

**CITY OF NORTH LAS VEGAS  
SPECIAL JOINT CITY COUNCIL  
AND PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

**January 10, 2006**

**CALL TO ORDER:** 6:30 P.M.

**ROLL CALL: COUNCIL PRESENT:**

Mayor Michael L. Montandon  
Mayor Pro Tempore William E. Robinson  
Councilman Shari Buck  
Councilman Robert L. Eliason

**EXCUSED:**

Councilwoman Stephanie S. Smith

**PLANNING COMMISSION PRESENT:**

Chairman Jay Aston  
Commissioner Steve Brown  
Commissioner Angelo Carvalho  
Commissioner Jo Cato  
Commissioner L. Dean Leavitt  
Commissioner Dilip Trivedi

**EXCUSED:**

Commissioner Harry Shull

**STAFF PRESENT:**

City Manager Gregory Rose  
Assistant City Manager Samuel Chambers  
Assistant City Manager Maryann Ustick  
Acting City Attorney Carie Torrence  
City Clerk Karen L. Storms  
Finance Director Phil Stoeckinger  
Fire Chief Al Gillespie  
Parks and Recreation Director Mike Henley  
Planning and Zoning Director Jory Stewart  
Police Chief Mark Paresi  
Public Works Director Jim Bell  
Utilities Director David Bereskin  
Chief Deputy City Clerk Anita Sheldon

**VERIFICATION:** Karen L. Storms, CMC, City Clerk

**BUSINESS:**

**1. DISCUSSION AND/OR DIRECTION REGARDING THE NORTH LAS VEGAS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE PRESENTED BY MCBRIDE DALE CLARION AND ASSOCIATES.**

The Planning and Zoning Department's Advanced Planning Manager, Misty Haehn, introduced Amy Kacala, Greg Dale, and Ben Herman of McBride Dale Clarion & Associates.

Mr. Herman stated they had reached mid-point in the process for creating the Comprehensive Plan (Plan) and wanted to meet with the City Council and Planning Commission to insure they were on track and headed in the right direction. McBride Dale Clarion & Associates worked closely throughout this process with the Planning Commission and the Focus Group, appointed by the Council.

Mr. Herman stated three scenarios were discussed at a prior meeting with Council and it was agreed the City would not proceed with the bedroom community scenario as part of the Plan. Since that meeting, McBride Dale Clarion & Associates met with the Planning Commission and Focus Group a number of times, reviewed the scenarios and received their input. In addition, a Community Open House was held January 9, in the City Hall lobby, and was attended by approximately 50 people.

Mr. Herman requested focused discussion and Council's direction before moving forward with the Plan. Mr. Herman questioned whether the direction for the City's Plan was achievable between now and the next 15-20 years, as the City grew. The second area for discussion was what the Plan should look like and how it could be made usable.

Mr. Herman provided an executive summary for two scenarios which focused on current trends according to development patterns and was based upon the City's build out to a population of 180,000-550,000. Mr. Herman stated the process for the Plan was about the differences the two scenarios represented and how the City could achieve its goals. The differences fell into three areas: 1) Mixed Use Development versus Single Use Development 2) Transit Oriented Development (North 5<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor Plan) and 3) Master Planned Communities.

At their last meeting with McBride Dale Clarion & Associates, Council requested statistics from Mr. Herman regarding population and employment differences and information regarding the comparisons of North Las Vegas to other cities regarding retail development, and how much retail development North Las Vegas would expect as it grew.

Mr. Herman referred to five areas for potential change: the master planned communities areas; potential northern development area with the Veterans Administration (VA) and University of Nevada at Las Vegas (UNLV) campus site; the North 5<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor,

Craig Ranch and the Cheyenne Corridor.

Mr. Herman reviewed the highlights of the downtown area and stated the differences between current trends and Vision 2025 came down to more aggressive in-fill and redevelopment in the downtown area. Mr. Herman reviewed the implications of the Plan on the downtown area with Redevelopment Manager Larry Bender.

Mr. Herman reviewed the master planned community area and stated the Planning Commission and Focus Group agreed the City should communicate with its citizens regarding the type of development that would occur in the northern area over the next 20 years.

