

Reinventing the Crescent

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Reinventing the Crescent Stakeholders Meeting February 23, 2007

Attending: Leslie Alley, Dubravka Gilic, Nathan Chapman, Sue Klein, Pat Gallwey, Kate Wendell, Lynn Walters, John Williams, Doug Meffert, Steve Maklansky, Patricia Meyer and Robert Jackson.

Allen Eskew welcomed everyone and explained the thirteen segments along the riverfront and the team structure.

Alex Kreiger

Have done much work around waterfronts. Economic advancement, but also for return to better living conditions, recreation and environmental issues.

- Anacostia Master Plan
Historically industrial area redeveloped to provide opportunities for people living there all along, not just for those who might come. Clean river, sites for 30,000 housing units, connect open spaces. Identify areas for monuments. Anacostia Development Corporation created to implement ideas. Third century for planning the in the capital area. Continuity between good parts of city with perpendicular roads that connect to river. Recapture industrial areas for public benefit. Some just walkways, some recreation/park settings. Redesigning green major street (like Canal) .
- Dallas – convergence of flood protection to create series of lakes, reintroduce flora and fauna. Make Trinity the heart of the community. Will be one of largest parks in America on the scale of Central Park. Levees will be raised, but roadways and byways will be built on top of that that.
- Cincinnati – Fort Washington Way along Ohio River. Built highway that separated River from city to achieve area of development between river and highway.
- Three Rivers in Pittsburgh – Area has been losing traditional industry at this point where the Ohio River begins. Created Riverlife with stadium, housing, etc. Lively environment draws visitors. Looking at developing river as a transportation corridor.

Enrique Norten

- Brooklyn Public Library – use for visual and performing arts.
- Sustainability is “trendy” subject, but Norten has worked on it for some time.
- Miami – designed the tallest tower...residential, commercial...”little vertical city on difficult piece of land.”
- Hotel in W. Hollywood will break ground in a few months.
- Lower NY – restoration of industrial buildings. Quite a wealth of existing architecture, but needs a new vocation. The goal is to bring new together with old to reinvent the waterfront.
- Master plan for Rutgers which sits on river, with the idea to connect the river to the campus.
- Guggenheim Museum in Guadalupe, a city ready to reinvent itself.

George Hargreaves

- Worked on connecting tissue with Enrique on housing project in Brooklyn.
- Chattanooga – park, then created infill in city grid. Mayor got hotel tax to pay for it. The waterfront park adjacent to the aquarium is home for riverfront festival. This was jumping off point for trail of tears. Worked with some Cherokees who did artwork for the park.

- Louisville Waterfront Park – ULI says it is one of the top 10/ festival plazas. People need a major cultural reasons to come, then discover the rest.
- Circulation Corridors – dense programmatic spine on college campus at U of Cincinnati.
- \$85 million park in Los Angeles, near Hispanic area and Chinatown, a dynamic area that creates literal bridges to culture. It is urban, celebratory space connected to flexible space.
- Olympic Stadium design in Australia. Lots of water.
- Big openings, cantilevers, etc. will help not to block view/access to river.

Allen Eskew

This is not recovery planning. This is an opportunity for people to seize. We have to be ambassadors and champions in the process. We will have to confront planning fatigue to come up with “transformative contemporary work.”

- A husky, industrial waterfront in Charleston, SC. has become cultural facility.
- Baton Rouge – Shaw Center. Fountain was what brought them there.
- Creation of front porch – communal space outside museum.
- Graphic educational process will be important technique for this project
- In terms of sustainability, Brad Pitt is working in Holy Cross, dealing with 19th century fabric and hoping to increase density. The architecture leads to the river.
- The 20 percent undamaged area is future of city. A string of parks is more important than ever because of concentration of population along that area.
- Tulane is recommitting to Riversphere, but differently. TPL and Port are instrumental.
- Asked Sean for Phase 4 of CC information to know what the plan will be over 20 years. This needs to be processed quickly.
- Hydrology examples to use for power. Tulane still wants leadership position in river turbine activity.
- “This is the sweet spot. This is the future of the city. Compelling, seductive and provocative plan will be acceptable.”
- 7 planning districts touch the 4.5 miles. New presentations will show connectivity to the neighborhoods.

Alex talks about the Pittsburgh project being six river banks on three rivers and that the river area was repopulated with housing, open space and cultural amenities. This was the first time there was housing along the river in more than 100 years. He expressed the importance of creating public promenades atop the levees.

Enrique expressed the need to change the geographic center, bringing activities to the river.

George talked about the Riverfest that is a cultural festival that lasts 10 days. Elements of the city and made them perpendicular to river. Lush green, under freeway. Flooding area is left in a natural state, but has walkway. Great lawn...terraced area works for small groups and thousands. He sees pedestrians, cyclists, etc. all converging to a Main Street with the Riverfront as Main Street.

Allen again stressed that this is not recovery planning... it is a development framework for architecture and great public spaces that can be clipped onto a bigger vision. He said it will honor the UNOP process.

Nathan Chapman asks about the public process.

Allen explained that the City/NOBC is the client. The process is different from UNOP, where citizens were the client. The group will be working with the steering committee and the stakeholders, then have two general public input meetings.

Sue Klein asked if it will work with existing regulations and Riverfront Vision 2005.

Allen said yes, but it will not be hamstrung by any of that. They want to look at all possibilities and will develop multiple options. The team will reach out to individual stakeholders as needed for clarification and input.

Sean responded to Nathan, “When look at mosaic of humanity to travel to work here, I see it as remarkable. What is the concern? This is transparent and well-meaning process.”

Nathan said that it really doesn’t make sense to live here. Those who are here are here because they love it. The core of city likes things to blend. Often the people involved create monuments to themselves, but it doesn’t blend. There is talent enough that we could do both.

Sean replied, “New Orleans is all about time and place. You are a guardian of the flame. We have preserved that so well, or not so well. This group, more so than any other of the proposed teams, really understands this. You can’t find their fingerprints on the work. People here have a deep cellular understanding of how it works in a built environment. This group will make it inspirational.”

Alex said that the synergy must be understood. Most important, values have to be nurtured. Things have to change over time. The magic of planning is adjusting appropriately to a period of time and circumstances. The goal is to move New Orleans forward as positively as we can while preserving history and culture.

Steve Maklansky asked about public/private opportunities.

Allen responded that the MOU/Cooperative Endeavor Agreement came about from Sean’s work with the mayor. It explains linear connections, various parcels and opportunities. The team will identify development parcels. We want to come up with a pro-active approach instead of finding the negatives.

Kate Wendell asked what makes this different than Riverfront 2000, 2005, etc.?

Sean replied that the Mayor asked to get it going at private sector speed. “This is a specific development plan, not a master plan. What we will have in June, after deliberate public participation, will make it incumbent for NOBC to come up with financial arrangements to make it happen. We will be looking for quick, important win for New Orleans to keep momentum. Kind thoughtful, fun program as part of this. This is a big thing for the mayor. Mayor wants to see this happen.”

Allen said there are some serious investment dollars on the sidelines, in addition to LRA money. There are resources that have never been here. Now is the time to step forward with some powerful ideas.

Allen said there will be some signature sites. They will “bubble up” through the process.

Doug said Tulane is excited, but wondered about development on the West Bank?

Allen said that the footprint for this project is clear. Fuzzy edges are on the on shoulder, but the team will look land-side only.

Meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.