

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE
TRIANGLE PARK CONSTROVERSY, AUSTIN, TEXAS

THESIS

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By

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To my husband, Kenan, for his much appreciated patience and support.

And to my parents, Joyce and James Parrish, for their endless supply of
encouragement in all that I do.

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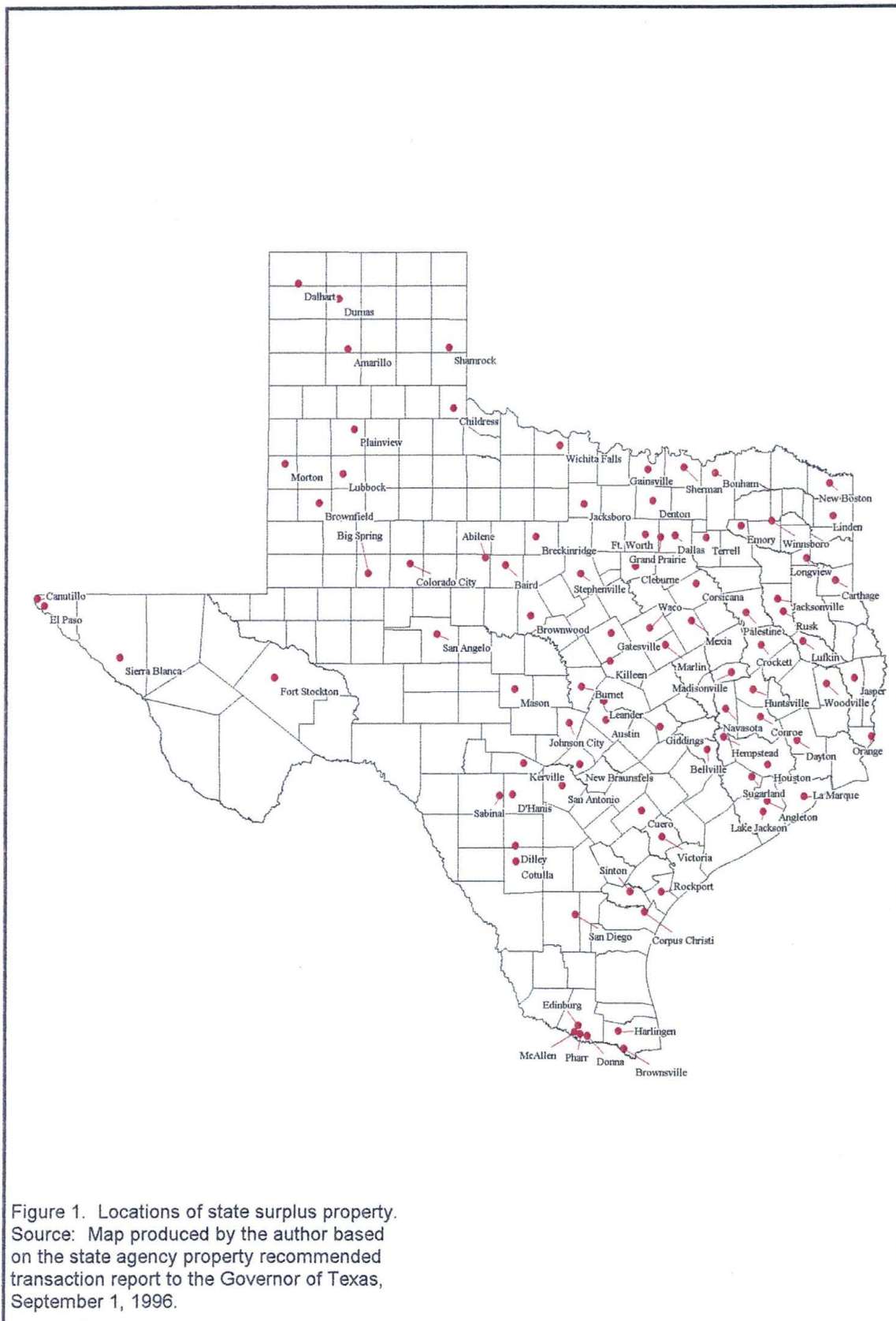
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This research is concerned with the issue of public participation in the development of approximately twenty-two acres of state-owned land located within Austin, Texas, city limits. The unique shape of the parcel in question has resulted in the name “The Triangle”. The Triangle is one of the first major developments to be pursued under Texas’ Surplus Properties Program that was initiated with the passage of Senate Bill 43 (SB 43) in 1985. Over 130,000 acres statewide were identified as underutilized, surplus land under state ownership. More than 590 acres of this land are located within the Austin City limits. SB 43 aimed to convert “surplus” state lands into revenue-producing enterprises to benefit state agencies. A follow-up law, Senate Bill 478, stipulated that sales or leases of state-owned lands for non-governmental purposes were to be well planned and “reasonably sensitive” to local government planning and zoning codes.

While SB 43 potentially impacts the development of “underutilized” land located in 90 Texas cities (Figure 1), it is the unique nature of the Triangle parcel that is the subject of this research. This study reviews the Triangle development planning process with emphasis on how the public has been included in the site plan negotiations. The level of citizen involvement in the Triangle public-private development partnership is unprecedented and has the potential to affect change in state policy regarding public participation. Managers of other lands in the Texas Surplus Properties Program are



looking to the Triangle development process as an example of potential pitfalls associated with developing land in the program. The outcome of the Triangle negotiation process will inevitably set a precedent for future private-public partnerships for the development of state property.

The twenty-two acres slated for development are surrounded by established residential neighborhoods with the historic and politically active Hyde Park neighborhood among them. The development process of the Triangle has been fraught with organized neighborhood opposition to the development plan, almost from its inception. Neighbors took issue with the design of the site plan as well as the developers' choices of establishments.

The Triangle development planning process has undergone significant changes during the two years of intense and often contentious negotiations (see chronology, Appendix 1). Debate often centered on the role of the public in determining the outcome of the planning process. This research evaluates the planning process with regard to established planning frameworks and attempts to answer the question, "Did public participation in the Triangle controversy result in a more equitable planning process?" The research also documents the actions of the organized citizen group that played a vital role in determining the nature of the development that is slated to be built among a number of established Austin neighborhoods (Figure 2).

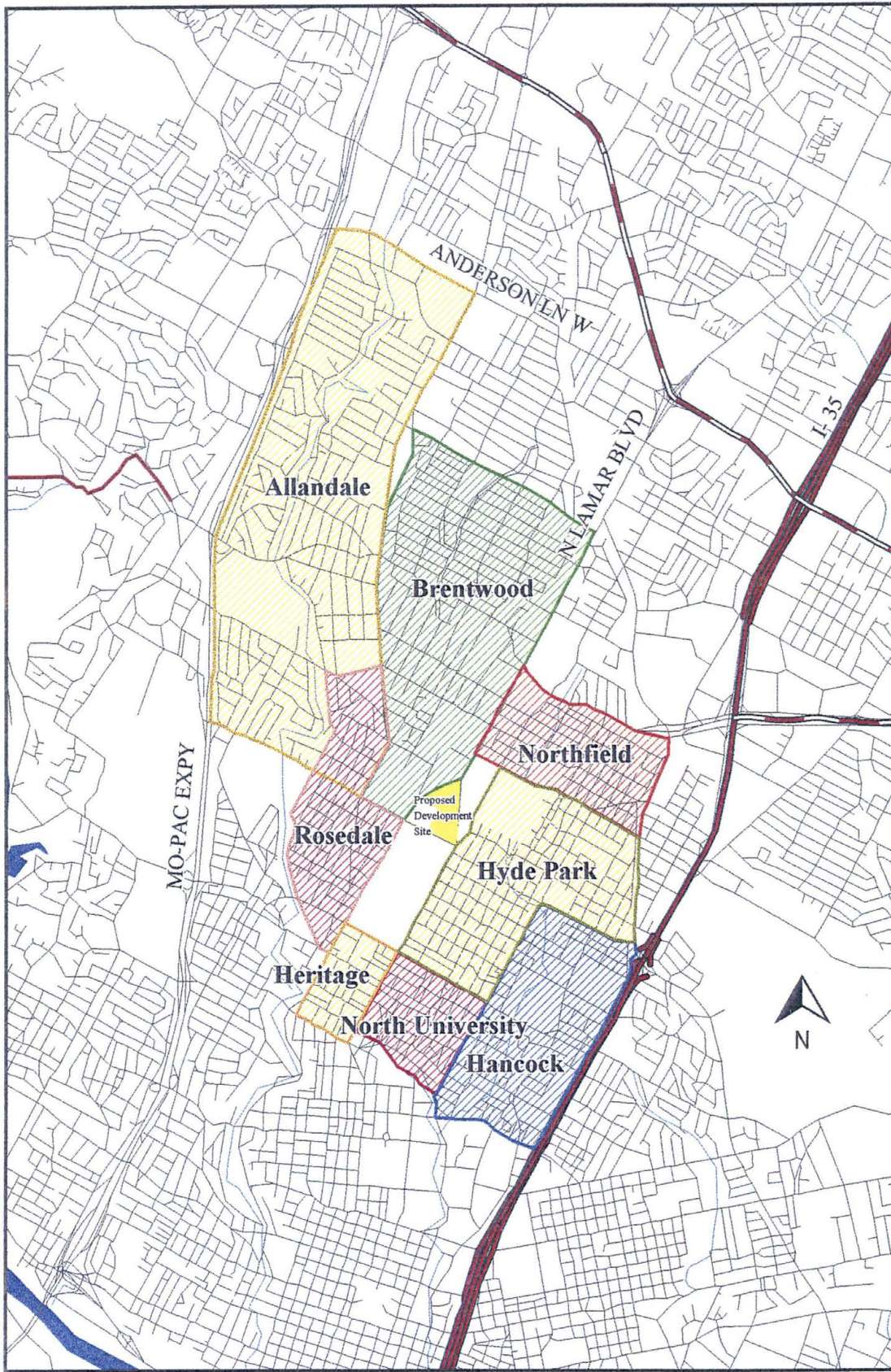


Figure 2. Neighborhoods surrounding the proposed development site.
Source: Map produced by the author.

