

A2D2 Project Highlights

Overall A2D2 Efforts

July – December 2007

- City Council approved A2D2 project implementation schedules for development process improvements (R-443-9-07), parking policies (R-444-9-07), design guidelines (R-445-9-07) and historic preservation (R-446-9-07) on September 24, 2007.
- City Council approved advisory committee recommendations for downtown zoning (R-07-494) and design standards, guidelines and review process (R-07-495) on October 15, 2007.

January – June 2007

- A monthly e-mail newsletter, A2D2 Project Updates, was launched in early February. Each issue has been distributed by email to residential and commercial neighborhood associations and organizations interested in planning issues.
- The A2D2 Steering Committee met monthly to review advisory committee progress and provide policy direction.
- A2D2 project leads presented the draft recommendations for the five high priority projects at a City Council work session on June 11, 2007.
- City Council approved advisory committee recommendations for development process improvements (R-256-6-07), establishment of urban design guidelines (R-258-6-07), historic preservation criteria (R-259-6-07) and downtown parking policies (R-262-6-07) on June 18, 2007.
- City Council approved advisory committee recommendation for service, software licensing and support agreement with CRW Systems for the TRAKiT Software and Implementation of a third party IVR system (257-6-07) on June 18, 2007.

July – December 2006

- City Council approved Downtown Development Strategies implementation work plans on July 17, 2006 (Resolution R-332-7-06).
- Project leads and Steering Committee members visited Kalamazoo and met with representatives from the city and downtown organizations to discuss downtown parking, zoning, design and development review approaches.
- City Council named the implementation initiative “Ann Arbor Discovering Downtown” or A2D2 on September 5, 2006 (Resolution R-405-9-06).
- City Council appointed members to advisory committees for the five high-priority implementation projects on October 3, 2006 (Resolution R-448-10-06).
- The Steering Committee approved charges for each of the advisory committees.
- The A2D2 website (www.a2gov.org/a2d2) was launched in mid-October 2006. The website contains background information and advisory committee meeting dates and notes for each of the five implementation projects.

- The Steering Committee reported to City Council on December 18, 2006 the status of the five high-priority projects and provided recommendations for the next steps to be taken in the A2D2 Implementation Plan.

Downtown Zoning Project

July – December 2007

- The Downtown Zoning Advisory Committee met in July to discuss questions posed by City Council, including a height limit for the Core. The Committee revised its recommendations to include a 240 foot height limit for the Core.
- In August, City Council postponed action of the downtown zoning recommendations to allow further coordination with the work of the Design Guidelines Advisory Committee.
- City Council approved the Downtown Zoning Advisory Committee recommendations on October 15. As part of this approval, the Council voted to remove the height limit for the Core area.
- In November, Planning Commission reviewed a proposed schedule for implementation of zoning and design guideline code and plan amendments over the following 6-8 months.

January - June 2007

- The Downtown Zoning Advisory Committee (DZAC) met eight times to discuss floor area premiums and use requirements, identify areas of overlap with the design guidelines project, and develop a proposed zoning framework for the downtown zoning changes.
- City Council approved the Flood Mitigation Plan at work sessions in March. The plan includes a recommendation for development of a floodplain overlay zone, which will affect downtown properties in the Allen Creek floodplain.
- In April, City Council approved a study of sanitary sewer flows and capacity in the downtown area, to be conducted over the spring and summer months.
- Staff conducted two public workshops in May to present the Advisory Committee's recommendations and solicit comments.
- The A2D2 recommendations, including those of the Downtown Zoning Advisory Committee, were presented to City Council at a working session on June 11.
- City Council postponed action on the zoning recommendations until August to allow further consideration of the recommendations.

July – December 2006

- Staff researched and compiled case studies from communities throughout the United States on overlay zoning, green building, floor area bonuses, and other innovative zoning techniques
- Staff developed a list of all downtown development projects since 2000 and evaluated their characteristics as part of the zoning diagnostic task
- Staff updated the current floor area inventory of downtown buildings, to be used in utility modeling.
- City Council approved the rezoning of the South University commercial district to C2A in October.
- The Downtown Zoning Advisory Committee's first meeting was held on November 15. The committee met a second time in December.