Mr. Herman stated briefings with citizens were held regarding the North 5<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor Study Plan, as well as plans from the Regional Transportation Committee. Discussion was held regarding how North 5<sup>th</sup> Street would connect with the VA and UNLV Campus. Mr. Herman stated development in this area could be transit-oriented, or the type of development that occurred along a major arterial City street. There were two additional issues regarding the area north of North 5<sup>th</sup> Street; 1) how the university and residential growth merged together to become a northern development district for the City and 2) what was the opportunity it afforded as a future center for the City.

Mr. Herman reviewed the Cheyenne Corridor Plan with the Planning Commission and the Focus Group, and stated the work force and work places were changing. The number of smaller, start-up businesses had increased. Discussion was held regarding the extent Cheyenne Corridor could become more Mixed Use, include housing, and increase the density along the Cheyenne Corridor.

Mr. Herman stated information regarding build-out reflected each scenario and the impact on population, employment and square footage. The City's current population was 180,000 and 54,000 households. Scenario 1 was based upon current trend densities, and represented a population of 500,000 and 135,000 households. Scenario 2 was based upon Vision 2025 and represented a population of 575,000 and 154,000 households, or a 15% increase in population capacity, which resulted from increased density and mixed use. This scenario reflected 26 million square feet of non-residential space in the City and 50,000 employees.

Mr. Herman stated Scenario 1, the trend scenario at build-out, represented 80 million square feet of combined retail, commercial and industrial, and 180,000 employees. Scenario 2, the Vision 2025 scenario, represented 153 million square feet of non-residential space and 284,000 employees at build out.

The statistics reflected a calculated build-out and assumptions concerning inefficiencies were made at 20%, and a discount on land area that went to right-of-way.

The final statistic, jobs-to-population ratio, reflected how balanced the City was between the people who lived there and the people who worked there. The City's ratio was .34,

which meant there was 1.34 jobs per person who lived in North Las Vegas. Scenario 1, at build-out was 0.41 and Scenario 2 was .53. A balanced community was considered anywhere between .5-.7 jobs per person. A greater number of jobs per person meant an imbalance would occur and there were more people commuting to work than living in the City, which would increase congestion. The City's ratio of .34 meant the ratio was lower than balanced and more people were leaving the City to work because there weren't as many jobs or they chose not to work in the City.

Mr. Herman reviewed how North Las Vegas compared to other cities in terms of retail development, and how much land the City should provide for future activity. North Las Vegas had 10.4 square feet of retail space per capita. The Las Vegas Valley, as a whole, had 19.4 square feet per capita; Henderson had 28 square feet per capita.

Mr. Herman provided a comparison of similar Sunbelt cities at North Las Vegas' build-out, and the findings showed three times the amount of space per capita. Preliminary calculations for Scenario 1 at build-out were 60-65 square feet per resident and Scenario 2 at build-out were 70 square feet. These statistics did not consider vacant space or sites that weren't developed. Either plan had enough space to meet the City's future retail needs and there was potential for retail/commercial growth. Mr. Herman stated Council's request for statistics on the impact build-outs would have on revenue was forthcoming.

Mr. Herman reviewed a comment card from the January 9, Open House, regarding Scenario 2, Visioning 2025, which stated the Plan required change and a focused effort to manage the change. Mr. Herman concluded by stating this was the reason for the meeting, to determine whether or not the goals were achievable, and whether the consultants were on the right track.

Mayor Montandon wanted to know how the goals would be accomplished; whether guidelines would be provided to determine the percentage of retail; would a map be provided to give specific or generalized locations and how the guidelines would be implemented.

Mr. Herman introduced Greg Dale, who responded if Council agreed with their recommendations, they would proceed to the next phase, which was to meet with the Department Directors and Staff to discuss their perspectives regarding opportunities and hurdles to implementing the Plan. McBride Dale Clarion & Associates would lead Council with recommendations regarding land use regulations and what types of zoning codes should be implemented. Mr. Dale asked Council what hurdles they saw in carrying the Plan forward.