According to Wisner *et al.*, “participation as research emphasizes the systematic documentation of the process and product, with the eventual end of formulating frameworks, models, and theories of participation, as well as evaluating its efficacy” (Wisner, Stea and Kruks 1991, 274). There is some debate over what most needs to be documented: actions of participants, the process, or the outcome. This study documents the evolution of the Triangle development process with emphasis on the role of the involved citizenry and relates the public process to established participatory planning models. The following investigation provides support for the claim that the Triangle development process evolved from one following a somewhat traditional planning model into one following a more radical planning model that was more open and responsive to citizens’ concerns. It is the author’s contention that public actions directly influenced the course of the planning process.

Research methodology

In order to achieve this research goal, three types of research techniques were utilized: personal interviews, direct observations, and analysis of secondary sources. The primary method of data collection was direct observation of the planning process. The author attended official planning meetings, workshops, and strategy sessions where negotiations on the Triangle development took place.

Participant interviews are also a substantial source of data. Participants were interviewed at various stages of the planning process in an attempt to gain insight into the changing public perspectives and to document citizen actions. A wide variety of subjects were interviewed in order to gather a representative sample of opinions on the negotiation process. Interview subjects included members of the public, local and state political

representatives, the developer, and urban planners. Questions were designed to gather information on the planning process and the role of public participation.

Secondary sources such as newspaper articles, documents written by key players in the development process, and related planning documents were also analyzed. Several sources such as citizen newsletters and articles published on the Internet were analyzed in detail as the information presented there represented the actions and views of the public. Proposed site plans and planning documents were also reviewed.

Each of the three research techniques yielded specific information. Personal interviews achieved the collection of participant perceptions of the process. By interviewing representatives of each of the major stakeholder groups (the public, developer, and the state) differing points of view were obtained. The author was then able to compare the significant differences in attitudes and perceptions of community power in the Triangle planning process. Not surprisingly, the greatest disparity in perception of public power was found between members of the citizen activist group and the members of the development corporation who were being pressured into altering the site plan to accommodate citizen concerns.

The direct observation of meetings and public hearings allowed the author to observe the negotiations from a distance. This provided the opportunity to collect relevant data as well as to observe the interactions between the key players as a neutral party. From the standpoint of an impartial observer, the author was able to gain the confidence of each group, which is essential to gain a complete understanding of the issues and concerns of each stakeholder group.

The analysis of primary secondary sources provided specific, relevant information on the Triangle planning process. The information gathered from secondary sources included dates, meeting minutes, development restrictions, and site plan recommendations. Information collected from secondary sources, personal interviews and direct observation comprised the research techniques for this study. The goal of this approach was to provide a complete picture of the complicated planning process.

Organization of the thesis

The thesis is organized into seven chapters. Chapter One introduces the planning issue at hand while Chapter Two provides a literature review on the topic of participatory planning. Chapter three examines Three theoretical interpretations of public participation and Chapter Four defines characteristics of effective public participation. Both chapters Three and Four provide a framework for the research undertaken in the subsequent chapters. Chapter Five provides a brief history of the Triangle and identifies the key players in the Triangle negotiations. Chapter Six describes the community goals for the Triangle and reviews the public's participation in the planning process. Chapter Seven, the conclusion to the thesis, analyzes the planning process in terms of public participation and attempts to categorize the process according to the theoretical planning framework established in Chapters Three and Four.

CHAPTER 2

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING

Since our satisfaction in life is affected vitally by the character of our cities in all of its greatest detail, it may be appropriate to say that the decisions about building our cities should be made by all of us, and not solely by the developers or the bureaucrats or the legislators or the planners. (Crane 1973, 93)

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the issue of public participatory planning in detail and to review the literature on the topic. There appears to be little consistency in the nomenclature concerning “public participation”. Terms like “public participation”, “citizen participation”, or “community participation” are interchangeable within the literature. Public participation is the preferred term used in this research. Public participation in planning is important because it can improve the quality of the planning process. Furthermore, effective public participation is an integral part of the democratic process (Pateman 1970). The literature on the subject of public participation in planning is quite extensive. This is supplemented by a large volume of literature on the issue of “democracy” and “citizenship”.

The rhetoric of public participation has become an integral part of the planning system. The notion of participation in civic affairs dates back many centuries (Pateman 1970), but the official recognition of public participation in planning came as recently as the mid 1960s. Such sanctioning was largely a consequence of community action and the civil rights movement (Cullingworth 1984). During the 1960s communities were active, creating demands for more public involvement in the running of government that were

difficult to ignore. Underprivileged groups, minorities, welfare agencies, women's groups, students, and many other citizen groups began to organize to demand an increased role in decision-making processes (Hudspeth 1982).

In addition to these demands, there was a growing community movement with organized resistance to urban renewal and freeway proposals that threatened to negatively alter many communities. These responses were associated with a growing community awareness of distributional consequences of public action and intervention (Cullingworth 1984; Hudspeth 1982; Davidoff 1965). This participation was community-led, and often unwelcomed by planning authorities and city councils.

The official recognition of public participation was aided by the emergence of advocacy planning in the 1960s. Advocacy planning was an approach to planning that encouraged public participation in the process to a limited degree. Thus advocacy planning represented an explicit recognition of the political and inequitable nature of the planning process. Critics of the advocacy planning movement argued that it ultimately failed to challenge inequality or bring about change (Cullingworth 1984). But advocacy planning did help in promoting and establishing the concept of public participation in planning.

By the 1970s, public participation became incorporated into the planning process. The community activism of the 1960s became institutionalized and mechanisms were introduced to allow citizens to have their say (Cullingworth 1984). But the existence of mechanisms did not provide any guarantees that the voices would be heard:

While it is helpful to have a voice, its existence doesn't in any way imply that it will be heard. Advocates of what are usually minority positions are thrust into dissenting positions by the nature of the planning process. Dissent is tolerated at public hearings and at private, behind the scenes,

hearings. However, tolerance of dissent seldom leads to just consideration unless backed by power. As the interests lacked power or authority they were tolerated, but unheard and unheeded. (Kravitz 1968, 41)

It has been questioned as to whether effective participation can survive formal institutionalization (Cullingworth 1984). Arnstein (1969) has suggested that the aim of official participation programs was to contain, rather than facilitate, citizen demands and to ensure that citizens remained passive and non-threatening. These concerns notwithstanding, public participation in planning processes has become the accepted way that individuals and groups can influence the outcome of planning processes and the nature and form of urban development. The rhetoric of public participation is largely unquestioned. Arnstein (1969) noted that public participation is a bit like eating spinach: we believe it to be good for us, so we are all accepting of the principle.

Definitions of public participation

There are numerous definitions of public participation in the literature. The variety of definitions reflect different ideological perspectives on participation. Many see it as a means of giving the public an opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process. According to Glass:

The term citizen participation is an overgeneralized term that is often defined simply as providing citizens with opportunities to take part in governmental decision or planning processes. (Glass 1979, 180)

Others see it more comprehensively as a means of democratizing government decision-making structures and empowering local communities:

For advocates of participation, citizen involvement in government decision-making is synonymous with (i) democratization of choices involving resources allocation, (ii) decentralization of service systems management, (iii) deprofessionalization of bureaucratic judgements that

affect the lives of residents, and (iv) demystification of design and investment decisions. (Susskind and Elliott 1984, 52)

Definitions of participation are useful because they can indicate the range of potential influence citizens may have in planning processes. One of the best known definitions is Arnstein's populist "Ladder of Public Participation" (Arnstein 1969). In her interpretation, public participation ranges from manipulation at the bottom of the ladder to citizen control at the top (Figure 3). Each rung in the ladder corresponds with the degree of citizen power that could influence the outcome of any planning decision. This ranges from non-participation on the bottom rungs of the ladder, through degrees of apparent participation, to degrees of actual participation at the top.

Figure 3. - - Arnstein's Ladder of Public Participation

Citizen Control	Degrees of Citizen Power
Delegated Power	
Partnership	
Placation	Degrees of Tokenism
Consultation	
Informing	
Therapy	Degrees of non-participation
Manipulation	

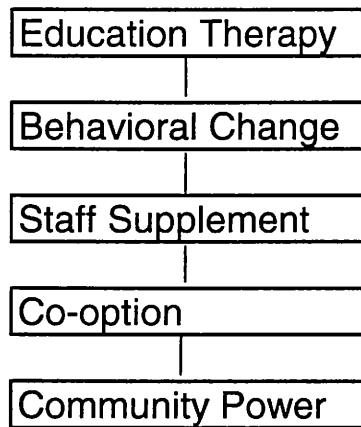
Source: Arnstein (1969)

The key concept is citizen power; without such power there could be no meaningful or effective participation. Without the redistribution of power, she argued, participation is a pointless exercise for the powerless. This typology has been frequently

used to demonstrate that public participation in planning has remained firmly entrenched on the bottom rungs of the ladder.

A similar approach was developed by Burke (1968), whose definitions ranged from education to community power (Figure 4). In Burke's scheme, the degree of citizen empowerment increases from the top of the ladder to the bottom.

Figure 4. --Burke's Typology of Public Participation



Source: Kasperson and Breitbart (1974)

The different levels are defined as follows:

1. Education therapy, which sees participation as a form of education to improve individual citizens.
2. Behavioral change, which sees participation as a mechanism for influencing individual behavior through participation as a member of a group.
3. Staff supplement, which sees participation as a means of adding citizen input to the expertise of the particular planning agency.

3. Staff supplement, which sees participation as a means of adding citizen input to the expertise of the particular planning agency.
4. Co-optation, which sees participation as a means of “capturing” or “neutralizing” opposition to various projects or plans. Objectors are involved in the process without having any influence or control. The public perception is that the process has involved community input.
5. Community power saw participation in terms of “the creation of new power centers to confront established centers as a means of generating social change.” (Kasperson and Breitbart 1974, 6).

This model represents the same continuum that Arnstein’s does, from a point of non-participation (education therapy) through to a much fuller interpretation of participation, in which citizens actually have power and control (community power). The point is made that for participation in planning to be effective, it has to be pushed toward a situation where communities have power and control.

