

# Communication to the City Council



Department of Community Development  
Office of the Director

**To:** Lyn Creswell, Chief Administrative Officer

**From:** Louis Zunguze, Community Development Director

**Date:** February 23, 2007

**CC:** George Shaw, Planning Director  
Cheri Coffey, Deputy Planning Director  
Doug Wheelwright, Deputy Planning Director  
Tim Harpst, Transportation Director  
Kevin Young, Transportation Planning and Design Engineer

**Re:** Downtown Master Plan update

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## Background

In April 2006, the Administration provided an outline to the City Council regarding the proposed process to update the Downtown Master Plan. (See attached memo). The Council was briefed regarding the proposed process on April 11, 2006. At that time, Planning staff explained, and the City Council agreed, that the proposed new work was to update—not rewrite—the 1995 Downtown Master Plan since many of the policies of the original plan are still valid. The proposed process was intended to update the technical discussion supporting the adopted policies and refine implementation strategies.

At the briefing, the Council was also made aware of staff's intent to use the Downtown Transportation Plan and the Downtown Rising processes as critical public outreach steps for the update of the Downtown Master Plan. Since the Chamber of Commerce was performing a regional visioning process and the City/UTA/UDOT/Chamber needed to update technical information regarding Downtown transportation systems, the two efforts were considered timely and compatible to the update of the Downtown Master Plan. At the conclusion of the April 11, 2006 briefing, a decision was made to combine all efforts and to share information in order to leverage the business community resources and avoid multiple public processes.

## **Current Situation**

Since Spring 2006, City Planning and Transportation staff, RDA staff, and community leaders have been involved in the preparation of both the Transportation Plan and the Downtown Rising visioning effort. These processes have evolved through City staff support and knowledge of existing land use policies. As these processes near completion, they will provide valuable information needed to update the Downtown Master Plan. For example: The 1995 Downtown Master Plan discusses the need for a balanced transportation system. This fundamental policy is not expected to change since the City still desires a balanced transportation system. However, the technical discussion in the 1995 Downtown Master Plan revolves around whether light rail should be on West Temple, Main or State Streets—a decision that has already been made. The update will now focus on exploring further opportunities to continue to enhance that goal.

Similarly, the Downtown Transportation Master Plan has been pursued with the background of both the policy to have a balanced transportation system and land use policies presently adopted by the City that promote vibrancy in the Downtown area. The transportation recommendations are technical updates to address the realities of changes that have occurred over the last twelve years in the Downtown, and are intended to conform with land use policies and explore opportunities for enhancing ease of travel to and within the Downtown. The Downtown Rising process was designed to solicit public input to determine whether existing policies are still valid and to identify emerging development trends and opportunities. The Downtown Rising involvement has been especially productive in obtaining business input and perspective of Downtown Salt Lake City as the center for business, government, education, culture, and transportation in the region.

One of the components of the proposed Downtown Master Plan updates will be a review of one of the key land use policies of the 1995 Downtown Master Plan, which was to encourage growth to the south and west, away from established residential areas and to reclaim older industrial areas. While staff does not envision a change in this policy, certain details need updating. For example: Have the land use regulations adopted to implement this policy been effective? Specifically, has the RMU zoning sufficiently deterred office development to the east? Have the development limitations in the D-2 zoning district south of Downtown been too restrictive? Is there a need for further zoning specialization (e.g., arts district)? Are other public investments (public way improvements, park development) sufficiently promoting the general policy of creating vibrancy in the Downtown? The Transportation Plan and the Downtown Rising Plan have developed more detailed concepts based upon their understanding of the validity of the present land use policies guiding Downtown development.

## **Future Steps**

The Downtown Transportation Master Plan and the Downtown Rising vision have advanced in proper order to provide technical information needed to update the existing Downtown Master Plan. As the Downtown Rising process and the Downtown Transportation Plan are

nearing completion, staff will begin integrating appropriate portions of these elements into the Downtown Master Plan update.

Staff will work with the Transportation Advisory Board and the Planning Commission to integrate appropriate elements of the Downtown Transportation Plan and Downtown Rising vision into the Downtown Master Plan update with the goal of having a new Downtown Master Plan draft for adoption by summer of 2007. A proposed detailed time line for the review and simultaneous adoption of both the Downtown Master Plan and Downtown Transportation Plan is attached.