Mayor Montandon stated enough data had been given to say it was probably a good direction to go more retail. The Council and Planning Commission had a lot of experience with constituents who indicated they wanted a school near by, but not too near by; a retail near by, but not too near by; and everyone wanted to be a half mile

from everything. If 21 square feet of retail per capita was the appropriate number and Council agreed, chances are the City would arrive at 15 square feet. Mayor Montandon asked Mr. Dale whether adjustments were made in the statistics for implementation difficulties or if they were generic.

Mr. Dale stated Mayor Montandon's question related to the discussions held with the Planning Commission and the Focus Group regarding Master Planned Communities. Discussions needed to be held regarding agreements, and the dwelling and retail numbers for those communities.

Mayor Montandon stated the master plan development agreement was easy because the City worked with one single party on a 2,000 acre purchase and the balance could be defined up front.

Mr. Dale questioned what type of Plan it would ultimately be, assuming the Vision 2025 document was the genetic code for the process. He added the current Plan was detailed, but a small part of it was used on a regular basis.

Mr. Dale said the future of the Land Use Map was known as a hard-line/parcel specific map and added if the future Land Use Map was placed next to the City's Zoning Code Map, and the labels were eliminated, most people would have a hard time telling them apart.

Mr. Dale stated when the public viewed these maps at the Open House January 9, they identified their particular piece of property and requested their property be placed in the Mixed Use category rather than Single-Family.

Mr. Dale stated there were two options for how the plan was characterized: 1) Parcel-Specific Approach or 2) Character Based Approach. Communities throughout the country debated as to whether their city was better served with a hard-line/parcel-specific, color-on-the-map oriented approach, or whether they should focus on the Comprehensive Map more, identifying the character, quality and design aspects of what the City was trying to achieve.

Mayor Montandon stated approximately two Comprehensive Plans ago, the City had used a character based approach on a 600-acre area where Council felt multi-family would be an appropriate use, and the City ended up in court. The first time multi-family zoning was denied inside that area, the homeowner went to court and the judge ruled in their favor. A court precedent made a character based approach difficult for the City and the City went to a parcel specific approach and met challenges there as well.

Mayor Montandon stated the disadvantages to Hard-Line/Parcel Specific Land Use Plans were they were less flexible, so there would be multiple amendments to the Land Use Plan which became obsolete quickly in a community with the growth rate and pressures that North Las Vegas currently had.

Mr. Dale stated a series of interviews were held with homebuilders and their complaint was the City had narrow band categories and there was no flexibility.

Councilman Buck stated her concern was with the citizens. Council knew the direction they wanted to move for North 5<sup>th</sup> Street, but the residents were not informed that Council was headed toward a more mixed use, commercial/transit-oriented development. North 5<sup>th</sup> Street would be widened and would have light rail. Councilman Buck's concern was how to assist citizens in knowing what was being developed in their area.

Mr. Dale stated a good job of communicating the Plan was needed and it was more important to define the land uses, characteristics and performance standards they would have to meet. The Plan might include photographs of the project, illustrations of desirable types of developments, more quantitative standards such as proximity-to-residential areas and the requirements for transitions and bumpers. Mr. Dale stated if a citizen wanted to review the City's vision for their area, photographs and illustrations might be a more accurate way of communicating, rather than a color coded map. History revealed detailed land use maps were subject to changed repeatedly, which created controversy among residents.

Mayor Pro Tempore Robinson stated the City had 1,300 new residents per month and wanted to know how to educate them. Mr. Herman stated the citizen who wanted to understand what was happening in their neighborhood would be more likely to read a 60-page, user-friendly Plan, than a 250-page Plan with data tables, or a colored map that would change on a monthly basis.

Mr. Herman stated he was not suggesting Council abandon their land use regulation approach through zoning regulations; but questioned what the zoning relationship was between the zoning regulations, which were highly detailed, and the Land Use Plan. In addition, Mr. Herman asked whether the Plan should be in terms of broader vision versus one that was much closer in terms of specificity to the zoning regulations.

Mayor Montandon stated compliance with the Master Plan was required. If someone chose a piece of land with specific zoning, Staff had to determine if it was consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. If it was not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, it had to be amended. One of the problems with a more character-based plan was Staff's analysis became subjective when determining compliance.

