



Montgomery City Council Workshop Meeting Minutes January 29, 2025

OPENING AGENDA

1. **Call Meeting to Order.**

The City Council Workshop Meeting of the City of Montgomery was called to order by Mayor Countryman at 3:06 p.m. on January 29, 2025, at City Hall 101 Old Plantersville Rd., Montgomery, TX and live video streaming.

With Council Members present a quorum was established.

Present:	Mayor	Sara Countryman
	Council Member Place 4	Cheryl Fox
	Council Member Place 5	Stan Donaldson
	MEDC President	Jeff Angelo
	MEDC Secretary	Ryan Londeen
	P&Z Commission Member	John Fox

Absent:	Mayor Pro-Tem	Casey Olson
	Council Member Place 1	Carol Langley

Council Member Donaldson gave the invocation

2. **Pledge of Allegiance.**

Mayor Countryman led the Pledge of Allegiance and Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas State Flag.

PUBLIC FORUM

Mayor Countryman stated no one signed up to speak at the public forum.

WORKSHOP AGENDA

3. **Discussion, coordination, alignment, and collaboration workshop with status updates from Kendig Keast Collaborative, Retail Strategies, and Ardurra / Kimley Horn.**

Mr. Bret Keast, CEO and Owner of Kendig Keast Collaborative, Sugar Land, Texas, said since we met last month and went over some of the interim regulations, just as a reminder, when we prepared the contract and scope of work for this project we decided there were probably several regulations that needed to be addressed sooner than later just because of the pace of development and those were identified in our scope. We have been working on those since we met last time. We have spent more time, particularly

on the downtown area making sure they are right sized for the community and they will deliver the type of development that you would expect in downtown. There were several different components of this. There is the future land use plan which has not yet been done. They did the mobility plan first. There is actually an updated version on the wall which he will be talking about a bit later. It is commonly referred to as a future street plan. The future land use plan will basically be a color-coded map that will identify the type, scale, and density of future development throughout the City and its planning area. That will be what is used to make any rezoning decisions. They already did the illustrated master concept plan that many of you participated in and that they had on display at the last meeting. They are working on the interim ordinance updates and are also working on the full unified development ordinance (UDO). These are the chapters from your current code of ordinances that will be included in whole or in part in the unified development ordinance. The goal of the UDO is basically to bring all development related regulations under single cover and have them all in one place with everything cross referenced so anyone that is developing would be able to go to one document and find all those. They will be consistent within in between each of those different topics.

These are the interim amendments. He will be focusing more on some than others. For the R2 district all they did for apartments was require they get a special use permit meaning that they are not just permitted outright in that district. Part of the reason is to make sure they can get some standards in place so that they get apartment developments of good quality, well designed, and will sustain in the community. Plan development they know that section expired so they have written some standards for that so should there be any plan developments that come in in the meantime, there will be some guidance there. Ultimately with the UDO he would hope that a plan development is not necessary. They should be able to do everything that you can do within plan development within the districts that they will outline within the development ordinance. Plan developments can sometimes take a lot of time, a lot of back and forth, and can cost a lot of money from the engineers perspective. It is really open ended and a lot of it is very discretionary. You do not really have set standards so they will be establishing very clear standards that will be used. The historic preservation standards they really have not changed too much of them substantively. The primary things they did was to cross reference the DT or the downtown district. They have the design guidelines they will be going over for the downtown.

Subdivisions. Regarding the thoroughfare plan, they have some standards in there saying that if a plat subdivision comes in that their street system needs to be consistent with or substantially in conformance with the street plan. It does not need to exactly follow that, but we need to make sure that we are building a street network that serves the entire community and not development by development. They have through streets that connect between developments and from there out to collector roadways into arterial roadways. For open space requirements they have some standards related to who owns them, who is responsible for maintaining them, and then also ultimately they will want to have standards in your ordinance that will reward people who set aside open space, who preserve stands of trees, low-lying areas, and create greenways, and trails. They could reward them by giving them density bonuses or extra density, but they want to say not every unbuilt land necessarily qualifies as open space if it is really unusable. A certain percentage of it needs to be usable, not just land that floods all the time or is not accessible.

They talked about sidewalks. There is tree preservation and then there is some landscaping that is associated with the perimeter fences and walls.

The only thing they did for R-2 was make a special use permit for apartments that will go away ultimately when they get the unified development ordinance complete and they have good standards.

Planned development they spelled out the purpose statement for it. It is intended to be of a higher standard. A lot of times they have been viewed as a way to skirt the regulations and to provide lesser standards, but they want to make sure there is a good quality standard that is held with them. They cannot otherwise circumvent the development regulations. Ultimately they will have very specific standards as to building types, development types, densities, open spaces, and setbacks to help guide any development so that it is consistent across the City.

Downtown is where they spent the most time since our last meeting. They are using the boundaries from the downtown master plan which he will review in a minute. Pretty much the historic preservation covers the same territory with the exception of a couple properties, but ultimately we are going to want to align those and clean those up. Some of them appear to be on the north side of SH-105, some are on the south side of SH-105, and they just do not align with one another right now. They can certainly clean those up. There is a use matrix or a table in there that identifies the types of commercial uses that you would expect to see in downtown and those that you would not want in a walkable historic downtown. They provide for event venues with some standards to make sure they do not overrun things with hours of operation and things of that nature. Artisanal manufacturing would be small scale. Say somebody can make candles or make some other type of home goods. That could potentially happen. It would not be large scale. It is 2,000 square feet or less.

