis, City of Tulsa, Real Estate Specialist
 - Greg Frizzell, U.S. District Court
 - Kathy Ervin-Johnson, United States Postal Service (USPS)
 - Nicole Stobaugh, USPS
 - Judge Terry Kern, U.S. Courts
 - Tom Wallace, Wallace Engineering
- (7 stakeholders contacted and invited)

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Friday, April 6 | Session 7 - Downtown Institutions and Employers | 1:00pm-2:15pm

- Mike Limas, Tulsa Community College (TCC), Sustainable Tulsa
- Tim Jackson, Jackson Technical
- Megan Nesbit, Philbrook Museum of Art
- Jack Carney, Arvest
- Lauren Brookey, Tulsa Community College (TCC)

(9 stakeholders contacted and invited)

Friday, April 6 | Session 8 - 20-Somethings | 2:30pm-3:45pm

- Ariana Harmon, Tulsa Hub
- James Jordan, Consumer Affairs
- Caroline Guerra Wolf, Federal Court House
- Tyler Ray Duncan, Topeca Coffee Roasters
- Kolby Webster, Tulsa Hub & Circle Cinema
- Tanner Sturm, Tulsa's Young Professionals (TYPros) Government Relations Crew Leader