Mr. Herman asked what constituted compliance; was it the right use category or a deeper set of analysis. He questioned whether the Plan was to remain predictable and become a land use category density check, or something that was more focused on assessing compliance with the performance standards or guidelines that related to the quality and character of the development in relationship to the neighborhood and surrounding areas.

Mr. Herman stated the City had set itself on a course with their vision that was going away from the traditional segregation of land uses, and the tools Council had were not equipping them to go in that direction.

Councilman Buck stated Council had its vision for North 5<sup>th</sup> Street, which was a mixed use product on the corner of Deer Springs and North 5<sup>th</sup> Street and was not reflected on the map. Mr. Herman responded the City could present a document or a poster to the public that reflected what North Las Vegas aspired to be.

Mayor Montandon stated there was a State law that said when you purchased a home, the builder was required to provide a document that the homeowner had to sign, stating they were aware of the zoning on all four sides of their property. Mayor Montandon said if zoning was Ranch Estates or had not been zoned yet, the document could have been misleading, because it did not reveal that the Master Plan allowed for other types of zoning. Mayor Montandon added that Council may have to go to the Legislature to modify the law to put a more comprehensive document into the homebuilder packages.

Mayor Montandon stated several years ago developers purchased property and tried to re-zone it commercial; however, over the past couple of years, land was being re-zoned residential. Statistics now reflected retailers will try to purchase land because they are going to wonder how the market was under served by 50%. They won't be able to find land and will be forced to redevelop existing property into mixed use. Guidelines will be needed to address today's issue of residential development going where retail should be, as well as tomorrow's issue of retailers looking for space.

Councilman Eliason stated residents did not understand such things and the market had driven the land uses. Mr. Herman responded this was the challenge the City faced. The more specific the Plan was, the more frequently it would have to be updated, and annual or bi-annual updates were necessary.

**An unidentified homeowner**, stated several good comments were made regarding how people did not understand zoning. He stated he was on the Homeowner's Association Board of Directors for his community and people approached him frequently asking what the zone changes meant. The homeowner stated to make the Plan more general would create more problems, especially with the developers in the area. Zoning needed to stay rigid in the community. He suggested to assist in educating homeowners, the builders should be required to put up a 24 x 36 zoning map in model home sales centers, and a mixed use overlay could be added to inform people of what would be developed.

Mr. Herman stated the community would be transformed greatly over the next 15-20 years, and asked how their firm could best provide the tools the City needed to assist them.

Mayor Montandon stated the Vision 2025 document was Council's blueprint. The most important statistic from the data provided by McBride Dale Clarion & Associates was the jobs-to-population ratio. Mayor Montandon stated when communities became off-balance and bedroom communities, taxes were created and the lack of jobs was a detriment. If the McBride Dale Clarion and Associates came up with a plan that moved toward a more balanced ratio and was consistent with the Vision 2025 Plan, that was a good Plan.

Mr. Herman stated the following needed to be accomplished: 1) review zoning to determine whether districts existed that prevented the City from accomplishing its goal; 2) review design standards to determine what Staff and the Planning Commission needed to review and evaluate a project; 3) review transit plans and work with regional transit on where the stations would be; 4) review re-alignment of the City's departments and responsibilities to provide services and build facilities in a manner that was supportive of the new approach for the City; 5) review the master planned communities and; 6) track the plan annually to see if it was in line with the City's goals.

Mr. Dale stated when they met with the Planning Commission, discussions were held regarding whether amendments to the Master Plan would be allowed at will. Some communities allowed quarterly amendments, which slowed down growth areas to allow applications within the Master Plan to start to develop.

Mr. Herman asked if Council would consider a three-pronged, rather than a two-pronged approach to the Plan; Zoning Code/Zoning Map (hard-line specific, detailed, month-to-month), a Comprehensive Plan (articulating the vision) and an in-between level, which was a shorter term land use element of the Comprehensive Plan, that was updated on an annual or bi-annual basis. Mayor Montandon stated this was an excellent idea.

Planning Commissioner L. Dean Leavitt agreed the three-pronged approach was the direction the City needed to go.