This is the boundary of what they are calling the downtown zoning district. This aligns with your downtown master plan. The zoning map will need to be updated to reflect this boundary as he thinks you know you only have one commercial district across the City right now so downtown does not have its own unique standards and that is what they are accomplishing with this. This will show you the historic preservation boundary and you can see it closely aligns with some of it. The good part about that is our state legislature limited what communities in Texas are able to do relative to building materials. A lot of cities used to require masonry and certain roof types. The state legislature said you could no longer do that, however, if it is an area of historic significance then you can. The benefit of this by having most of all of the downtown zoning district also within the historic preservation is that it gives us the ability to have a little bit more regulation to ensure that we are getting things that are of historic character and that work well within the downtown area. Ultimately, we will want to clean up the boundaries where we can. He knows there has been discussion about possibly expanding the downtown district and they can certainly have those conversations as well, just not at this interregulation point.

These are different street types and they have tied the street types to the regulations so SH-105, Eva Street that segment of it they are calling type A and there are certain standards that would be associated along that corridor on the north for all properties that abut the right-of-way on the north and south sides. The blue are the type B streets,

basically the core walkable area of downtown. The green streets are type C streets, the peripheral streets where you are interfacing between commercial and residential or the neighborhoods. We refer to those in the regulations. Here you see a table that has your type A, B, C, and D. The lot area and lot widths in many cases these pre-exist zoning so they just said there is none because as soon as you create one some lot will be less than that and they will have to create extra process. In downtown, basically two stories along SH-105 particularly going west along the Heritage Plaza they are allowing those to go to three stories like those buildings are already. They want to bring buildings to the street. They do not want to align SH-105 with parking lots that are unsightly. They would prefer like the Heritage buildings that the parking is to the side or preferably even in the rear so they can have a nice frontage along that roadway with sidewalks that are actually passable. Those are the standards that apply to those different areas. Then they have illustrations that you see there that basically show A, B, C, and D and they correspond with a table that show what is a front setback, what is a side, a corner setback versus an interior side when there is not a street, building height and how that is measured. This is basically wanting streets that are built toward the street, but not 120 foot of building that is all built. You want to have some jogs and interest in it and that is basically called a frontage requirement. A certain portion of that building needs to be brought to the street, but not every portion of that. As you have now, you can have breezeways and breaks in the building massing or access and shorter buildings. Things like that create a little bit of visual interest so they do not just get these big boxes. They have done a very nice job with those two buildings that are there now.

The sign regulations they have spelled out in the downtown core all the allowed sign types. You can have a sign on an awning or on a canopy, it can be hung underneath of a canopy, you can have one on a wall sign, you can have one projecting out. You pretty much have most of these types somewhere in downtown right now. They are wanting them to be downtown type signs that are the appropriate scale and work wealth in downtown. You can have A-frame signs on a temporary basis so if someone has a tea at 2:00 p.m. or a sale or something they can put out a temporary sign and take it back in. They are trying to allow businesses to do what they do, but without big, oversized, overly lit signs that are not appropriate in a historic character. These are the sign types that are prohibited. One on top of the roof, a cabinet sign where the whole thing is lit up where it is a cabinet that sits out from the wall, a pole sign, an electronic messaging center where you can have either digital messaging, they would not want that, as well as a pylon sign. Some of these will be perfectly appropriate elsewhere in town, just not in downtown. Mayor Countryman asked when you say manual, the manual changeable copy, is that a sign that may be hanging that is on vinyl? Mr. Keast said yes where they can put the letters in they can allow that, but what they do not want is any traveling messages or any animation or things blinking on an electronic messaging center. We will need to talk about that elsewhere. Some communities have said they are okay if they are of a certain size and we do not allow the message to continue to scroll and we do not have fireworks and things that are capturing attention so we will talk about that. We can have a sign with manual letters that people could put in and sometimes cities will even go to the point of saying all the letters have to be the same color so you cannot do rainbows and all sorts of crazy things.

Parking. There are some graphics there that he thinks help to understand along SH-105 they would like to see parking to the rear of building rather than being out along SH-105. The one in the middle that shows parking in front is prohibited in this instance.

Obviously, in downtown a lot of the parcels are too small to have onsite parking so they are going to be either parking on the street or in some of the common lots that you have currently. With the new design it looks like there is going to be some diagonal parking on that street. With the redesign of some of the downtown streets you could pick up some public parking there. Mayor Countryman said on the front parking she knows there are two businesses on FM 149 that have front parking and that is the only parking they have. How would that be addressed? Mr. Keast said they are preexisting so they are going to be grandfathered. This would be basically going forward after these are adopted. Anyone that comes in when they bring in their site plan they would be looking at it to make sure how they are going to take access, how they are going to have circulation on site, where the parking is relative to the building, and making sure they have handicap parking to meet ADA requirements, and that it is screened. Council Member Donaldson said his understanding on parking is a lot of it has to do with employees and the prospective customers so we are not necessarily going to base the parking space just on the square footage are we because they have to have room for their employees to park also. Mr. Keast said often times in your ordinances this way you have parking ratios that will say typical is four spaces per thousand square feet for retail or five spaces per thousand square feet, but when you have some type of businesses it may say one space for each full-time employee plus per square foot or it could be based on a number of seats or bedrooms or beds in a hospital. There are a lot of different ways you go about calculating those. The big thing they have seen nationally is that cities are starting to do maximum parking ratios rather than minimum so that your Kroger and your Home Depot do not have large 60 to 70 percent open parking for 350 days a year and during Christmas and the holiday season it gets full. They are concerned about the runoff, the heat, and they are concerned about aesthetic. Many communities are starting to say we can have a minimum, but we also have a maximum that is only a certain percentage over so that they do not basically pave the whole countryside. Most of your national franchises have their own standards. They will commonly exceed city standards, but cities are saying we are setting a maximum, so we will have more conversation about that. You will see a lot of different ways that parking will be calculated depending upon the use. Also, we want to look at where driveways are, how many driveways there are, and sharing driveways where we can and then having cross access between sites. That way someone does not have to go out of one site, go out on the road, and back into the next site. So that you have driveways that connect them. Will stub out of street for the next guy. When it develops, they can tie into that, and people can move up and down without having to jump back out onto SH-105 and go two doors down and pull back in just to avoid all that congestion and opportunity for accident. That is called shared and cross access agreements and we will be including that in there as well. We want traffic to move freely and without so many conflict points. The more driveways you have it bogs down just like what he was in coming over here.