The problems and potential of public participation in planning

The operation of public participation is not without problems; it is clear, for example, that some groups in society are able to participate better than others. There are numerous public participation techniques, each with inherent advantages and disadvantages. Different techniques will suit different purposes, and most planning processes will incorporate a range of techniques and approaches.

Public participation has enormous potential that can enable the public to have an active and meaningful say in the decision-making process. Not only can it contribute to

the democratization of decision-making processes, but it can also improve the quality of the decisions themselves. The key issue for any public planning process is how far this potential is realized.

Participation processes can be complex, technical, jargonistic, and bureaucratic. The process can be top-down and participation processes are usually established without public involvement. Planners often retain too much control over the participatory process, effectively undermining the potential that such participation offers (Susskind and Elliot 1984). The public rarely controls the agenda. Agendas can be preset and outcomes pre-determined:

Citizen participation in America is rapidly emerging as the newest spectator sport; spectators are not participants. Participation does not occur when individuals are attached to institutions or processes where the agendas are already set, the issues defined, and the outcomes limited. Participation is “unreal” when the motivation is legitimation and support rather than creation. (Kasperson and Breitbart 1974, 5)

Community groups can, therefore, be suspicious and mistrustful of official public participation processes and consequently refuse to participate, as they would argue that the very act of participation serves to legitimize it. There is a tendency for groups to participate at key points (i.e., at the public hearing stage), as it enables them to get direct access to the politicians.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a brief overview of the operation of the concept of public participation. It has looked at the development of participatory planning and reviewed some of the definitions and rationales for public participation. The problems of

participation were considered and some questions about the relationship between public participation and democracy were raised. The concept of public participation in planning is now widely accepted. There is, however, a wide range of interpretations of how public participation should be organized and the impact that it has. The concept can vary from degrees of tokenism and paternalism, to more fully fledged interpretations that incorporate varying degrees of community power.

The following chapter raises important questions regarding both the theoretical underpinnings and current practice in relation to public participation in planning that support the research presented here. The main question is: Were the citizens effective in changing the Triangle planning process? To do this, characteristics of effective public participation will have to be examined against various theoretical models of public participation.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL INTERPRETATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

This chapter reviews the planning theory literature to identify the major planning paradigms. The planning theory literature is legion. There are a number of different classifications of planning theory. These include Friedman and Hudson (1971), Hudson (1975), Healy *et al.*, (1982), Weaver and Hightower (1984), and Friedman (1987). These classifications are useful as they reflect the range of planning theory and the different political ideologies that lie behind them. Each of these groups of theories describe public participation differently.

Three planning models that provide a framework for understanding effective public participation in planning are: (1) rational comprehensive planning; (2) advocacy planning; and (3) radical planning.

Rational comprehensive planning model

The rational comprehensive planning model is the dominant planning model and constitutes the basis for planning practice in Western liberal democracies (Wolfe 1989). It is frequently referred to as the traditional or mainstream planning theory approach. It supports a practice of planning that tends to be seen as technical, rational, scientific, politically neutral, and objective. There is a further tendency for this planning approach to be top-down, with the public being seen as passive clients. The planner is usually considered to be the “expert” who makes professional decisions in what she/he

determines to be the “public interest”. Generally, this is not by nature conducive to a practice of planning that supports effective public participation. At best, public participation is seen as a form of consultation, rather than as a fundamental element of the planning process. Public participation is seen as a means of legitimating the planning process and the decisions reached.

One of the major flaws of the rational comprehensive model is that it propagates the myth that planning is apolitical and neutral (Piven 1975). It may further be argued that, ironically, the apolitical view of planning has allowed it to be used in a very political way by politicians and developers to suit their own advantage. It has been suggested that the decision of planners to try to be apolitical is in fact a political decision in itself in that it serves to maintain the status quo (Piven 1975, Krumholz and Forester 1990). The logical extension of this view is that planners become little more than facilitators of urban growth and development. They become aligned with those interests that benefit from urban growth (Piven 1975).

The apolitical view of planning serves to mask the differential power structure of society. It is assumed that everyone participating has an equal opportunity to influence the outcomes of the planning process. This is a very pluralistic interpretation of society. It sees power as being shared between the state and various community interests as well as private individuals. Power is seen as being competitive and diffused, where everybody is seen as having some power and nobody has too much, so no one group of interests can dominate (George and Wilding 1976). The theory is that we all have rights, free and regular elections, and representative institutions and we can all partake of these elements under full protection of the law, our independent judiciary and our free political culture.

The assumption is that the state cannot fail to respond to the wishes and demands of competing interests and ultimately “everybody, including those at the bottom of the queue, get served” (Miliband 1969, 4).

It could be argued that the rational comprehensive model acknowledges and accepts the dominance of private market forces. The activity of planning is seen as being subject to the influence of the market (Kravitz 1970; Ambrose 1986; Peattie 1991). The planning process and the contribution of public participation is therefore determined and constrained by this interpretation.

Consequently, this model of planning receives endorsement of developer-orientated politicians, who favor the market approach to planning. Their view of public participation is that it should not be allowed to delay development. There is considerable political support at all levels for this approach to planning. It is seen to “get the job done”. The impact of this planning approach was questioned in the advocacy planning movement of the 1960s.

Advocacy planning model

The civil rights campaigns and the community action movement of the 1960s led to growing community awareness of distributional consequences of public action and intervention activities like planning (Cullingworth 1984; Hudspeth 1982). A new model of advocacy planning emerged, which was aimed at promoting a redistributive and participatory approach to planning (Davidoff 1965). This could be described as a modified liberal-democratic approach to public participation (Kravitz 1970). The basic rules remained the same, but attempts were made through the activities of community-

based advocacy planners, to enable low-income communities to participate more effectively in the decision-making processes that affected their neighborhoods. Public participation was a fundamental element of advocacy planning. The role of the planner was seen not as a neutral arbitrator, but as a committed and politically active community advocate.

Advocacy planning was soon challenged by other radicals for being cooptive. It was seen as a useful mechanism for allowing the poor to participate, but not in a manner that improved their situation (Piven 1970; Kravitz 1968; Goodman 1971). According to Piven (1970), although the advocacy planners left government institutions to serve the people whose voices were ignored, the government still had the final say in the allocation of resources. Moreover, the pluralistic assumptions underlying advocacy planning resulted in the power structure remaining unchallenged. Advocacy planning, therefore, operated within the existing institutional frameworks and power structures.

Kravitz (1968) made the point that advocacy planning was functional to the system. The poor and the disadvantaged were allowed to “blow off steam”, rather than develop into a potential threat to the existing institutional order (Bachrach and Baratz 1970). Moreover, advocacy planning served to create the impression that something radical was indeed happening. In reality, the system remained unchanged. Advocacy planning simply resulted in community groups competing against each other for increasingly scarce resources. Those groups who won concessions with the help of advocacy planners usually did so at the expense of other, less well organized groups (Goodman 1971).

It is not clear, then, whose end advocacy planning serves. At least some community groups are helped to participate more effectively in planning processes, but it is clear that this was achieved at some cost. Kravitz (1968) and Goodman (1971) argued that advocacy planning simply allowed the poor and disadvantaged to participate in their own poverty and thereby becoming more accepting of it.

An important point to make is that being given the opportunity to participate does not necessarily ensure that any subsequent input will be acted upon. It is possible to have the appearance of a participatory system without the resulting participation being allowed to impact the outcomes of the planning process. While the advocacy planning model has been criticized for being cooptive, at least it succeeded in making the political nature of planning much more explicit. The radical planning model sees its task as following on from this point:

The advocate began the politicization, or normatization of planning; the radical seeks to carry this process to its logical conclusion. He seeks to take planning beyond advocacy and pluralism, and to take American democracy beyond representation to total involvement – to active, human participation that is creative, innovative, and effective. (Kravitz 1968, 39)

Radical planning model

The radical planning model views planning as a political and redistributive mechanism. Planning is seen as contributing toward social change and the creation of a more equitable society. Public participation is therefore seen to have a completely different role than in either of the other two models. It is seen as a mechanism for low-income communities to improve the quality of their lives and for local communities generally to gain more effective control over decision-making processes. It is a move in

the direction of community power. This model supports the introduction of institutional and administrative change that enables this to happen; for example, the introduction of decentralized decision-making structures.

There is a substantial amount of literature documenting the wealth of human activity that is developing alternative ways of organizing society in order to facilitate greater degrees of community control. Boyte (1980) looked optimistically at the potential for new forms of organizing society based on self-reliance and non-market principles. Bouchier (1987) introduced the concept of 'radical citizenship', which he developed into a theory of action. He wrote about thousands of small groups that were "burning with energy and optimism about rebuilding American society one step at a time through local action" (Bouchier 1987, 109). Morris (1975, 1982) developed the concepts of neighborhood power, self-reliant cities, and the potential for new city states. Doughton referred to the importance and potential of community power that reduces both state dependency and the dominance of market principles and promotes the principles of community and self-government:

The only alternative consonant with our fabric of liberty lies in the renewal and revitalization of our links to one another among the people who are the community: not through processes of negative reinforcement – the huddling of those drawn together by fear and frustration – but through new and positive organizational forms able to employ expertise without being used by it, able to handle human scale, forms and systems linking people in capacity and therefore in self-energizing power. (Doughton 1976, 14)

Also, there is burgeoning literature on citizenship and radical democracy that point in the direction of more free, democratic, and egalitarian societies (e.g., Laclau and Mouffe 1985).

Conclusion

From this review of three paradigms regarding public participation in urban planning, the research indicates that citizen involvement in planning has undergone significant change as the public has demanded a greater role in determining the state of their communities. Familiarity with the rational comprehensive, advocacy, and radical planning models provides a framework within which to evaluate the Triangle Park negotiation process.

CHAPTER 4

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION

Advocacy and radical planners argue the case for public participation in planning, but for public participation to be meaningful it must be effective. Effective public participation is essentially about the power to influence the outcomes of planning processes in such a way that community priorities prevail. There are a number of key components or characteristics that must be present in a public participation process for such an approach to work. Minnery (1985) and Klein (1990) suggest that an effective planning process must be open to all groups who wish to participate and that the process is efficient. Julian and Reischle (1997) claim that citizens must have the power to affect the outcome of the planning process in order for it to be an effective participatory process.