Design Guidelines Project

July – December 2007

- The Winter|RACESTUDIO team conducted focus group meetings and the second community workshop in July to review proposed character districts and design principles.
- Based on feedback from the community workshops in May and July, Winter|RACESTUDIO developed a first draft of design guidelines, standards and review process for downtown development in August.
- The third and final community workshop was held at the beginning of September to review the proposed design guidelines and solicit comments.
- The Design Guidelines Advisory Committee met several times in September and early October to review comments and refine its recommendations.
- Nore Winter of Winter & Company presented an overview of the proposed design guidelines to City Council in a working session on October 8.
- City Council approved the Design Guidelines Advisory Committee recommendations for downtown design standards, guidelines and review process on October 15.

January - June 2007

- The Design Guidelines Advisory Committee met 7 times to review community case studies, document existing downtown design examples, define character areas, identify areas of overlap with the zoning project, and develop a proposed framework for the design guidance in the downtown.
- Based on the response to the RFQ, four consulting firms were interviewed by staff and the committee, and the consultant team of Winter|RACESTUDIO was selected. The contact was approved by City Council in March.
- The Winter|RACESTUDIO team conducted focus group meetings and a kick-off community workshop in May to define urban design objectives for downtown.
- The A2D2 recommendations, including those of the Design Guidelines Advisory Committee, were presented to City Council at a working session on June 11.
- City Council approved the Design Guidelines Advisory Committee recommendation to create design guidelines for downtown on June 18 and approved a schedule to complete the work by October.

August – December 2006

- Staff coordinated with the American Institute of Architects' Huron Valley Chapter to set up and publicize a lecture series on urban design concepts. The sessions were held on October 19 & 26 and November 16 & 29 at the Ann Arbor District Library.
- Staff collected and reviewed design-related regulations from a variety of communities.
- Staff organized and held the first meeting of the Advisory Committee on November 14th. A second meeting was held in December.
- Staff completed a Request for Qualifications to retain consulting services to lead the public input process and completed a list of firms to include in the RFQ mailing.

Historic District Criteria Project

July – December 2007

- In September, the State Historic Preservation Office provided comments on the draft historic design guidelines and requested minor revisions.
- City Council approved the proposed project implementation schedule on September 24.

January - June 2007

- The A2D2 Historic Advisory Committee met six times to review and provide comments on revisions to Chapters 8 and 103 and to review draft design guidelines and provide guidance to staff on the table of contents, the language tone, and graphics type.
- Revisions to Chapters 8 and 103 were passed by City Council on March 19, 2007.
- The A2D2 Historic and Design Guidelines Advisory Committees met jointly in March to discuss design guidelines around designated historic districts and transition areas.
- In April, the Historic Preservation Advisory Committee met to finish reviewing the draft historic district design guidelines.
- Staff photographed designated properties in the A2D2 study area and created survey sheets with a proposed historic and non-historic designation for each property for review by the A2D2 historic advisory committee in May.
- Public meetings were held on May 10 and May 23 to present the draft historic preservation design guidelines and provide the public an opportunity to present their comments and ask questions.
- City Council preliminarily approved the draft historic preservation guidelines on June 18. Final approval will be scheduled once the draft has been reviewed and approved by the State Historic Preservation Office.

August – December 2006

- Consultant started drafting residential and commercial design guidelines for all historic districts (July – November 2006).
- Consultant started drafting application guidelines and list of work that staff can approve under the revised Chapter 103 (July 2006). The draft Chapter 103 revisions were placed on the City website, and informational meetings were held on November 16 and 28 and aired on CTN. The meetings will be aired on CTN through the end of December.
- The Historic Preservation Criteria Advisory Committee held its first meeting on November 8th.
- Consultant started drafting residential and commercial design guidelines for all historic districts
- Consultant started drafting application guidelines and list of work that staff can approve under the revised Chapter 103 Chapters 8 and 103 public hearing held at December 14, Historic District Commission meeting.

Development Process Project

July – December 2007

- The City installed the TRAKiT software in September.
- Planning and Development and Information Technologies staff started the process of data conversion for the new software system.
- Staff training on the new software is scheduled for December.