In regard to landscaping, we have amenity spaces and so we are identifying you can have a plaza, a courtyard, a paseo, or even a vegetable garden. As he was looking around downtown you actually have some of these little spaces. Some of them are maybe a little more informal than these here, but it is important that we have places for people to hang out, to have coffee outdoors, to talk, to visit, to gather. It will be important going forward, not only in downtown, but elsewhere across the community. This is to show that some of the standards that we wrote things are already being built so we are not bringing in things that are off-the-wall that nobody could possibly meet. This building (the Westmont Building) has a brick front, recessed windows, and a recessed entry that

comes out to the sidewalk. There are sills on the windows, a cornice across the top, an adjustment in the height. It is those types of things so that we do not just get square boxes. Most of the time new regulations would require the side elevation, the metal, would require the front be wrapped around the corner, maybe 20 percent of the depth or something like so that you will see the brick on the front façade and then wrap each side. In downtowns and shopping centers where we have parcels, a lot of times you will require 360 degree architecture because someone is looking at the back and the sides when you are at the main anchor, whether it is Home Depot or whoever it is. Then you have fast food and gas stations out front and if the back end is metal and everyone is visiting, Home Depot is looking at the back of that.

You have a lot of shading devices around downtown. On rainy days it is nice to be able to walk under awnings, canopies, arcades, and galleries. Those are all encouraged downtown and a lot of those play into the era of development and the historic nature of that area. We have standards for those to be of a certain height and so far out so they are passable. He may have to speak with City Engineer Roznovsky about where the right-of-way is relative to the front of these buildings. Sometimes in downtowns it is right at the front of the building and so if you do anything you are encroaching into the right-of-way. We have some standards in there about encroachments. They are permitted, but there are standards to make sure they do not interfere with traffic operations or anything like that. The next slide shows this is along SH-105. He is calling it a gateway to downtown. It is not of the same historic nature as downtown with the size of the buildings. This is a beautiful building and they have done all the things that you would want to do by breaking up a large building into modules, having building step backs, using different materials, different heights, using some awnings, canopies, and different window shapes. It creates a very attractive and very interesting streetscape. Anything else that comes in up and down along SH-105 does not have to be three stories obviously, but there are certain rules to make sure that you are carrying that type of appearance up and down that corridor so you do not have these beautiful buildings right next to it a metal shed. The standards you see there are the standards that are included.

The next slide includes a picture of the thoroughfare plan. You have your major roadways, but what is important is that we tie them all together so you can go from one neighborhood through the next neighborhood to the park or school so you do not have discontinuous roadways that do not lead anywhere or that you have a subdivision and just an internal roadway then you have to go out and into the next subdivision to get to your friend's house or for your kid to walk to school. The red lines are the major arterials. Those would be the highest traffic volume, the widest street sections, and the most lanes. The blue are the secondary arterials. They are a little narrower and less capacity, but still continuous. The green are at the collector level. They looked at the County's thoroughfare plan to make sure they are syncing up with what they are doing and we will have to coordinate with them in some of the areas outside the city limits. With your platting authority outside the city limits, you have the ability to look at the thoroughfare too. That is why they are saying if someone is coming in building a large piece of property we want to make sure the alignment can change depending on their design, but we want a street that goes all the way through and connects with the next one and goes onto the arterial rather than having them mismatch or having dead ends. That just naturally happens when things happen incrementally over years and years if someone is not watching it from a bird's eye view. Here is a good example of a part of town. There are a lot of very nice subdivisions, but the street system is just disconnected.

There are a lot of cul-de-sacs and you cannot get from one to the other, so school buses, mail carriers, and bicycles have a hard time accessing green spaces. In a perfect world we would have wanted some type of collector roadway through that area and then you could have your pods of development be built into more of a continuous roadway network. Then there are individual cross-sections that are up and down the sides of this image that will show. In this case along the top it is showing what a major arterial could look like. We do not necessarily want SH-105 where we have five lanes all wide with shoulders that is unsightly and cars turning every which way. As we are building new streets in areas that are developing, we would like to have boulevard sections so we can control where the turns are into shared access points and then people could access off of the roadways. You can either have a boulevard or you can have a very wide median, so if there is a timbered area and you want to keep all those trees you can do a very wide median and preserve those. Or, we can do a parkway where you basically set the roads to the side then you have a very wide open space on one side and you can have sidewalks and trails along those roadways. We have a cross-section for each of the other road types as well. Some of those you may be constructing with a County or a developer may be participating, but you need to have a consistent standard so that all the road ways match up with one another. We have rights-of-way for allowing for turn lanes that over time, instead of having to go out and acquire right-of-way after the fact.

Cul-de-sacs are very popular and people love them because of their privacy, however, particularly around here when we have hurricanes and flooding, most communities have a maximum length of a cul-de-sac that is 600 maybe 800 feet. This one that he is showing here is 2,300 like a half mile long. If a tree falls over that or part of it is flooded, the people at the back are not going anywhere and they are stuck. It has happened a lot with some of our floods and maybe you have seen that. Here is an example of what a 450 foot long cul-de-sac looks like as well as a 750 foot so you have a scale. Cul-de-sacs are fine as long as you still have continuous roadways to connect between neighborhoods and provided they are not too long. Some of them will have a median in the middle and that is fine. They just have to have a bigger radius so that fire trucks and other apparatus can maneuver in there and not have to back the full length of that street. All of those standards will be included.