Public participation processes must allow all groups not merely to participate, but participate on an equal basis. In other words, the participation process must be fair and open. Public participation is the mechanism by which citizens and community groups can access the decision-making process and make their voices heard. It is a fundamental element of democratic decision-making (Pateman 1970). Public participation can stimulate local democracy, encourage an active citizenry, and contribute to an inclusive city (Fagence 1977).

The equity characteristic is clearly evident in the advocacy and radical planning models. These models explicitly acknowledge the political nature of the planning process and seek to positively discriminate in favor of the most disadvantaged groups in the community. These models further recognize that, within public participation processes, some groups in the community have greater power and access to resources than do others. There is no explicit equity agenda in the rational comprehensive model of public participation. Public participation is seen in very pluralistic terms, with everyone having some degree of power and influence. This model serves to maintain the existing power structure. In the advocacy model, the equity agenda is clearly present in that the political nature of planning is explicitly identified, and there is an attempt to discriminate in favor of the poor and the marginalized. The problem is that this did not ultimately challenge the existing power structures. In the radical planning model, planning is seen as a political mechanism and as a way of contributing positively to the creation of a more equitable society. Krumholz and Forester's (1990) equity planning concept is a clear expression of this approach.

Public participation processes must be efficient, well organized, and have a defined timescale. They must have a clear program of how the process is organized and contain indications as to what stage the public process has reached (Klein 1990). The process must also make use of all available information. Public participation can be a useful tool for planners to gather considerable information that can aid the decision-making process about potential plans and projects. Full and active public participation can bring information and data to the table that otherwise might be missed. Advocates of equity planning, for example, saw equity planning as a mechanism for efficient,

professional planning because it was required to get all available information into the decision-making process.

There is often an argument made against public participation that it is time consuming and delays implementation, which makes the process less efficient. Critics of public participation suggest that citizen participation may be trying to superimpose a participatory system on a representative system, which leads to inefficiency and confusion (Kweit and Kweit 1981).

The outcome must also in some way relate to the effort put in. Developers and community groups do not have an endless supply of energy or resources, and they cannot sustain a long and drawn out participation process (Klein 1990). From a community perspective there is a danger that lengthy public processes will result in the attrition of interest and attendance at meetings.

The process must also enable citizens and community groups to impact the outcomes of public participation processes. This suggests some level of community power. It means that participating in the planning process must be seen to make a difference. The outcome of the planning process must clearly reflect the public input received. The planning process, in short, must be responsive (Logan 1982). Individuals and community groups are not going to participate in a process they do not believe they can influence, or where they feel that the outcomes may be predetermined. If we are looking specifically at whether citizens and community groups impacted by the Triangle Park development were able to influence the decision making process, we can evaluate the outcome in terms of whether their expressed needs and concerns (e.g., underground parking, public green space) were included in the final development plan. If they are

included, this would suggest that they had some power and influence over the outcome. If they are not included, then this would suggest that they had little influence or power and that the participation process was ineffective. The public will soon lose confidence in a process that does not seem to take the points they have raised into consideration or if they are seen to be ignored. People must have some sense of efficacy in the planning process if they are going to participate. In democratic theory, a whole body of work demonstrates the link between a sense of political efficacy and political participation (e.g., Pateman 1970). In this sense public participation is no different.

Efficacy is a key component of a democratic and effective public participation process. This characteristic is explicit in the radical planning model, where public participation is seen as a mechanism to bring about social change and as a potential means of enabling local communities to gain much more effective control over themselves. The concept of popular planning is based on the premise that local communities have the ability and desire to plan for themselves. Popular planning demonstrates the high degree of efficacy that is possible in a participatory planning framework and is a clear expression of the potential of community power.

Public power to effect change is not so explicit in the rational comprehensive or advocacy models. The top-down, apolitical nature of the rational comprehensive approach in many ways mitigates against the potential for local communities to effect change (Wolfe 1989). Public participation here is usually carried out within well defined parameters on an agenda that is usually set by other actors in the process (developers, politicians, and/or planners) rather than the community members themselves.

Consequently, there is often little room for any significant community influence in this model.

The advocacy model potentially offers local communities more chance of impacting the outcomes of planning processes, but again, this tends to be well within defined limits. Advocate planners work with communities to enable them to have greater influence, but generally, the context is one in which this influence could be easily marginalized. Moreover, as noted previously, advocacy planning often pits one community group against another to compete for resources or influence, rather than serving to unite groups that potentially could have resulted in more influence and resources.

Finally, there is the interesting question of potential trade-offs between these characteristics. Do we, for example, have to sacrifice efficiency in pursuit of equity? This is a difficult question to answer. There will inevitably be some give and take between the various elements, but researchers argue that all these components must be present in any public participation process if it is to be judged effective from a community perspective.

Conclusion

Planning theory informs planning practice and has a significant influence on the nature and form of public participation. The review of the planning theory literature undertaken here suggests that it is possible to distill out certain characteristics that can be used as an indication of effective public participation from a community perspective. These characteristics are equity, efficiency and public power. The application of these

characteristics to the case study material will help us to address the question of the effectiveness of public participation in the Triangle Park planning process.

The review also suggests that in modern-day planning, the rational comprehensive model remains dominant, but this has some serious shortcoming in terms of fulfilling the identified characteristics. The rational comprehensive planning model supports a planning practice that tends to be top-down, hierarchical, technical, and apolitical. The dominant form that participation takes within this context is consultation, which affords citizens little opportunity to effect the outcomes of planning processes.

CHAPTER 5

HISTORY OF THE TRIANGLE

In 1985, the Texas Legislature created the Asset Management Division of the Texas General Land Office as a result of Senate Bill 43. The legislation directed the division to “review the real property not being used or being substantially underused and make recommendations to the commissioner regarding the use of the property...” Senate Bill 43 (SB43) was pursued in an attempt to utilize existing state property as a possible source of revenue as a result of budgetary constraints in the 1980s. The legislation directed the Asset Management Division to “review the real property inventory of each state agency not less than every four years...”. The State Legislature recognized the revenue potential of the state’s land holdings and mandated that agencies develop plans for underutilized parcels.

The triangular piece of land that is currently the subject of heated debate is a twenty-seven-acre parcel of predominantly undeveloped, prime Central Austin real estate bordered by 45th Street, Lamar Boulevard and Guadalupe Street (Figure 5). The majority of the land in question has never been developed; it was utilized for cattle grazing for the state dairy farm in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with parcels of the land cultivated by residents of the Texas Mental Health and Mental Retardation facility. While the land has been fallow for at least half a century, it remains in the possession of the state. At the current time, the Triangle collects excess runoff during storm events and

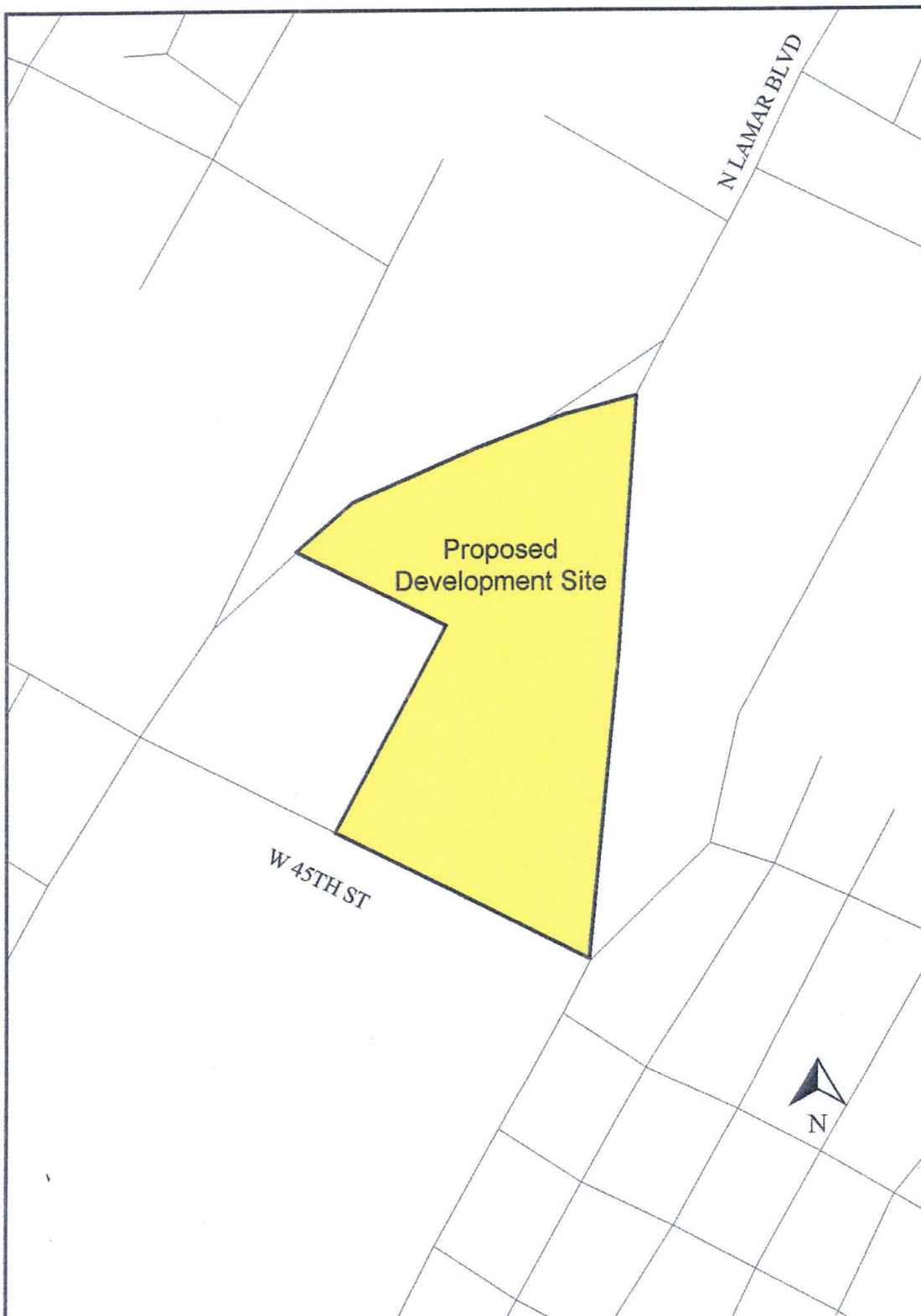


Figure 5. Triangle Park Tract.
Source: Map produced by the author.

plays a vital role in protecting a nearby neighborhood from flooding. The entire parcel encompasses 27.06 acres including, 5.0 acres for future state use (Figure 6).