Tentative Completion and Adoption Time Line  
Subject to change  
Downtown Master Plan and Downtown Transportation Plan

February 2007

February 28 – Brief Planning Commission regarding the pending release of Downtown Rising and the Draft Downtown Transportation Plan – discuss preliminary timeline and options. Discuss possibility of joint meeting with Transportation Advisory Board TAB on April 2

March 2007

March 5 – Brief Transportation Advisory Board – agree on schedule and process.

March 14 - Brief Planning Commission – agree on schedule and process

March 21 - Downtown Rising to be released

Mid-March - Draft Downtown Transportation Plan to be released.

April 2007

April 2 – Presentation of Draft Downtown Transportation Plan and Downtown Rising to Transportation Advisory Board and Planning Commission at potential joint meeting

(April 9) – Presentation to Planning Commission if not done jointly with TAB on April 2

May 2007

May 7 - TAB makes formal recommendation regarding Transportation Plan

Mid-May Open house

May 23 - Begin Planning Commission work on all 3 plans

June 2007

Continue Planning Commission discussions or subcommittee work

July/August 2007

Finalize Downtown Master Plan update draft

July/August/September 2007

Planning Commission public hearing

Open house

Planning Commission recommendation on Downtown Master Plan Update and Transportation Plan

August/September/October 2007

Transmit recommendations on both Master Plan Update and Transportation Plan to City Council

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# SALT LAKE CITY CORPORATION

DEPT. OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

ROSS C. "ROCKY" ANDERSON  
MAYOR

## CITY COUNCIL TRANSMITTAL

**TO:** Ross C. "Rocky" Anderson, Mayor

**DATE:** April 4, 2006

RA

**FROM:** Louis Zunguze, Community Development Director

**RE:** Downtown Master Plan

**STAFF CONTACTS:** Alex Ikefuna, Planning Director, at 535-7759 or  
alex.ikefuna@slcgov.com

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the City Council schedule a briefing to consider options for  
updating the Downtown Master Plan

**DOCUMENT TYPE:** Briefing

**BUDGET IMPACT:** None

### DISCUSSION:

**Issue Origin:** Salt Lake City is presently considering updating the Downtown Master Plan. Several major projects are driving this renewed interest, including discussion regarding creation of an arts district, development of a Downtown transportation study, increased need for housing, mall redevelopment, and the relocation of LDS Business College and inclusion of a satellite branch of Brigham Young University in the Downtown area. In all, Downtown Salt Lake City is poised to benefit from approximately \$1.5 billion in planned investment over the next two to five years.

In 1995 the City Council adopted the Downtown Master Plan, modeled on the 1962 Second Century Plan. The plan identified a number of development and redevelopment themes which evolved into specific projects with quantifiable results in the City's Downtown Master Plan. Many of the themes identified in the plan now need to be updated. For example, Downtown transportation issues now focus on how best to expand light rail, rather than on whether or not to implement it. Given the emerging development opportunities, it is critical that the City proceed in a timely and effective manner to update the Downtown Master Plan such that maximum benefit can be accrued from the development opportunities at hand and also continue to build on the success of the 1995 Plan.



- A. Provided a review of the 1995 Downtown Master Plan, outlining policies and accomplishments
- B. Identified and outlined the pros and cons of three potential visioning and planning processes for the Council to consider.

**A. Review of the 1995 Downtown Master Plan**

The 1995 Downtown Master Plan identified 11 areas of focus:

- People Oriented Activities
- Balanced Transportation System
- Salt Palace Expansion/Update
- Consolidated Courts Complex & Civic Center
- Town Square/Block 57
- Memory Grove Extension
- Downtown Zoning Modifications
- Theme Monument
- Gateway Redevelopment Area
- Sports Park/Stadium
- Housing

The Planning Division has reviewed each of the themes, policies, and projects identified in the 1995 Downtown Master Plan and has provided a determination of whether these items have been accomplished or not. Attachment A identifies specific projects and policies that have been implemented in each of these areas with recommendations for the future. It is clear from the review by the Planning Division that the 1995 Plan has been very effective in spearheading the Downtown's current successes, as evidenced by the Gallivan Plaza, Matheson Courthouse, and transportation upgrades including light rail.