Sidewalks. He does not know where the utilities are. Probably along the street. A lot of communities do street trees and put utilities elsewhere. Just having sidewalks on each side of the street is significant. A lot of these things he imagines people saying the dollar signs are counting up. We consider that and we look at right now your lots are 9,000 square feet. People are building smaller lots than that. The way we structure this is that we reward them. We say if we want you to provide a green space or a trail that is money. However, we can give you more density so you can sell more lots. There is a balancing act in there and we are trying to reward them if we are asking for improvements just so we do not ratchet up the housing costs. We are trying to be very conscientious of if we are asking for something to give something in return in terms of infrastructure.

For open space, most communities have a parkland dedication requirement. It usually works out to one acre every 70 lots. There is also a fee in lieu of dedication. If there is already an existing park and we do not want another park right next door, they can just dedicate a fee. We have not written that yet, so we will be talking to you if that is something you want to do because at this early stage of development you want to make sure that your park system is also coordinated. If ultimately it ends up in the City's hands

at some point, first we need to make sure they are maintained and taken care of and there is an instrument to do that. Then, we also want to think about the overall park system ultimately in the City. Generally, you have a green space within a 1,000 feet of every resident in town.

Walls and fences. With a subdivision you would want the subdivider to build the wall at the time they construct the subdivision which you are seeing happening. In some instances it is each individual lot has their own fence and some are six foot, some are five foot, some are chain length, some are wood and it becomes very unsightly so we have requirements in there. They have to do subdivision fencing. My question to you is there are several different examples of different materials from composite to masonry, to wood. Do you want to allow 100 percent wood fences along your major roadways or would you want to require a masonry column every so often? That is going to be a question. Right now we say it can be of masonry, wood, wrought iron, or a composite material. We want to make sure that what is constructed meets what you are hoping to realize out of these and something we will need input on ultimately and that is the overview.

Again, these are interim. We wrote them with track changes within your current ordinance so they are ready when you are ready to adopt, they are already in a form that you just put an ordinance on top of them and they can be adopted. It is your current ordinances with some add-ons. The new ordinance will be organizing it much differently, having a lot more graphics. It will be web based so you can browse around it a lot easier and it will be organized in a way that is more intuitive for someone that you will not have bits and pieces that are strewn all throughout different chapters and not know where they are.

Council Member Fox said one of the things she sees missing for the downtown area was enclosed trash receptacles. She thinks she was very adamant about the fact that she is very opposed to having those very unattractive dumpsters out in the middle of the road especially on FM 149. Where are you addressing that at? Mr. Keast said there are design standards for non-residential and mixed use developments and there are standards in there that would require you have an enclosure that is of a five foot or six foot height. Most of the time they are required to have gates on the front of them so you do not look at the rusted, dented up dumpster. Council Member Fox said she is primarily just as concerned about the downtown area as she is the others, but downtown also. Mr. Keast said he will make sure that either we cross reference those standards so you know where they are at or we will add something into the downtown standards. Council Member Fox said she likes very specific ones about the businesses specifically. Mayor Countryman said she is meeting with the downtown businesses tomorrow and she is actually going to have a trash survey that we are going to send out to find out if we can have a couple of city sponsored areas that the businesses can take their trash to and have twice a week trash pickup. Actually, Waste Management was at their meeting last night and we spoke afterwards. She will be more than happy to get with you, but she too has taken some pictures of our downtown. When you have trash sitting out on the ground and all around where there is foot traffic it is not very attractive so it is a priority to get that picked up and cleaned up. That is something she hopes we can get done quickly so just so you know there is some movement on that. Mr. Keast said he is glad to hear that because in downtown usually you have centralized garbage. Not every business has one right? Mayor Countryman said it is very successful. She met with some businesses in

downtown Conroe and there have been quite a few studies. They were not happy with having to trek a little bit of ways, but at the same time they have gotten used to it and they appreciate it. Council Member Fox said she understands that is an expensive endeavor when the businesses go in, but overall it is very needed in downtown Montgomery.

Mayor Countryman said she heard Mr. Keast say the interim ordinances which have been something that have been a priority to us since we started working with you that they are ready to go. Mayor Countryman asked City Engineer Roznovsky and City Attorney Petrov if they are ready to go on that? If you look at our development map, the one you showed us last night, there were 16 developments between residential and commercial happening and we are used to four or five. We need to get ahead of this before that ship is sailed. Mayor Countryman asked where are we? City Engineer Roznovsky said he cannot speak for City Attorney Petrov, but he thinks that your second February meeting that both of them could have reviewed, provided comments, and have it for action. The first February meeting just with meeting schedules he thinks is too tight, but your one on the 25th he thinks it can get in front of Council. Mayor Countryman asked can we ensure we do not approve any developments, any plats, or approve anything between now and then? City Engineer Roznovsky said he will kick it over to City Attorney Petrov on terms of from approval, to when they are adopted, what is grandfathered and what is not. Mayor Countryman said that was one of our main priorities while we get our arms wrapped around all of this growth is to have those interim ordinances. She realizes there has been a change in administration, but she feels like we are a little bit behind the ball and would like to get caught up if possible. City Attorney Petrov said for sure you do not have to approve any development agreements. Those are discretionary. If someone files a plat application that meets the existing requirements, however, you do have to process it in terms with the existing requirements at the time filed. Mayor Countryman said that is why she was asking when are we going to get these ordinance in place so we can have interim ordinances in place to address what we do not have today that we need in place. City Attorney Petrov said they can get that done. Mayor Countryman asked if we can get that at the end of February? City Attorney Petrov said yes. Mr. Keast said that is good because we will be submitting to you a schedule for each of the subsequent pieces that are coming and we were wanting to know when that would be done so they can start scheduling out all the other portions they will be drafting. Mayor Countryman said she just hopes they do not have an influx of plats coming in between now and then because that is going to defeat the purpose of this whole entire exercise. To be clear, it was not on you.

