



Report to the Plan Commission

October 5, 2009

Legistar I.D. #15498
Planning Division Staff Response and Recommendations
Comments Received from Reviewing Bodies on the
Draft Royster-Clark Special Area Plan

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Summary Recommendation: The Planning Division recommends that the Plan Commission recommend approval of the Royster-Clark Special Area Plan subject to input at the public hearing and the nine changes recommended below in response to comments from members of reviewing committees and city staff.

Long Range Transportation Planning Committee Recommendations - 8/20/09

The LRTPC voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Plan, and asked that comments from individual members be considered by the Plan Commission. The Planning Division staff responses to the comments are *italicized*, and Staff recommended changes to the Draft Plan are shown in boxes.

1) Robbie Weber commented on “Concept B” and said that bicycle/pedestrian connections are needed at the southern end of a Royster Avenue if there is not a full street connection. Mark Shahan suggested adding language to encourage this connection to Recommendation 27.

The bicycle/pedestrian connection to Royster Avenue is shown on Royster-Clark Development Concept B (pages 24 and 25), but it isn't obvious because these illustrative sketches have no legend. This type of connection is also generally called for in Recommendation 27. Rather than add a specific reference in Recommendation 27 to the Royster Avenue connection, Planning Division staff recommend that this connection be noted in the text description for Concept B:

Staff Recommendation:

Add the following text to the first sentence of the last paragraph under the description of Concept B (page 24):
“...while continuing to provide a bicycle and pedestrian connection to the southern end of Royster Avenue.”

2) Gary Poulson agreed that transit service should be improved in this area, and added that it is particularly important for access to the East Transfer Point to be improved.

Planning Division staff agree and recommend that additional text be added to the narrative on page 17 and to the map on page 18 to clarify that Route 39 mid-day service only runs to the Royster-Clark site from the East Transfer point in the southbound direction, and also that Recommendation 34 be revised to emphasize the importance of Transfer Point connections.

Staff Recommendation:

Revise text after the fourth bullet point under the description of existing transit service (page 17) as follows:
“Route 39- mid-day service on weekdays from the East Transfer Point southbound on Dempsey Road, serving a bus stop on Dempsey Road at Cottage Grove Road. After a 25-minute loop, Route 39 returns to the East Transfer Point via Stoughton Road.

Revise the map and legend on page 18 to clarify that Route 39 mid-day service only runs to the Royster Clark site *from* the East Transfer Point southbound on Dempsey Road, and returns via Stoughton Road.

Revise Recommendation 34 (page 47) to read as follows: “Improve transit service to the Planning Area, both directly and via the East Transfer Point, to the extent feasible to help support development of the area as an employment location.”

3) Mike Rewey said that bicycle lanes may be needed on interior streets of the development, especially if intense commercial development is proposed. He said that this is not shown at this time.

In general, staff does not recommend bicycle lanes on interior local streets, which should be relatively narrow and designed to safely accommodate all modes of traffic. However, if bicycle lanes were later determined to be needed, this would be supported by Recommendation 27 (page 47).

Staff Recommendation:

No changes.

4) Mike Rewey said that the power lines could be moved and that this should be considered.

The feasibility and cost of relocating the lines was not specifically evaluated, but relocation within the right-of-way would provide very limited potential for street pavement widening, would not address the concern regarding loss of desirable terrace width, and would provide no aesthetic benefits to the streetscape. Moving the poles out of the right-of-way, if even technically feasible, could restrict flexibility for future development along Cottage Grove Road, and also would not address the aesthetic concerns.

Staff Recommendation:

No changes.

5) Mark Shahan encouraged the use of traffic calming techniques along some streets to discourage cut-through traffic.

The design and layout of internal streets is intended to discourage cut-through traffic, as noted in Recommendations 24 and 26 (page 46). Nothing in the plan would preclude consideration of additional traffic calming measures if these were determined necessary to discourage cut-through traffic at a future time.

Staff Recommendation:

No changes.

6) Mark Shahan said that any reconstruction of Cottage Grove Road in the future should consider changes to the street cross-section.

Staff agrees. While this is already implied within Recommendation 30 (page 47) and within the narrative, staff recommends that additional narrative be added pointing out the opportunities for other improvements that accompany street reconstruction projects.

Staff Recommendation:

Add two sentences to the end of paragraph 1 on page 43 as follows: "Many of these improvements will occur within the street right-of-way, and may require changes to the street cross-section or to the right-of-way width. Any future reconstruction projects along this street should include consideration of opportunities to incorporate pedestrian-bicycle improvements."

7) Mark Shahan asked whether existing rail spurs were recommended to remain.

Staff notes that most land uses typically requiring rail spurs are heavier industrial or distribution uses generally considered incompatible with the overall vision and land use recommendations in the Royster-Clark plan. While it is assumed that the rail spurs will be removed in conjunction with a future approved redevelopment, the plan does not explicitly require this.

Staff Recommendation:

No changes.

Economic Development Committee Recommendations - 9/2/09

The Economic Development Committee recommended approval of the Plan with one dissenting vote. There were no suggested revisions to the Plan.

City Department and Division Recommendations

Most of the comments on the draft Royster-Clark Special Area Plan from City agencies were made on an earlier review draft, and are incorporated into the current July 24, 2009 draft. Typographical errors will be fixed in the final version, and the following two substantive changes are recommended.

8) At a July meeting, City Engineering staff suggested that Cottage Court and the street crossing at Cottage Grove Road on the eastern side of the Planning Area could be improved to provide an additional pedestrian-bicycle connection between the Capital City Trail and the Lussier Family YMCA.

This change was inadvertently omitted from the final draft, and it is recommended that it be included.

Staff Recommendation:

Revise the first subpart of Recommendation 30 to read: "Add midpoint pedestrian refuge islands to crosswalks at Maher Avenue, and consider them at other locations, such as Cottage Court and where new streets from the Royster-Clark Site intersect Cottage Grove Road."

9) Planning staff note that the reference in Recommendation 9 is to a current zoning district that will be changed when the code is revised.

The SM (Specific Manufacturing) District will be irrelevant once the new zoning code is adopted, and the current draft of the new zoning code does not contain a district similar enough to include in this Plan. Therefore, staff recommends addressing the intent more directly in Recommendation 9 (page 27).

Staff Recommendation:

Revise the second subpart of Recommendation 9 (page 27) to read: "Non-nuisance uses related to production and light processing may be allowed, but the external impacts of these uses shall be contained on the site."