



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

MEMORANDUM

Date: January 28, 2019

To: Barbara Goodrich, City Manager
Cc: Shane Dilles, Deputy City Manager; Daniel Folke, Interim
Community Development Director
From: Sara Dechter, AICP, Comprehensive Planning Manager

Subject: Southside Community Plan Progress Report

Background

The Southside Community Plan update began with a kick-off meeting between the City and Southside Community Association in January 2017. In June 2017, the City Council awarded a contract to assist with the first stage of neighborhood planning to Matrix Design Group; so that the effort could begin before completion of the High Occupancy Housing Plan. In October 2017, the Friends of the Rio received an EPA Environmental Justice Small Grant to work on inclusion of Southside residents impacted by flooding in the flood management planning process. This report is a summary of the work these partners have collaborated on from Fall 2017 to the end of 2018 and the next steps for the project.

Challenges and Opportunities

There is a long-standing history of public participation that “checked the box” but did not result in longstanding collaboration or meaningful change to the policies the City applies within the Southside community. The project team spoke with many residents over the last 18 months who said they tune out the City because of being let down in the past or decline to participate with the assumption that nothing could change. The Southside Community Association, the City, and Friends of the Rio have focused efforts on creating a more hopeful environment. The process should allow residents to voice injustices, share insights into their current concerns and values, and create a vision for a more equitable future.

The team made progress with residents throughout the summer of 2018 through a series of meetings at various locations that dove into the topics of visioning, land use, transportation, and stormwater. Reflecting on the public involvement, the team decided to “pause” the development of a plan in favor of establishing a stakeholder group for to

lead the development of the plan. The team also wanted immediately apply lessons learned from the community to demonstrate the City's commitment to following through and creating collaborative solutions. The scale of these accomplishments are small and specific, bearing in mind the public participation goal of establishing trust between the City and the Southside Community.

Public Participation and Outreach Strategy

Level of Public Participation: Collaborate

The public participation plan for the Southside Community Plan is available on the "Upcoming Events" tab at www.flagstaff.az.gov/southsideplan. The City's promise to the public is that we will work in collaboration with the community partners, residents and property owners to create a plan that manages change while recognizing the cultural and historical character and contributions of Southside to the overall history of the Flagstaff region.

The strategy involves 4 phases: Community Visioning, Identification of Needs and Solutions, Policymaking and Partnerships, and Prepare and Adopt a Plan. Since October 2017, Matrix Design Group, the City, Southside Community Association and Friends of the Rio worked together to engage the Southside Community in creating a Vision and identifying Needs and Solutions.

During the first two phases of this process, the public by the City and partners were engaged using the following techniques:

- Stakeholder interviews
- Five public workshops
- Neighborhood canvassing of more than 800 residents
- Booths at community events
- Small group meetings with non-profits and stakeholders
- Five on-the-street meetings

In addition to City-sponsored efforts, the Friends of the Rio conducted Rio de Flag specific stakeholder interviews and the Southside Community Association hosted homeowner dinners to empower the neighborhood to set a vision. The team also created an innovative map-based project website that allows community members to have equal access to the data that the internal staff are considering in the planning process.

Accomplishments Based on Lessons Learned

Through public participation so far, the Southside Community clearly expressed that there were many issues that had been left unresolved for too long and they wanted addressed immediately. Therefore, from August 2018 to December 2018, the project team turned our focus to developing solutions and working through problems that could be immediately resolved, including:

- Provided signs for new streets added to the residential parking program under ParkFlag with property owner involvement,
- Installed a new striping and signing scheme for Fountaine Street to address parking and access issues,

- Implemented handicap accessible on-street parking in three locations in the neighborhood (four more are pending),
- Held one-on-one meetings with property owners to discuss stormwater regulations and insurance issues,
- Set up additional procedures to more quickly address bulk trash issues and provided education on this topic to renters throughout the neighborhood,
- Sent a memo to NAU students on snow removal, winter driving and parking,
- Friends of the Rio and the Southside Community Association led several trash clean ups to address neighborhood concerns.

Next Steps for the Community Plan

The next step in the process of developing a plan for the Southside is to collaborate on the development and evaluation of policies and programs that can meet the needs identified by residents. So far in the process, there has been a small group of individuals who have regularly attended workshops and expressed interest in a deeper level of public involvement. However, these individuals have also expressed reluctance to have the City be in the lead for the Policymaking phase of the process. The City has therefore identified FY19 funds that can be used to provide facilitation support for a stakeholder group. The Southside Community Association is beginning to convene these stakeholders with the goal of holding a first meeting in April 2019. The objective of this group would be to collaborate on the creation of recommended goals and policies for the draft plan by September 2019. This would allow the project to be presented to the City Council for adoption in early 2020. This schedule is dependent on the timely formation of stakeholder group and that the group can complete its work in a timely fashion.

The stakeholder group would:

- Set a schedule for reviewing the recommendations of Matrix Design Group and the City,
- Receive briefings on draft recommendations and related topics,
- Evaluate options for shaping the future of the community, and
- Provide guidance to the project team on the content of the plan.

The facilitator will work with the group and the City to build consensus on a direction for the plan. The City project manager would produce a draft for their review prior to the 60-day public review required by City Code. The group's meetings would be advertised and open for the public to observe and provide comments. The meetings would be convened by the Southside Community Association. The City would produce the plan based on the guidance provided by this group and the group would be able to advocate for the prioritization and implementation of the community's plan after the project is complete.