Mayor Countryman said before we introduce our next guest she would like to recognize some other members that have come in for the record. MEDC Board Member Wade Nelson, MEDC Vice President Arnette Easley, Planning and Zoning Chairman Bill Simpson, MEDC Board Member Dan Walker, Planning and Zoning Board Member John Fox, Mayor Countryman said she failed to mention everyone that we had in the room today because it was on the agenda that she saw here, but not on this. We have City Secretary Ruby Beaven, Deputy City Secretary Diana Titus, City Engineer Chris Roznovsky with WGA, City Attorney Alan Petrov with Johnson & Petrov, City Attorney Caleb Villarreal with Johnson & Petrov, Police Chief Anthony Solomon, Code Enforcement Officer and Planning/Zoning Administrator Corinne Tilley, City Engineer Zachary Timms with WGA, Lieutenant Belmares, Special Events Coordinator Stephanie Johson, and Rick Hanna our Certified Building Official.

Mr. Jeremy Murdock, Community Development Specialist with Retail Strategies is the Community Development Specialist with their downtown strategies team. He also has his colleague Ms. Laura Marino listening in. She is also on the downtown team as well.

Our partnership with Montgomery is actually a two-part partnership. We will be focusing on the downtown portion tonight, but he just wanted to clarify there are two different teams with Retail Strategies working with Montgomery. One is focused on retail recruitment which is really focused on national retail recruitment looking at your highway corridors and commercial corridors mainly outside of the downtown area working to connect the dots with properties and filling vacancies and activating properties and connecting the dots with national and regional retail brands. That is one team. He is here representing the downtown strategies team which is specifically focused on downtown Montgomery. The retail recruitments focus more citywide, the downtown partnership is zoomed in on the downtown area. Our scope and the work that they do at the downtown strategies is a little bit different than the other things you are going to hear tonight. We are much more short-term focused. We are looking at a five year time frame. So, what can be done in downtown Montgomery over the next five years to enhance the vibrancy, make progress towards some of these longer term goals and projects that you have in mind. The things you are going to see out of our work is much more practical, tactical, project based recommendations. It is the development of a five year strategic action plan as well as implementation support. This is a three year partnership. Year one is focused mainly on the development of that strategic action plan and then what we call implementation jump start where we are trying to get a jump start on some of the strategies from the plan. Years two and three will focus solely on that implementation support. We have a lot of tools and processes we go through to help generate action in the downtown area so that is where we are going in the future. We have done this work in other communities to where we are working alongside these other planning firms like we are hearing from tonight. He feels like it is a really good collaboration and it can flow really well together and actually complement each other. You are setting the stage for the long-term big picture plans like the streetscape plan and master plan. You are going to hear about you are setting the foundation with the code rewrite and then our plan comes in with more of the immediate tactical things that you can do in the meantime while you are gathering the resources for these longer term projects. We did something very similar in Clayton, North Carolina to where we were working alongside a master planning firm and that is a good example because they are two and a half years into that partnership and they are still finalizing the details of that master plan. We are in the middle of year two of implementation of actually getting some of those short-term things done while they are finalizing the longer term plan. He thinks these can complement each other very well. Another thing is the turnover and some of the changes there locally has really not disrupted our process at all. It was a really good time for us of where we were in our process that it really has not disrupted us at all. We are still on track with our original timeline and process that I will go over with you in a minute. The biggest change was a new point of contact and we were able to set that up at the beginning of the year. He feels they are in a good place with their partnership and process retail recruitment and downtown.

Mr. Murdock provided a PDF to everyone that was distributed via email. It went through our whole partnership, retail recruitment and downtown. He is going to review their work with the downtown team and focus on that. Their process goes through three main phases in that first year. The first phase is the discovery phase where we are trying to

learn about your community. They want to know about any past plans that have been done, which you have had some in the past and any current planning efforts that we are obviously talking about tonight, and just learn about Montgomery and the current conditions there. That is really the phase they are wrapping up right now and he will go into more detail about that in a minute. The second phase is the strategic planning phase where our team is actually formulating that strategic action plan and that is what we are shifting into right now. The third phase toward the end of this first year will be the implementation jump start that he mentioned where we will work with the core team to get a plan for how are we going to mobilize and engage other downtown stakeholders and start to take action on some of these initial early projects.

They started back in August of 2024 which was when the contract was signed. They had a kickoff call that walked through what our process looked like, our timeline and all those details. One of his colleagues Jen Gregory actually had a call with the Kendig Keast team to make sure we understood their scope and how that might impact the work that we do. That took place in October and in November he actually got to meet a lot of you. He came into town in Montgomery and facilitated what we call our strategic visioning workshop where he met with a small group of individuals, had a walking tour, and then had a more public input session that he believes a lot of you attended. It was a really well attended meeting and he was able to gather a lot of input there that will go into the recommendations that they make.

Now that we are shifting into the development of the strategic plan, our team is getting together and based on what we heard and based on the observations we made, what are the strategic action items and strategic strategies that we need to recommend for downtown Montgomery? We force ourselves to not throw 300 ideas at you. This is not an ideal generation exercise for them. We are trying to whittle that down to what are the things that you should focus on over the next five years, where do you need to put your attention over the next five years in downtown and really focus on those practical things that are within the resources that you have right now while you are working toward these longer term projects? We call our plan a bite sized plan. We are trying to take these big picture ideas, we will even look at the plans that are going on for the streetscape and these other things while we are working toward that perfect version of that, what are some things they can do right now that will set the stage for that and flow directly into those longer term plans? We are excited to see what some of the other recommendations are so that we can identify what are some short-term ways that we can start working toward that now.