The General Land Office (GLO) listed portions of the twenty-seven acre tract in question as underutilized in the State Agency Property Recommended Transaction Report to the Governor thus making it eligible for development under SB 43. In 1995, the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation (TDMHMR) agency issued the first request for bid proposals for the development of the Triangle property. The GLO and TDMHMR Boards decided that the best use of the property was to lease it for commercial development based on the success of another commercial lease on state-owned property, known as Central Park in Austin. The Central Park development planning process set a precedent for the Triangle Park site as it also received a substantial amount of public input. Unfortunately for TDMHMR, the public's role in the planning process was not without difficulty and the agency was eager to develop a more effective process for the Triangle development.

The Central Park development was the first piece of TDMHMR land to be leased for private development. According to Steve Craddock, Director of TDMHMR Asset Management Division, the agency was extremely concerned about the potential impact of Central Park on the surrounding neighborhoods (Craddock 1998). TDMHMR is committed to creating an effective method to receive public input on the development of state property and would like to improve upon the participatory process as a result of the controversial public input in both the Central Park and Triangle developments.

There was substantial citizen involvement in the design of the development guidelines for Central Park, but conflicts arose regarding industry standards. The

The Triangle Site
(Including 5.0 acres Future State Use and .83 acre Option Area)

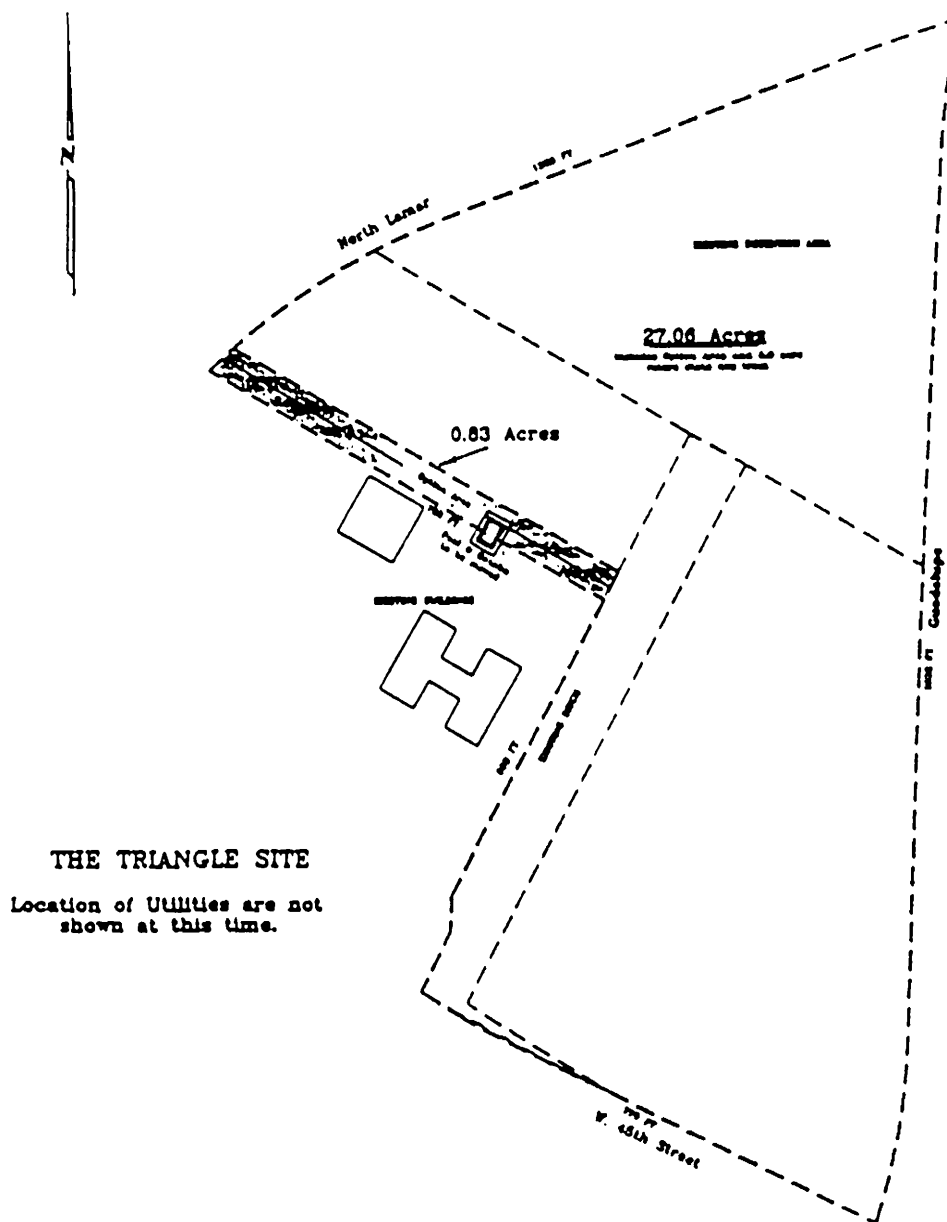


Figure 6: The Triangle development site

Source: Texas General Land Office solicitation of bids

developer of the Central Park property was not involved in discussions with the citizens and, as a result, did not agree with the citizen recommendations and claimed they were not financially feasible. Despite months of citizen input, a development was built that did not incorporate many of the citizen recommendations (Pennington 1998).

One complaint of the negotiation process was that the developer was not included in direct discussions with the citizens. As a result of the disappointing public input process in the Central Park negotiations, TDMHMR instituted changes in the Triangle neighborhood involvement process. Instead of including citizens in the beginning of the process (i.e., when creating the development guidelines for the Triangle), TDMHMR staff elected to require the developer to meet with the public in order to receive public input after the bid was selected (Craddock 1998). While this decision was made with the best intentions, it provided for unexpected difficulties in the negotiations with neighborhood representatives. Not only did the Central Park development result in a change in the Triangle negotiation process, it also resulted in the wary involvement of some of the neighborhood representatives since there was the perception that they had already been disappointed by TDMHMR in the past (Pennington 1998).

TDMHMR solicited bids for the development of the Triangle in October of 1995. The request for bids outlines the expectations of the potential developer and also provides essential information about the development process and the property itself. The bid document states that the Triangle property will be leased for fifty years, with the state receiving compensation in the form of prepaid base rent and then percentage rent. The bid document outlines permitted uses for the property and clearly states that the land was not zoned for development by the city of Austin. The bid document also states that the

developer must “provide evidence of neighborhood input in the development planning process” (Texas GLO 1996). It is the ambiguous language of the requirement for citizen input that created what some claim was a seriously flawed procedure for obtaining public participation in the planning effort.

As a result of the Central Park negotiation process, where many citizens felt betrayed by the TDMHMR Asset Management Division, members of the community were very sensitive to the potential development on the Triangle site. As a result of this heightened awareness and the experience gained from the Central Park planning negotiations, members of the Hyde Park neighborhood association kept a watchful eye on the TDMHMR/GLO bid process for the Triangle. Also as a result of the Central Park experience, TDMHMR elected not to have the public involved in the initial stages of the bid process, but rather wanted to wait until a developer was selected before encouraging the public to become involved.

Cecil Pennington, a resident of the Hyde Park neighborhood and a prominent urban planner, was wary of waiting until a developer was selected before making the neighborhood’s desires known. The Hyde Park Neighborhood Association drafted a list of desires titled the Neighborhood Compatibility Standards (Appendix 2). In it, almost every conceivable aspect of the preferred development attributes is listed, from the location of pedestrian walkways to the routes of the delivery trucks.

In addition to the historical precedent set by the Central Park negotiation process, there were other inherent potential points of contention existing in the Triangle development process before the citizens were even asked to come to the table. The TDMHMR was charged with the task of developing the twenty-two acres in an attempt to

procure funds for the agency's programs and services. The goal of the agency, and of the private developer is, to put it bluntly, to make as much money as possible. While the economic concerns of TDMHMR and the private developer is an unavoidable aspect of the development process, the quest for financial gain does not necessarily allow for the option of accommodating a community vision for the same property.

In June of 1996, Cencor Realty won the bid and was granted the authority to develop the Triangle into a shopping center. Cencor Realty had procured Randall's Food Store and JPI/Guadalupe, Inc., an apartment developer, as anchors in the original bid proposal. JPI, Inc., rescinded its involvement after Cencor was selected and Act III Cinemas signed on as the new anchor. This fact is relevant to the discussion on public involvement in the development process as many neighbors preferred the residential element of the original bid proposal. Another point of contention with Cencor's plan was the potential for "yet another grocery store" in the neighborhood. Many neighbors took issue with presence of the Randall's Grocery in the bid proposal for two reasons: (1) some citizens believed that there was no need for another grocery store in this area, and (2) the "big box" aspect of the Randall's stores limited the type of architectural design of the building.

Due to the design of the bid process, Cencor Realty was required to submit a preliminary site concept plan for the Triangle to the GLO and TDMHMR (Figure 7). Tom Terkel of Cencor Realty presented the initial concept plan to the neighborhood representatives in September of 1996 as required by the TDMHMR. Terkel met with neighborhood representatives from the surrounding neighborhoods on an approximately

bi-weekly basis from September 1996 to February 1997. It was during these regular meetings that the goals of neighborhood representatives became apparent.