**B. Potential Visioning & Planning Processes for Consideration**

In order to ensure that the Downtown continues to thrive as a major center for commercial, business, and residential development, it is necessary that the City Council determine the direction of future planning for the Downtown area given the current state of the Downtown Master Plan. Attachment B provides details on the benefits and concerns of three differing approaches to consider in updating the Downtown Master Plan.

*Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT)*

The R/UDAT program is an intensive process that provides a "snapshot" of an area and its immediate concerns. It is designed to provide cities with direction regarding a visioning process. In this process, architects and other design professionals visit a project area for a short period of time and develop a plan to provide vision and goals for future development. The City's 1988 previous participation in R/UDAT was highly successful, bringing together many divergent groups to create a shared vision. Numerous ideas generated in this process, such as identification of districts within the Downtown area, were incorporated in the 1995 Downtown Master Plan.

The City's participation in R/UDAT was extremely useful in helping the City determine a direction for areas of future planning. As a result, the City has enjoyed great success in the development of distinct districts within the Downtown, such as Gateway, Main Street, and Trolley Square.

### *1995 Downtown Master Plan Update*

Updating the 1995 Downtown Master Plan can also be accomplished through the standard planning process. Planning staff would compile background information, maps, and demographic information and review existing documents and policies to identify what has been accomplished and what remains to complete. Public input is a vital part of the Master Plan process; as such, stakeholders representing a variety of entities throughout the community would be encouraged to participate. Housing agencies, property owners, advocacy groups, developers, and business owners would be invited to share their views and visions. Staff would conduct Open Houses to gather stakeholder input and then analyze the information gathered, identify land use conflicts, formulate recommended policies, create a Master Plan document draft, present the draft to the public, incorporate comments, and prepare a final draft for review by the Planning Commission and adoption by the City Council.

### *Chamber of Commerce Proposal*

The Chamber of Commerce proposes to initiate a process similar to that of the 1962 Second Century Plan, with an emphasis on the importance of the capitol city's role in the larger region. The Chamber has a strong presence in the Downtown and a unique ability to solicit participation from business stakeholders who have a broader perspective and unique perspective on strategies to ensure ongoing success of the Downtown business district.

**Discussion:** Because the R/UDAT process is designed to provide cities with a starting point for identifying goals and creating an early vision, repeating it now would redirect the City's current development vision rather than update and enhance the direction the City is already moving. Unless the City is uncertain of the direction of future planning Downtown, repeating the R/UDAT process is unlikely to provide the best result.

The Chamber of Commerce is committed to a Downtown planning process. If the Planning Division proceeds with a Master Plan update independent of the Chamber's process, it is probable that neither process will obtain the desired public participation. Two planning processes without careful coordination will likely result in conflicting and confusing visions for the Downtown area.

A partnership between City staff and the Chamber of Commerce would allow the City and community (business and residents) to pool knowledge and reach a shared vision for future development. It would also lessen confusion and frustration for the public by streamlining public input into a single process. Working jointly with the Chamber, City Planning staff would not only realize an unprecedented level of public participation in the updated Downtown Master Plan but share an enhanced understanding of the City's role in regional development.

**Recommendation:** It is apparent that there are advantages to participating with the Chamber of Commerce in formulating an updated Downtown Master Plan. The Chamber is prepared and eager to move forward with the planning process. Participating with the Chamber in this project offers the City a unique opportunity to encourage greater citizen participation and strengthen its

partnership with the business community. While the City cannot rely solely on the Chamber's process to garner information from all concerned groups, creation of a business-community vision for the Downtown would ensure a built-in implementation group and provide the City access to the issues, visions, and goals of a large citizen group who are often reluctant to participate in the public process. Should the City elect to participate with the Chamber of Commerce in the planning process, a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each party will be vital. The Administration considers the Chamber's primary contribution to this collaborative effort to be that of a champion of regional cooperation and a reaffirmation of Salt Lake City's key role as the catalyst for regional economic prosperity and the nucleus for governmental and civic activities Statewide.