The next big step for our team will be to present the market analysis presentation which is scheduled for the end of February. That will go over the data which is really more of a retail focused data than probably what you are seeing in some of the other work. It is more retail centric and you will get a lot of that from the retail recruitment team as well which includes looking at the retail market and how that impact the work we are going to do.

We are set to present a draft of the strategic action plan to a smaller internal core team in April and then they will have a chance to review and refine it. We will then determine the best way to roll that out. So the next steps will be the market analysis in February and the plan presentation in April. We will then give a few weeks to review that document, but then we are going to immediately roll into implementation and start

talking about where are we going to start and how can we facilitate that and set up some processes and structure to help with that process to get some things going. We are looking at February through April for the strategic planning phase and May through July will be the implementation jump start to wrap up the initial year of the partnership before we roll into year two. That is a high level view of where they have been and where they are going.

Mr. Murdock said as a side note he definitely commends everyone for being so proactive with all of this. He knows this can get overwhelming at times, but he can speak from a personal experience. The county that he grew up in was one of the fastest growing counties in the country in the late 90's and early 2000's. It was a town that started about your size and now has 20,000 people. I know a lot of people still view yourselves as a small town in Montgomery, but fast forward five, 10, 15 years and things can change quickly. A lot of cities just wait until they are in the midst of all the chaos before they try to do things like this. He definitely commends everyone for being proactive on this and really getting your house in order before you are in the middle of tremendous boom.

Mayor Countryman said just for her understanding when they had that last meeting with you in October, that February market analysis you are going to put together a presentation from what you heard in that and how you would tackle that feedback and ideas from the October presentation. Mr. Murdock said the market analysis will be just on data. He will be looking at the retail market and the market analysis data that they pull. It will be similar to what you are hearing from the retail recruitment team, but we will relate that to how that impacts downtown and our plan with downtown and which is what will be in February. The actual recommendations, the draft version of that will be in April.

Mr. Sharath Vennavelly, with Ardurra, formerly Gunda Corporation, spoke regarding the McCown Street downtown project. With him is Mr. Jim Patterson who is with Kimley Horn. Mr. Patterson is an architect who also was part of the master plan development for the downtown district. Mr. Vennavelly said they had multiple hiccups on this project with changes in staff and some direction they wanted. They put together an initial conceptual phase of how they want to do it. The direction they are heading is to make McCown Street a one-way street heading toward College Street. The key improvement of this project is going to be a pedestrian plaza in the middle of the paving. This is a conceptual phase so it is not finalized. Mr. Patterson has put together two drawings to see how it will look.

Mr. Patterson said the first drawing he will speak on shows the overall project limits as it was set out for them going from Caroline north to College Street. It is intended to be one-way northbound and then at the middle of the block there would be a pedestrian plaza where the traffic lane goes through that. They are using several methods of traffic calming to address that. As you approach it, you would rise up on what is called a raised traffic table which is a strategy that is used in a lot of downtown areas as a traffic calming device in front of crosswalks. There would be a slight rise up and then the material would be changed from the standard street pavement which is concrete or asphalt (he is not sure if that has been determined yet) onto a more decorative pavement that would have some texture. You would see the Texas flag pattern that would be in the Texas flag colors with the star in the center. He will talk about the project north of that and then they can go to the enlarged plan.

Mr. Patterson said north of that it continues northbound. As you come off of that special area in the middle, the driving surface slopes back down and you transition back onto standard street pavement. There would be angled head-in parking on each side of the drive lane through that as well as through the central area. The central area is 14 feet wide so it is plenty wide for if a car happens to be pulled over that a fire truck or an ambulance can get around that. They have used that successfully in other cities to have that 14-foot, one-way lane.

The lot that is on the west side of that north portion is currently a parking lot and it is privately owned. They are envisioning here a driveway connecting into that and over time if that use changes, then those connections can be refined. That is the lot with the little pavilion on it. Continuing north you connect to College Street. The next slide is an enlarged view of that central area. You can see the central plaza has not only the special paving for traffic calming with the pattern and texture, but it has barriers along each side of the traffic lane. The little dots you see would be ballards which are simple posts that would be impact resistant. The long, dark bars you see would be solid seat walls with benches as you see in the lower left corner with people facing in toward the plaza and on the upper side out towards the sidewalk. On this drawing that you see on the screen down where those little wiring looking things you see are four large trees planted at each end of the plaza. The plaza, while we do not show it here, would have tables, chairs, and furnishings. We would imagine there might be some out on a day-to-day basis and then when you have a festival as you would do now, you might choose to close off the street and the entire space could be used as a pedestrian space. It really has the ability to be a day-to-day with through traffic and special events where all of it would become a public pedestrian space. On the west side which is this drawing is the top edge of the colored special paving is a sidewalk that runs north and south along the west side of McCown and it connects. It is not quite as evident on the screen, but those four buildings along the west side all have a finished floor that is three and a half feet above the street. What we are showing here is a common raised deck that would connect all of those stores. It would have a handrail and landscaping in front of portions of that deck and there would be two sets of steps up to the deck and a ramp allowing access for someone in a wheelchair or people with strollers. Once you are up on the three foot high deck platform you are on private property then, but it would be as we understand it with the EDC funding part of this project, built, as we are envisioning on private property with that common deck. It would be an attractive wood-like, probably composite material that would be durable over the long term, but it would be in character with those wood frame buildings and railings and things that would be in character also. They are imagining the businesses might put out tables and chairs or displays for their particular businesses. As businesses change over time, they would adapt to suit those businesses. The project involves the public streetscape, but also what he will call private development that would be up at the level of the stores. In the lower left corner he pointed out the photograph of the two women sitting on the bench that is mounted on a seat wall that would be part of the safety barriers along the drive lane. Just to the right of that is a cross-section where we are looking south along Montgomery. You see the car in the drive lane and the little post is just a symbolic representation of a safety bollard. You then the sidewalk and a narrow planting area with a combination light standard that would have a street light height, a pedestrian light, and banners that would fit in with the banner program that he believes you already have. Then you see the platform that the figure of the woman is on up at store level with the safety railing. What you do not see in this is there is a ramp and a couple of sets of steps so it is completely accessible.