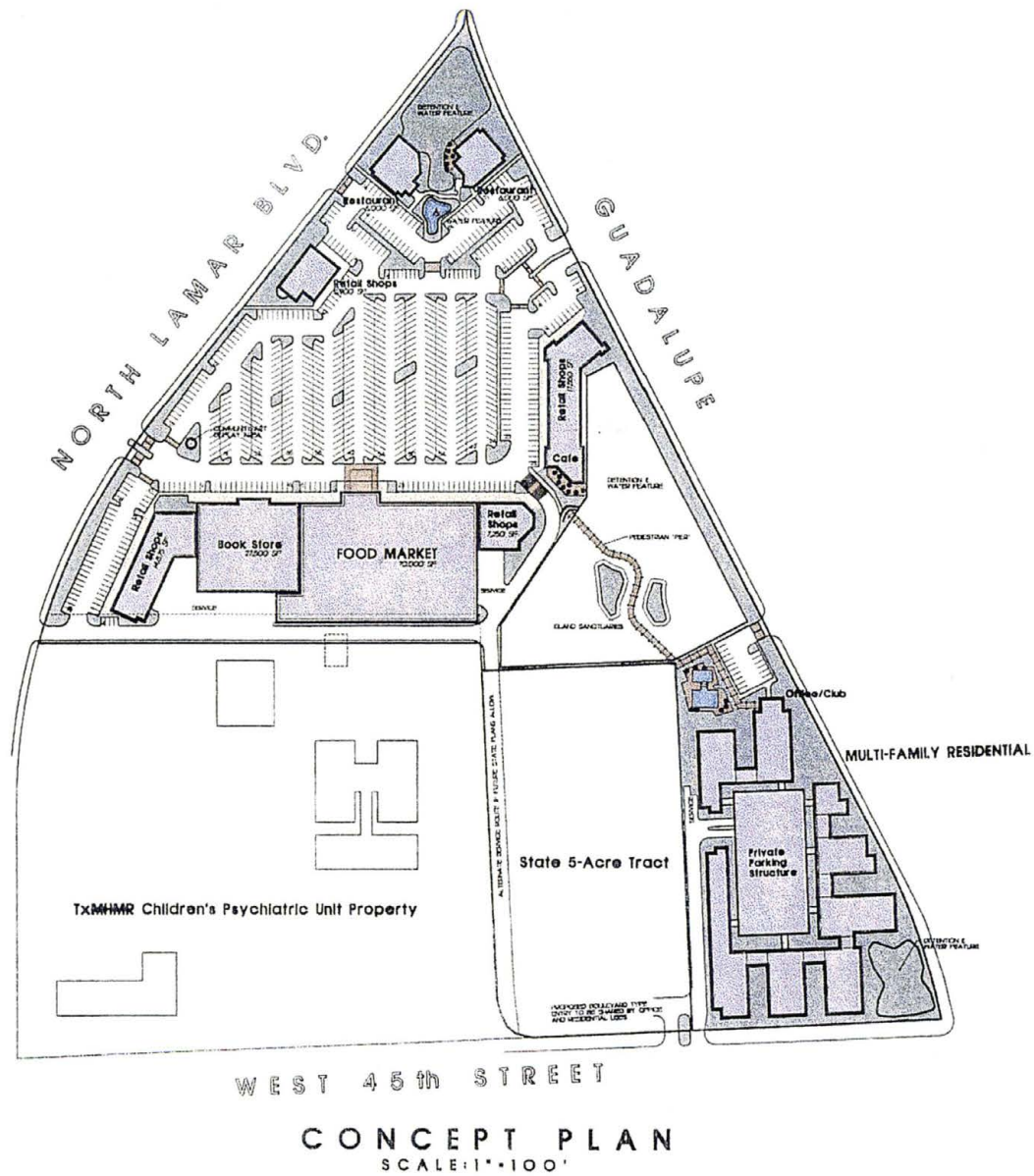


Figure 7. Cencor concept plan for the Triangle site

Source: Cencor bid proposal

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a brief overview of the history of the Triangle parcel and the public debate over the development. This chapter also reviewed the TDMHMR bid process and highlighted critical elements of the bid proposal, including the role of the public in the planning process. The neighbors surrounding the Triangle are familiar with urban planning, due in part to the Central Park development, and as a result came to the neighborhood meetings with a clear agenda. A comparison of the Neighborhood Community Standards to Cencor's original site plan proposal demonstrates the philosophical differences between the community's goals and Cencor's goals for the same tract of land.

CHAPTER 6

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE TRIANGLE PLANNING PROCESS

The primary goal of most established neighborhood associations is to preserve the existing character of their neighborhoods. Residents often elect to live in a specific neighborhood often based on an intangible quality of the neighborhood. It is not unusual that residents would oppose a development that they perceive as a threat to the neighborhood's character. Some residents oppose all change, no matter the type, while others support change that has the potential to enhance or benefit the neighborhood. Because of the relatively dense residential nature of the surrounding neighborhoods, the development of the Triangle property as a "suburban" shopping center stood to affect the character of the surrounding community in a variety of ways, most of which were negative in the views of the local citizens. For this reason, the goal of protecting the neighborhood character was common to all of the neighborhoods involved in the project.

The complaints that the proposed development was too "suburban" referred to a strong belief held by the neighborhood representatives that the land in question was too precious to waste on an "unimaginative strip-mall development" (Pennington 1998). Neighborhood representatives strongly believed that the Triangle should be the site of a true New Urban development. According to the New Urbanism website, the goal of the movement is to "reintegrate the components of modern life – housing, workplace, shopping and recreation – into compact, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use neighborhoods

linked by transit and set in a larger regional open space framework”. The major principles of New Urbanism include compact, walkable neighborhoods with clearly defined centers and edges. The center should include a public space, such as a square or a green, and the development should include public buildings such as a library, church or community center, a transit stop, and retail businesses. The philosophical tenets of New Urbanism include the restoration of existing centers and towns within coherent metropolitan regions, the reconfiguration of sprawling suburbs into communities of real neighborhoods, the conservation of natural environments, and the preservation of our built legacy (Center for New Urbanism 1998).

Unfortunately for the neighborhood representatives, Cencor Realty had never developed a property using New Urbanist techniques; in fact, Tom Terkel was not at all familiar with the tenets of New Urbanism before the Triangle controversy (Terkel 1998). As a result, most of the requested changes in Cencor’s initial site plan centered on this issue. One major complaint of the development process as a whole was that TDMHMR was aware of the neighborhood’s desires for this type of development (as a result of Central Park and also of the Community Compatibility Standards), yet it selected a developer with no prior knowledge of New Urbanism.

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development should include public buildings such as a library, church or community center, a transit stop, and retail businesses.

While Cencor's initial site plan was deemed a "mixed-use development", as requested by TDMHMR, and initially included a combination of retail and residential units, it was not necessarily a New Urban development. Much of the neighborhood input process centered on this fact. Although Terkel listened to the public's concerns and attempted to include many of the neighbor's suggestions in subsequent site plans, many found the changes inadequate. According to one neighbor, "you just can't fit a square peg into a round hole" (Thomas 1998). In other words, it is impossible to turn a traditional suburban development into an innovative New Urban design.

The neighborhoods were involved in the planning process because TDMHMR stipulated public input as part of the bid process. The strength of that input was, however, left up to the developer. Terkel recognized that neighborhood support would benefit the project, and he initiated the neighborhood input process with the goal of working towards a consensus on a site plan.

Terkel's neighborhood input process was a significant source of dissatisfaction for many neighborhood representatives and residents. The neighborhoods' second common goal was the desire for legitimate, substantive input into the planning of the development. Without the ability for legitimate input, the neighborhoods had no way of achieving their primary goal of protecting the existing neighborhood character. Addressing traffic concerns was also a major goal of the neighborhood representatives, along with compatibility of scale and design, pedestrian access and friendliness, and public greenspace.

Site design aspects of the development were critical issues for the neighborhood representatives. One site design that representatives suggested concerned the orientation of the buildings. Residents requested that the buildings front the major streets as opposed to interior parking lots. This, combined with street trees and wide sidewalks, would ensure a pleasant streetscape. The site design principle that was most important to the neighborhoods was pedestrian accessibility and friendliness. This aspect was of special concern to the neighborhoods that border the project because residents wanted to be able to walk easily to the development. Pedestrian amenities were important because the character of the project was seen as being dangerously suburban. Several neighborhood representatives voiced concern over the size of the grocery store (72,000 square feet) and the large surface parking lot. The large scale of the project was dictated by the grocery and theater buildings, and many neighborhood representatives worried that these structures would be incompatible with the scale of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Drainage was another important factor in the Triangle development. The 27-acre site in its current condition acts as a detention pond for the state office complex buildings to the north. According to an analysis of drainage by a consultant, the capacity of the pond is approximately 9 acre-feet. Engineers reported that the drainage pipe at 45th and Guadalupe was severely undersized. The same report states that the North University neighborhood experienced frequent flooding due to this lack of capacity in the existing stormwater drainage.

The Triangle site is currently open space, with a few trees scattered throughout the interior and an existing treeline along Guadalupe. The issue of greenspace gained prominence with the establishment of the Neighbors of Triangle Park (NTP) group in

February of 1997. Sabrina Burmeister founded the group after learning of the proposed development through an article in the *Austin Chronicle* on February 20th. The NTP's goal was to stop the development from happening, and the group immediately began producing and distributing fliers describing the planned "strip-mall" and the potential negative impacts of the project. The NTP encouraged neighbors to gather at the site on Friday afternoons to show that the open space was being used as a park. The group held general informational meetings approximately once a month, and they organized a "Picnic at Triangle Park" event with more than 100 people in attendance. While the goals of NTP were very much aligned with the changes requested by the neighborhood representatives, members of NTP felt as if the neighborhood representatives had not gained significant changes in the site plan and therefore should not offer public approval of the development. At the same time, some members of the neighborhood representative group felt that Tom Terkel and Cencor had put forth a good-faith effort in an attempt to accommodate specific public concerns. The NTP felt that it was necessary to put more pressure on local politicians to intervene in the flawed planning process. Members of the often controversial NTP publicly stated that it was their intention to preserve the Triangle, in its entirety, as public greenspace.

Existing greenspace in an urban environment is always difficult to give up, and many of the neighborhood representatives regretted the imminent loss of the Triangle's landscape. However, a majority of the neighborhood representatives felt that the state must have income from the site. They did not believe TDMHMR would leave the land idle, much less spend money to develop it as a park. Many residents did not think the

property was even suitable for a park due to the heavy traffic on the major traffic arteries bordering the land.