Mr. Dale asked whether Council supported slowing down requests for amendments or grouping them quarterly to the Comprehensive Plan. Councilman Eliason stated holding onto a piece of property represented a loss of monthly income to the City.

Mr. Dale stated before a piece of property was purchased the zoning should be researched. If the City wanted to accomplish their vision, a commitment had to be made to the Plan. Mr. Herman added Council could better consider the impact of changes by looking at ten amendments at the same time.

Councilman Buck stated there would be no need to slow down the amendment process if they had the process down and knew what the vision was. The amendment either fit in with the plan or it didn't.

Mayor Montandon stated a process was in place through discussions between Staff



and the applicant's representatives, as to whether or not an amendment was needed, or was in compliance with the Master Plan. If a difference existed between the applicant and staff, the request would come before council.

**An unidentified speaker**, stated, from a homeowner's standpoint, one of the challenges with delaying the master plans was there was one meeting where 3-4 different items on one property were being heard on the same evening. There would be one meeting for the Planning Commission and one meeting for the City Council.

Planning and Zoning Director Jory Stewart added that McBride Dale Clarion & Associates offered great assistance. Discussions were held concerning creating a layer of more specific land uses associated with the Master Plan, in addition to creating another layer that was more visionary throughout an extended time frame. Director Stewart added due to the amount of change and the market dynamics, Staff was creating a generalized Master Plan, simultaneous with a Corridor Plan for the North 5<sup>th</sup> Street and Deer Springs, to address a more transit-oriented type of design and lifestyle for that corridor. This was a huge departure from the parcel specific land planning process. Direct Stewart agreed with Councilman Buck that this process was working for the City.

Mayor Montandon stated the City would accomplish their goals. They would communicate with the public through the documents provided by McBride Dale Clarion & Associates. Development was moving so rapidly, that the work they were doing had already begun to be implemented by the City. Mr. Herman stated the other components they were working on would be small area or focus area plans.

Mr. Herman stated the City was committed to the ideas as presented regarding having a good, readable, Comprehensive Plan that communicated a vision to the public. The idea of separating out the land use element as a shorter term tool to help implement the Plan would serve as a link between the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Code.

Mr. Herman asked for Council and the Planning Commission's nod of approval that they were headed in the right direction. Mr. Herman stated they would meet with individual departments directors regarding possible hurdles and the components that needed to be built into the plan.

Mr. Herman concluded by reading a comment received at the January 9, Open House: "I believe that many people will resist No. 2 (Vision 2025 Plan) because they believe there is a significant cost associated with it. There must be a considered effort to sell this Plan."

Mayor Montandon stated when the process began on the Comprehensive Plan for 7,500 acres, 8 years ago, Council was advised there would be "x" percent retail and "x" percent industrial. Mr. Herman stated their Plan would include specific benchmarks in terms of desirable jobs-to-housing ratios, percentages of retail, etc., to assist in evaluating performance.

## **PUBLIC FORUM**

**Bill, an unidentified speaker**, stated the strengths of North Las Vegas were the jobs and opportunities that existed due to the continued growth. One of the first areas he looked at when he came to North Las Vegas was the downtown area. He did not know of a City that was growing like North Las Vegas that did not have a vibrant downtown area, and North Las Vegas did not. The use of the downtown area for attorneys or medical offices existed and he encouraged Council to develop this area.

**An unidentified speaker**, stated he worked on the Vision 2025 Plan and was a real estate agent. He had not known anyone who did not support the Vision 2025 Plan. He stated northern Las Vegas was developing the Centennial Hills area with commercial properties. He said if North Las Vegas added commercial, Council needed to make sure it was viable commercial, along the northern beltway, so it did not suffer from the Great Mall of Las Vegas.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**ACTION:** THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:55 P.M.

**MOTION:** Mayor Montandon

**SECOND:** Councilman Eliason

**AYES:** Mayor Montandon, Mayor Pro Tempore Robinson, Council Members Buck and Eliason

**NAYS:** None

**ABSTAIN:** None

**APPROVED: MARCH 15, 2006**

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Mayor Michael L. Montandon

Attest:

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Karen L. Storms, CMC  
City Clerk