This is all visible. They believe that along with setting an appropriate speed limit that would be safe, they have delineated the space for pedestrians versus cars. A comparison might be to City Center in Houston where there are upgraded paver driveways and no curbs so the pedestrian spaces in the street itself have an attractive appearance.

MEDC Secretary Londeen said the reason for the one-way street was because originally we had a loop on the south side of the pedestrian walkway. The pedestrian walkway was completely closed off originally. The north, the one-way street they were going to do a loop through the Old Montgomery Steakhouse. MEDC Secretary Londeen said he wanted to remind everyone of that decision. Mr. Vennavelly said he thinks initially before hitting the plaza on the south side of the pedestrian plaza the City wanted to get an easement or purchase a property at the steakhouse so that we could loop the traffic through that, but the City could not get a deal with the steakhouse, so we did not want to direct the traffic into the private property. That is the reason we made the decision of going all the way as one-way. Mayor Countryman said she thinks the way the City proposed that is not the way you just described, so she thinks we can go back to the table and talk to the business owner and perhaps get what you just described. She does not think that door is closed. She likes how it looks, how it would go through that parking lot. The only thing is does it take away the parking that he has on the north side? Mr. Patterson said what they are describing is coming from Caroline northbound. You would then turn right before you get to this central plaza on the street within the right-of-way. Then you would turn right and cut through the steakhouse parking lot. That is what the original desire was.

Council Member Fox said years ago she has always talked about doing something with that particular road, but she has always been told how expensive it is. How much is this going to cost? Mr. Vennavelly said right now the engineers estimate just for McCown Street about \$1.5 million which is the estimated construction cost.

Mayor Countryman asked City Engineer Roznovsky if he has seen these plans before? Did anyone on MEDC see these plans? This is the first she has seen it for this meeting. MEDC Secretary Londeen said he has seen it and it has been presented before too. We have been through this probably twice and that is why we made the decision to go with the one-way street that was done at a previous meeting. That was when Mr. Dave McCorquodale said he reached out to the steakhouse owner. They could not get an agreement on the turn lane so we went with this one-way street, but if there is still opportunity to talk with that property owner he thinks their plan A if that is still on the table, we should maybe revisit that. Mayor Countryman said it was proposed for the trash receptacle to be right there by the front door and that is not desirable, but she thinks if we can come up with a plan which she is working on, then she thinks we can approach him again. MEDC Secretary Londeen said it would be helpful if we had someone to champion this to work with the property owners before. Previously Mr. McCorquodale was championing and coordinating with property owners. It would be good having someone who could pick that up and continue coordinating with the property owners especially on the raised deck since it is all on private property. We are definitely going to need their buy in. He said he spoke to everyone about potentially doing a profile, a vertical cross-section of those so that we can show them a picture of what that would look like. He thinks that would help facilitate discussion with them as well, but he thinks we would love to go back to doing a loop through that street. Council Member Fox asked if all the business owners agreed they like the one-way street? Mayor Countryman

said they have not seen this and that is what she is presenting tomorrow. Council Member Fox said she does not like it. Mr. Patterson said he would mention that in the downtown plan that Council approved a couple of years ago, there are some differences, but it is generally the same idea. One of the illustrations shows a perspective artist rendering of that raised deck so that might be helpful in communicating to people.

MEDC Secretary Londeen said he has a question for City Engineer Roznovsky. There is the 1.5 that is just for everything above ground. You are not doing any subsurface work right? Mr. Vennavelly said it is just a surface. Nothing underground, no utility improvements. City Engineer Roznovsky asked including no drainage improvements in that? Mr. Vennavelly said we are going to raise the inlets, but no drainage improvements. MEDC Secretary Londeen asked if City Engineer Roznovsky can speak on what underground work needs to be done because we do not want to do all these really nice improvements when we know there is some work that needs to happen underground. City Engineer Roznovsky said the things they are worried about underground are obviously water, sewer, and the drainage pipes. For your sewer pipes that are underneath in that area those have already been rehabilitated in or replaced in the sections that needed it back a year and a half, two years ago, so the sewer, sanitary sewer side is off the list. The second piece is the water line portion which you have sitting at your desk. If you look at the exhibit, obviously the scope of work of what was in this project is much further than this, so this cost estimate is for everything shown on the exhibit and can definitely be cut down to fit just McCown and that is replacing all the water lines. Right now you have mixture of four inch and six inch water lines running through downtown. Most of the rest of your water lines in the City are a minimum of eight inch. We would recommend just replacing those. One is because they are old, and two, upsizing will help with connectivity across. As this continues to develop, his recommendation would be that we will change the scope that is shown on the exhibit in red and would cut that down and just replace the portion today that is within to the limit it makes sense. It would go across Caroline Street, go across and probably over to Maiden just to get out of the plaza area, and then wait on the extense to get all the way up to Clepper and SH-105. That will bring that cost down. Also, it would make more sense that as this is getting all ripped to just include it as one single construction contract. They are digging it up and doing the work anyway, they lay in the new water line and then do it at once. This estimate in front of you is everything on this exhibit as a stand alone project. There is obviously economy of scale and reducing the scope to bring this back down still by the time you set up a temporary water line and get everyone connected. We will then have to get with Ardurra. We are back and forth on the drainage, but we would recommend at least replacing the storm sewer in this section. The City did a drainage study downtown so all the sizing and the layout is complete. It is just more the placement of the inlets which is also what is holding up the finalization of these plans. Once the downtown design is complete, then we will work hand in hand with Ardurra and Kimley Horn to locate valves, hydrants, and inlets as appropriate so it works within the landscape they have. Council Member Fox asked City Engineer Roznovsky if there is a good drainage plan in place now? City Engineer Roznovsky said yes there is. It has been a couple years, but a master drainage study was done in the downtown area which reevaluated all the improvements downtown where the lines are and line capacity. Council Member Fox mentioned the Shockley property. City Engineer Roznovsky said we would not look to fix everything in this one, but at least take care of what is in this road size correctly so as the improvements continue, it can be continued on with it.