January - June 2007

- The Development Process Advisory Committee met four times to review general policy issues, including inspection timing and the level of detail currently required for site plan approval.
- Vendor interviews were conducted in January and a preferred vendor was selected.
- In February, staff conducted follow-up demonstrations to test development software capabilities of the preferred vendor. The software selected will provide web and phone access to the development process, in addition to wireless and tablet capabilities for staff.
- The Development Process Advisory Committee met in April to finalize recommended goals, objectives and strategies for improving the development review process. The primary goal identified is reducing the time it takes to successfully complete a review process.
- City Council approved the Development Process Advisory Committee recommendations on June 18. At that same meeting, City Council approved a service, software licensing, and support agreement with CRW Systems for the TRAKiT development process software.

August – December 2006

- The Development Process Technical Team (DPTT) developed comprehensive process workflow.
- Staff established specific software and hardware needs for desktop and field equipment with IT and software consultant.
- Staff implemented process mapping improvements throughout the development review process. Examples include coordination of project management efforts and establishment of timelines and accountability for project submittal, review and approval.
- The Planning and Development Unit expanded the use of existing BS&A permit software to manage projects, permits, inspections and related documentation.
- Staff prepared and distributed RFP for workflow software in October.
- In October, Planning and Development staff implemented process improvements concurrent with the A2D2 effort. These include a new schedule that commits to certain deadlines if a project is complete, and conditional Planning Commission approvals, which are monitored by a liaison group to satisfy the conditions before Council action.
- Staff reviewed workflow software proposals and selected top three vendors for demonstrations in November.
- The Development Process Advisory Committee met for the first time on November 8, 2006. The committee met for a second time in December.

Parking Study Project

July – December 2007

- City Council approved a parking and transportation implementation schedule on September 24. The schedule identified the following key areas for action:
 - Development of express commuter service
 - Development of intercept park and ride capacity
 - Adjust fixed-route bus service
 - Add to the parking supply to create an environment where parking pricing can be effectively used to manage parking supply
 - Develop commuter choice program for the downtown area
 - Lead by way of example with City commuter choice campaign
 - Conduct planning process to introduce signature transit system
- The A2D2 Steering Committee convened a newly formed Transportation Leadership Working Group in November to begin work on key actions.

January – June 2007

- In January 2007 Nelson/Nygaard completed a 95% draft of its final parking study report. The Downtown Development Authority board and DDA and City staff reviewed this report and provided edits to Nelson/Nygaard.
- City Council approved a contract with Nelson/Nygaard on January 22, 2007 to provide consulting services for Phases II-IV (Resolution R-29-1-07).
- The final Phase I study report was published in February.
- In March, Nelson/Nygaard facilitated a joint policy board workshop, a public open house and a series of four focus groups seeking input for the development of parking and transportation policy options.
- Nelson/Nygaard drafted a set of parking and transportation policies for review in April.
- In May, Nelson/Nygaard conducted a second joint policy board workshop, focus groups and a public open house to gain feedback on the draft policies.
- Nelson/Nygaard completed the Phase II report, which included eight key parking and transportation principles for the downtown and a toolbox of actions to implement them.
- City Council approved the Phase II parking and transportation recommendations on June 18, 2007.

August – December 2006

- The DDA Research and Operations Committee interviewed two consultants and selected Nelson/Nygaard for the first phase of the parking study in June 2006.
- Nelson/Nygaard compiled data on the current parking situation from city sources, including the number and location of public on- and off-street spaces, recent development, city code requirements and downtown employment and population.
- DDA staff conducted an inventory of private off-street parking spaces and initial lot utilization counts.

- In September, Nelson/Nygaard conducted parking utilization counts, distributed 3,000 mail-in surveys on parked cars, and interviewed 30 patrons in depth to generate a profile of user parking and travel preferences, patterns and perceptions.
- In November, Nelson/Nygaard completed initial findings on downtown employee transportation behavior, the city's zoning regulations related to parking, an analysis of private downtown parking and stakeholder interviews.
- A community workshop was held in December to review the initial findings of the parking study, and the public and provide opportunities to comment on downtown parking demand, supply, and management.
- A focus group with members of the real estate community has conducted by Nelson/Nygaard on December 7th to learn about the interconnection between downtown parking and development, commercial leasing, and residential growth.
- After reviewing progress on the comprehensive downtown parking strategy in December, the A2D2 Steering Committee recommended revising the work plan for Phases II-IV, and reviewed a proposal from Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates to oversee Phase II-IV tasks.