

## **R4C and R2A Zoning Study Process (REVISED 09-25-09)**

This process outlines the steps to be taken for engaging the public in the development of strategies for potential changes to the R4C and R2A zoning districts. Item I below describes four methods for community outreach and engagement. Item II and the attached timetable defines an anticipated five-step process for the study effort.

### **I. Outreach and Engagement Strategy**

The successful outcome of the R4C and R2A Study relies on active participation of the community. This outreach and engagement strategy will establish a solid foundation for enlisting community support and interest and the shared commitment needed for exploring alternatives and eventual development of improvements to the R4C and R2A zoning districts.

Throughout the study process planning staff will provide multiple opportunities for community interaction and input. This will be facilitated first and foremost by an Advisory Committee (AC) with broad based representation. In addition there will be stakeholder involvement, community workshops and a potential joint planning session.

#### *1. Advisory Committee (AC)*

The AC should be comprised of a diverse group of between eight to ten stakeholders. Participants should include representation of the City Council, City Planning Commission, Neighborhood Association representatives, Commercial Association representatives, and others who have a stake in the future of the R4C and R2A zoning districts.

The council appointed AC will work very closely with planning staff throughout the course of the study, directing us to sources of background information, reviewing assumptions and providing feedback at important project milestones (see study timetable). The broad base of the AC provides a management tool for keeping the study on target and ensuring that planning staff receives carefully considered direction.

#### *2. Focus Group Meetings*

Planning staff will work with stakeholders in a series of focus group meetings to gather information and input regarding the R4C and R2A zoning districts. Meetings will be organized with no more than eight to ten stakeholders from a variety of backgrounds. We anticipate a total of four stakeholder meetings. The purpose of the meetings will be to initiate contact and surface issues about how each participant is affected by the R4C and R2A zoning districts, discuss strengths and weaknesses and a future vision for the districts. Participants may include representative from the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Ann Arbor Chamber of Commerce, Historic District Commissioners, rental associations, long-time renters, Greek organizations, city departments and public agencies.

#### *3. Community Workshop and Meeting*

Open to the entire community, these gatherings will provide a forum for sharing concerns and priorities related to the R4C and R2A zoning districts. Each event will begin with a staff presentation to explain the

study purpose and the general issues and opportunities through the use of visual images. These introductory steps give participants a common visual understanding and context of the study and serve as a reference for the workshop activities.

4. *Optional Joint Planning Session*

Planning staff will coordinate a Joint Planning Session to specifically discuss the R4C and R2A zoning districts. Information compiled from the study process will be reviewed and will serve as background information. The intent of the Joint Planning Session will be to discuss and develop action strategies for addressing the issues and opportunities of the districts. Attendees at the Joint Planning Session should include representatives from each the City Council, Planning Commission, Downtown Development Authority, Historic District Commission, and the Advisory Committee. Since this is a working session, ideally the group should be no larger than 20 individuals.

## II. R4C & R2A Study Tasks

1. *Study Initiation*

- a. Staff shall review and organize information pertinent to the study effort.
- b. Meet with the AC to describe the project process, schedule and the role of the AC in the study.
- c. Develop a list of stakeholders to meet with in the focus group meetings. Email list to the AC for review.

2. *Issues and Opportunities Analysis*

- a. Compare the Central Area Plan and “Priority Action Strategies” with the R4C and R2A ordinance to determine areas of conflict. Determine the primary issues related to the conflicts and opportunities for integrating the recommendations of the Central Area Plan into the ordinance language.
- b. Meet with the AC to brainstorm issues and opportunities. As a team, recommend an approach to addressing the issues.
- c. Meet with stakeholders in focus group meetings to brainstorm issues and opportunities.
- d. Prepare a summary report of issues, opportunities and alternative approaches to addressing the differences between the plan and related ordinance language.
- e. Meet with the AC to review summary report and discuss next steps.
- f. Present the recommended study process to the City Council for approval prior to proceeding to the next step.

3. *Study Area Alternatives*

- a. Organize focus group meetings to present the issues and opportunities analysis and elicit input about the future vision of the R4C and R2A zoning districts.

- b. Organize a community workshop to present the issues and opportunities analysis and elicit input about the future vision of the R4C and R2A zoning districts.
- c. Summarize the outcome of focus group meetings and community outreach efforts. Propose alternatives for achieving the goals of future R4C and R2A zoning districts.
- d. Meet with the AC to review the findings and determine the preferred alternative.
- e. Optional—Coordinate a joint planning session as described in I.4 above to present the findings to date and develop a framework to preparing action strategies.

4. *Action Strategies Development*

- a. Prepare strategies necessary for implementing the future goals of the zoning districts. This may include text amendments, plan modification, boundary refinements or other steps necessary to achieve community goals.
- b. Meet with the AC to review and refine the action strategies.
- c. Organize a community meeting to present the draft action strategies and receive input.
- d. Incorporate input in a final Action Strategies document.

5. *Approval Process*

- a. Report study process findings to the Planning Commission and City Council. This would include the Issues and Opportunities Analysis, Study Area Alternatives and the Action Strategies Document.