The neighborhoods had numerous concerns regarding the Triangle project, all of which were brought up in the meetings between Cencor and the neighborhood representatives. Throughout the neighborhood input process, as the neighborhoods' concerns were voiced, Terkel responded by looking into various options. The site plan was adapted multiple times due to requests or issues raised by the representatives. Terkel hired consultants and used his own staff to research solutions to the citizens' concerns.

As the meetings continued and the public input process progressed, the question of what was binding versus advisory in the Triangle development process became increasingly important. Many issues were outside Terkel's control, such as the proposed solutions to traffic concerns. Road improvements are under the control of the City of Austin, not Tom Terkel or the state. The neighborhood group could not assume that just because Terkel wanted the same solutions as the neighborhoods, they would actually happen. While some citizens doubted the sincerity of Terkel's wishes, others believed that he shared many of the same concerns as the neighborhood group but was unable to implement many of the requests because they were out of his control.

The neighborhoods were all stakeholders in the Triangle project, and they were allowed input into the planning of the project because the state required it. However, the state did not say the developer must listen to specific concerns or make definite assurances in any way that certain agreements with the neighborhoods will be carried out. From the neighborhood perspective an important question for the Triangle project is what, if anything, is binding in the negotiations with Cencor and the state?

The answer was, very little. The state's first priority for the Triangle property is to generate revenue, not to build a project pleasing to the surrounding community. This is not to say that the State did not want to please the community, but if forced to choose, the State would select the option that was in its own best interest or in the interest of the developer before selecting the option that best suited the neighborhoods. The only true power of the neighborhoods rested in their ability to present a unified front on areas of concern and to broadcast these concerns through the media to the general public, the Austin City Council, and the TDMHMR Board.

The neighbors speak out

After meeting with neighborhood representatives for months and altering the original site plan, Terkel submitted the proposed plan to the City of Austin Planning Commission for a zoning review. Terkel's goal was to be able to include community support for the plan as part of the document, but as a result of involvement of the extremely vocal Neighbors of Triangle Park (NTP), complete neighborhood approval was now out of the question. NTP wanted to stall Cencor's request for zoning change while they pursued other community options because once the plan was submitted to the Austin Planning Commission, a legislative time-clock started ticking. Once the request for zoning was submitted, the Austin City Council had six months to review and vote on the request. If a vote was not taken in the time allotted, a Special Board of Review would convene and make the ultimate decision for the city.

Members of NTP rallied citizen opposition to the plan by distributing flyers in the local community and collecting signatures of those neighbors who did not want to see

Cencor's development constructed on the Triangle site. While a few NTP members were pounding the pavement, others were meeting with City Council member Beverly Griffith and her staff discussing possible solutions to what appeared to be an impasse. Beverly Griffith suggested the possibility of organizing a design charrette where community members would have an opportunity to suggest alternative designs and/or uses for the Triangle. A charrette is a relatively short, intense planning process designed to create an environment conducive to brainstorming. The most effective approach for a charrette is to include all major stakeholders at the table, with no restrictions on design possibilities. It is an opportunity to create limitless design suggestions and also an opportunity to solicit concerns and priorities.

Somewhat surprisingly, Cencor agreed to a charrette on the condition that they were not required to sit at the proverbial table. A charrette was organized, and a design firm based in Florida was hired to run the event. The charrette was advertised as an opportunity for all interested citizens to have an opportunity to make their opinions on the Triangle development known. More than 100 members of the community committed over two days during November 1997 to the design charrette. Tom Terkel, members of GLO, TDMHMR, and the City of Austin were all present, but unfortunately they were not willing to sit at the table with the public. They were merely available to answer questions. As a result of the incomplete commitment from all of the stakeholders to a true charrette, many citizens claimed that the weekend was more of a charade than a charrette. After all, Cencor had already submitted their "new and improved" proposed site plan (Figure 8) to the Planning Commission before the charrette even took place.

After the charette, the NTP published a community statement, which included the following terms:

- The community will not accept a conventional retail strip mall.
- If development is to occur, we will only accept the creation of a sustainable community that preserves as much greenspace as possible.
- Many support the preservation of the Triangle as greenspace, and we believe that an option for no development or a less intense development should be explored further
- Community support for a development hinges on the simultaneous implementation of transit and transportation improvements.
- The State of Texas must give some decision-making power to the City of Austin, respecting a municipality's right to plan its future, and to the central Austin community as neighbors of the development, taxpayers, and citizens of Texas.

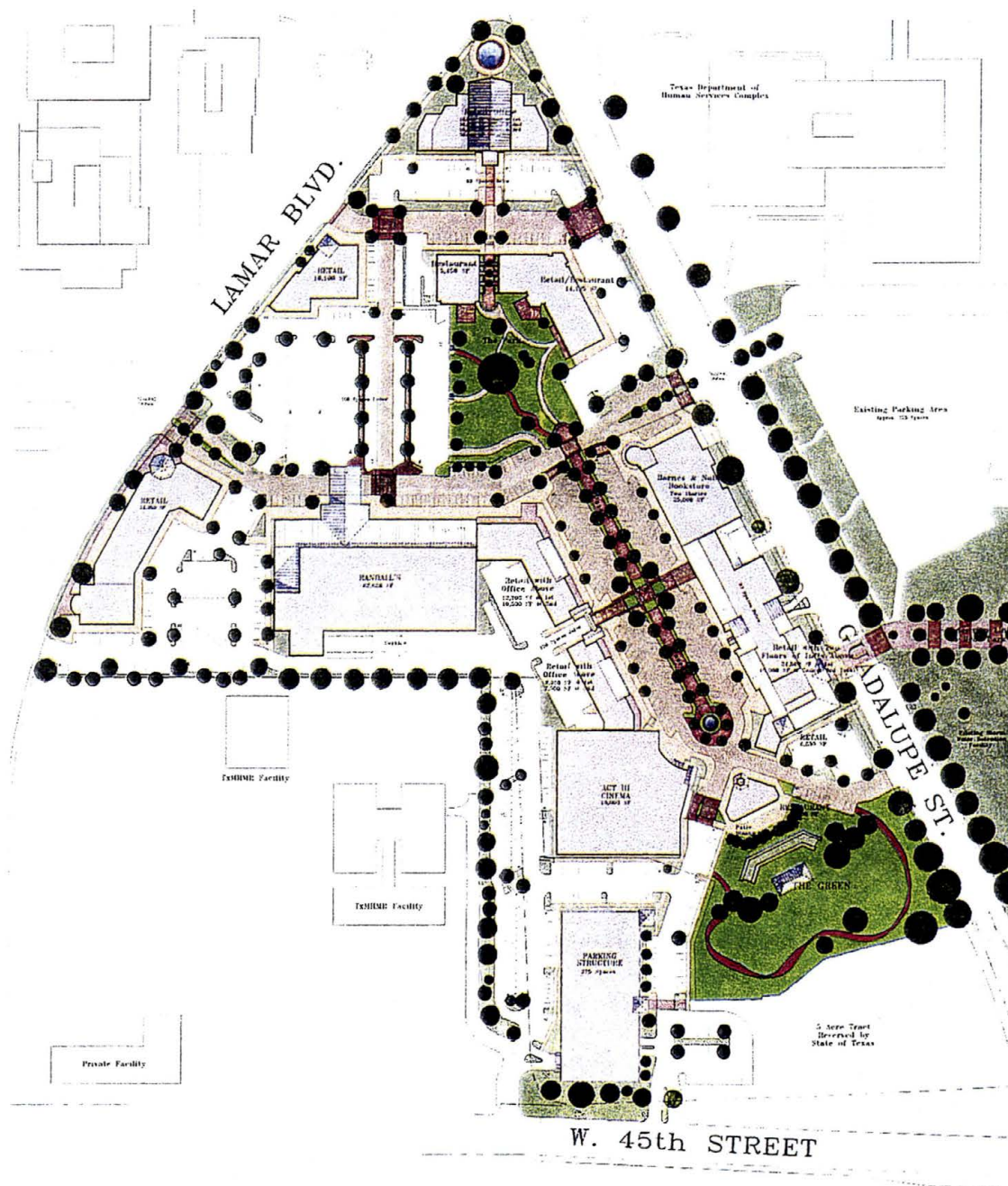


Figure 8. Revised Triangle site plan

Source: Cencor Realty, Inc.

The new and improved planning process

Once it was realized that the charette did not have the expected impact on the Triangle site plan, the NTP focused its attention on lobbying the Planning Commission to recommend the denial of Cencor's zoning request. An organized public campaign of letter writing, press releases, petitions, and meetings with Planning Commission and City Council members was implemented. In April of 1998, the Planning Commission unanimously voted to recommend a denial for the zoning request. The recommendation then went to the Austin City Council, where another unanimous vote to deny zoning was passed, just one week shy of the six-month time limit on a the decision.

As a result of the city's decision to deny zoning to Cencor's development proposal for the state property, a Special Board of Review was required to convene and decide the case.

The Special Board of Review consisted of: Texas Land Commissioner, Garry Mauro Travis County Judge Bill Aleshire, Austin Mayor Kirk Watson, Texas Mental Health and Mental Retardation Board Chair Charles Cooper, School Land Board member William Warnick, and School Land Board member C. Louis Renaud.

Again, members of the NTP organized a sophisticated letter-writing campaign and even sent NTP delegates to personally meet with Review Board members to lobby for citizen rights. NTP continued to publicly denounce the token role of public participation in the planning process and demanded a more equitable solution to the debate. In July 1998, NTP received its wish. In a landmark decision, the Special Board of Review unanimously voted to deny zoning for the proposed Cencor development and granted an additional 90 days for a new negotiation process to take place.

The new planning process was spearheaded by Calthorpe and Associates, a nationally renowned New Urban design firm based in California, and funded by the General Land Office. Cencor's site plan was "scrapped" and the planning process started anew, this time with all of the stakeholders at the table, each with equal weight. The stakeholders included representatives of the General Land Office, City of Austin, Cencor Realty, Randall's grocery, TDMHMR, Post Realty (the residential developer), Barnes and Noble, and neighborhood delegates from the Community Advisory Group.