Planning and Zoning Chairman Simpson said he has a question about the loop going through the steakhouse. What is going to happen downstream from that on Maiden? That street cannot handle two-way traffic. Mayor Countryman said no, you are correct. Planning and Zoning Chairman Simpson said that street would have to be addressed also. Mayor Countryman said correct. She said they have talked about that street and it is going to have to be in conjunction with this. She does not think it could stand alone by itself. Council Member Fox said the other thing is too she thinks you need to because you are going to address the fact that the steakhouse is going to lose so many parking spots on the north side. Mayor Countryman said she just wants to make sure the door is open to have a discussion with him. This does not have to be the final, but approach him in a different way that would be successful and she thinks we can. It may be that Ardurra might have to come up with a secondary plan for him, but let us see if we can sell this one and get his feedback for it and gain insight of what is concerning. Probably the parking spots and she knows he does not want trash at his front door. Mr. Patterson said while they did not draw any parking spaces on this drawing because the steakhouse was off the table at the time, it appears there is enough width to have a one-way drive lane going east and some head-in parking spaces. He would hope the number of parking spaces could be pretty close to what is there now. The original concept was looking at a dumpster (he will just say) at the lower left corner of the colored plaza area. It could be in an enclosure easily accessed by garbage trucks and be accessible not only from the steakhouse and those stores, but also the stores across the street. That is certainly not finalized, but it was something that was envisioned during the downtown plan. Mayor Countryman said currently on that north side he has head-in parking so you are saying although it is not denoted here, but it would still be possible to have those or even if it is slanted parking that you have. Mr. Patterson said we could call that angled head-in parking. How that is configured would need to be discussed with that owner. Mayor Countryman said as long as there is an opportunity to discuss it. With you recognizing that area could potentially be used for parking, that is enough to bring him to the table. Mr. Patterson said it has been a couple years, but he believes the exhibit of the downtown master plan shows something like that. Mayor Countryman said he was not the owner of the steakhouse then either so that has changed as well. Planning and Zoning Chairman Simpson asked if those parking spots on the north side of the steakhouse his spots? Mayor Countryman said they are. Planning and Zoning Chairman Simpson said he has put up bollards with a chain. Mayor Countryman said no comment.

Mayor Countryman thanked everyone for coming and everyone getting on the same page. She feels like we have been very siloed in our works and is glad everyone is back up and running with us again. Our intent was to move forward so she is glad we are finally doing so.

Mayor Countryman said just so she is clear, their next steps with KKC is for the February second meeting to get those temporary ordinances in place. Mr. Keast said yes and they will be providing a schedule for each of the next deliverables built around that date.

Mayor Countryman said she heard Mr. Murdock say that in February will be the market analysis and strategic actions and April will include the draft recommendation for the strategic plan. Mr. Murdock said that is correct. Mayor Countryman said after the draft recommendation in April then they can start rolling into implementation in July.

Implementation would be the jump start and we will be starting with our second year with you as well. Mr. Murdock said that is correct.

Mayor Countryman said for Ardurra, City Engineer Roznovsky start looking at drainage. She can talk with the steakhouse owner and see if we can get them back to the table and then gain feedback from the meeting she is having tomorrow with downtown to see what they think of this and make sure everyone is on the same page. Then we can start moving forward. City Engineer Roznovsky said correct. He thinks putting a pause with the Ardurra folks would be good until we have the conversation with the steakhouse because that will change the direction. Once that decision is made, the roping back in, the drainage component, and the waterline component which are put together, just bringing those pieces, that will be affected by the overall change. If the steakhouse is open, then relooking at Maiden and making sure that is included, recommend improvements to Maiden in order to handle the increased traffic. Mayor Countryman said since we own 213 Prairie Steet it might make sense with this whole trash conversation, maybe we put a City-owned receptacle on that property and they can just walk across Maiden. We can have it all fenced off for us and all the businesses that are on McCown can walk or bring a wagon one block over and put all of their trash there to get it off of McCown. If we are going to spend money making McCown look pretty, she definitely does not want green receptacles on it. She does not think anyone does.

COUNCIL INQUIRY

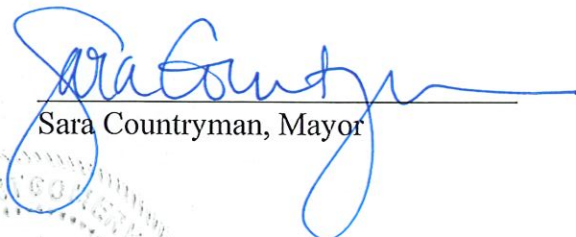
Mayor Countryman said again she wants to thank everyone for coming. She appreciates it and thinks we are heading in the right direction to facelift this town and get set for success.

CLOSING AGENDA

4. Adjourn.

Motion: Council Member Fox made a motion to adjourn the Workshop Meeting of the City of Montgomery at 4:24 p.m. Council Member Donaldson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

APPROVED:


Sara Countryman, Mayor

ATTEST:



Ruby Beaven, City Secretary