Calthorpe and Associates instituted an all-inclusive process designed to receive public input into the design of the development. A public workshop was held in August where surveys were distributed to all in attendance in an attempt to gain the full range of public desires for the Triangle. The design team also fielded questions and listened to the public's concerns. A community advisory group, also open to the public, met once a week. The weekly meetings were designed to provide ongoing public input into the process. Regular meeting between the major stakeholders always included representatives from the community advisory group.

As a result of the intense stakeholder negotiations, two alternative site plans were agreed upon (Figures 9 and 10). These two alternative site plans were presented to the community at large in a second workshop. Participants in Workshop II divided into small groups and modified the plans to reflect more accurately the group's goals for the site.

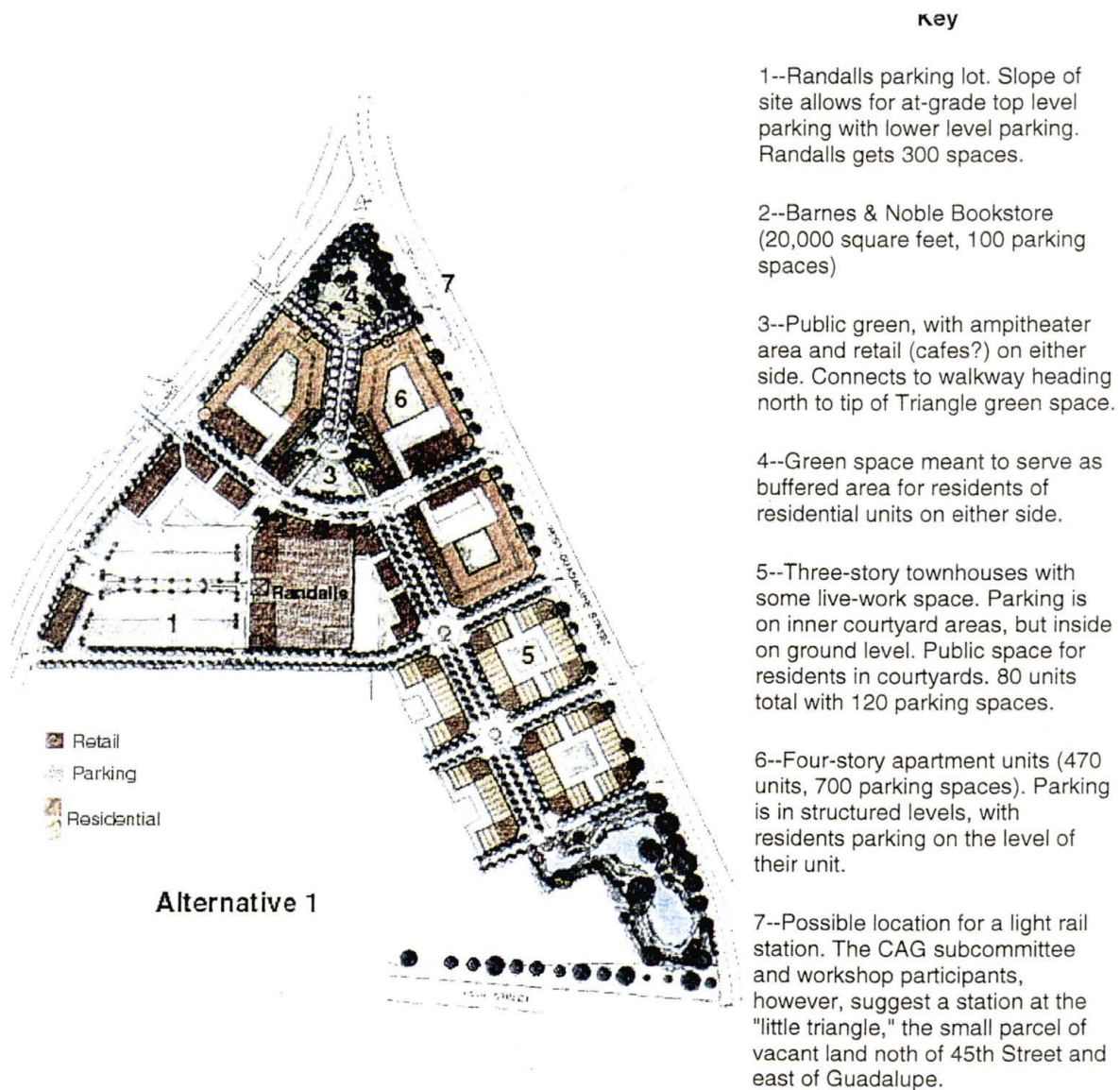


Figure 9. Alternative site plan 1

Source: Calthorpe and Associates

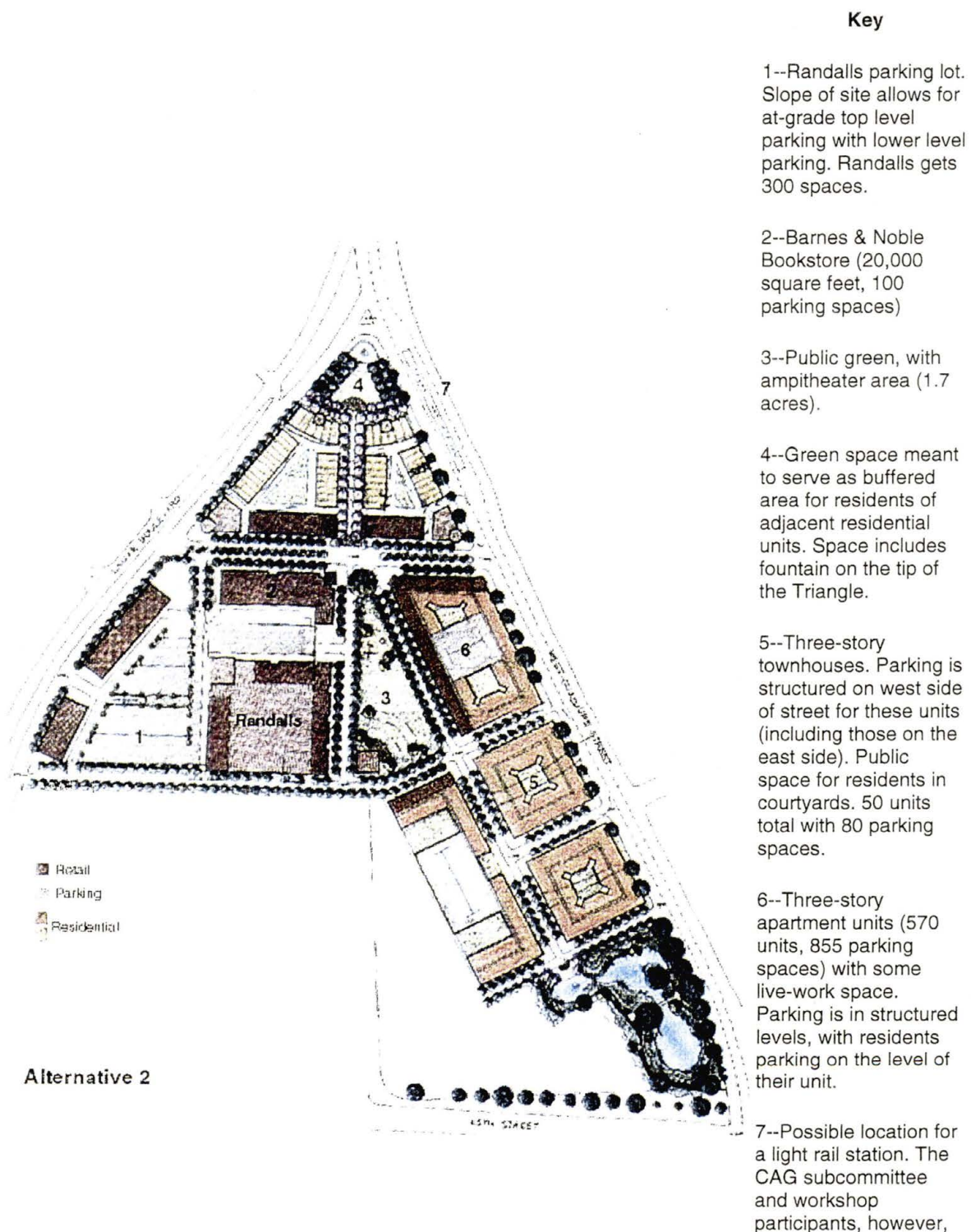


Figure 10. Alternative site plan 2

Source: Calthorpe and Associates

At Workshop II, neighborhood resident Dick Richardson was quoted as saying, “these plans are like filet mignon compared to the other plans we’ve seen which in comparison, were like the scrapings off the cow’s head for dog food” (Richardson 1998). Two weeks later, the final site plan, which incorporated community comments, was unveiled at Workshop III (Figure 11). In October of 1998, the Special Board of Review reconvened and unanimously voted to approve zoning for the new site plan, thus officially putting to rest the two-year battle over the Triangle site plan.

The new Triangle development site plan was hailed as a “showpiece for our community and for the state” (Watson 1998), and one member of the audience at the Special Board of Review stated, “given the very real constraints that we all faced, [this plan] is nothing short of miraculous” (Moffet 1998). Before the final vote was taken, former Land Commissioner Garry Mauro stated, “We could all have thought small and ended up losers” (Mauro 1998). Austin Mayor Kirk Watson said, “Austin is in the process of seizing a new identity and this project raises the bar in terms of developments for this city” (Watson 1998).

Travis County Commissioner Bill Aleshire, who went on record criticizing the initial role of public participation in the planning process, was pleased with the evolution of participatory process. At the last meeting of the Special Board of Review he stated, “This process ended well with substantive community involvement, perhaps it would have been better if it had begun that way. This last process serves as a good example to follow, with disciplined community involvement” (Aleshire 1998).

Approved Triangle Site Plan

Below is the site plan submitted by Calthorpe & Associates and approved by the State's Special Review Board on Oct. 12

One key missing element is the possibility of a small movie theater. About two-thirds or more of those attending the Sept. 24 workshop favored a theater defined as 10,000 sq. ft., 2 screens, 500 seats or less. The location is undecided. It could be located at the northeast corner of the townhomes, which would allow use of nighttime parking on the state office lots on the west side of Guadalupe.

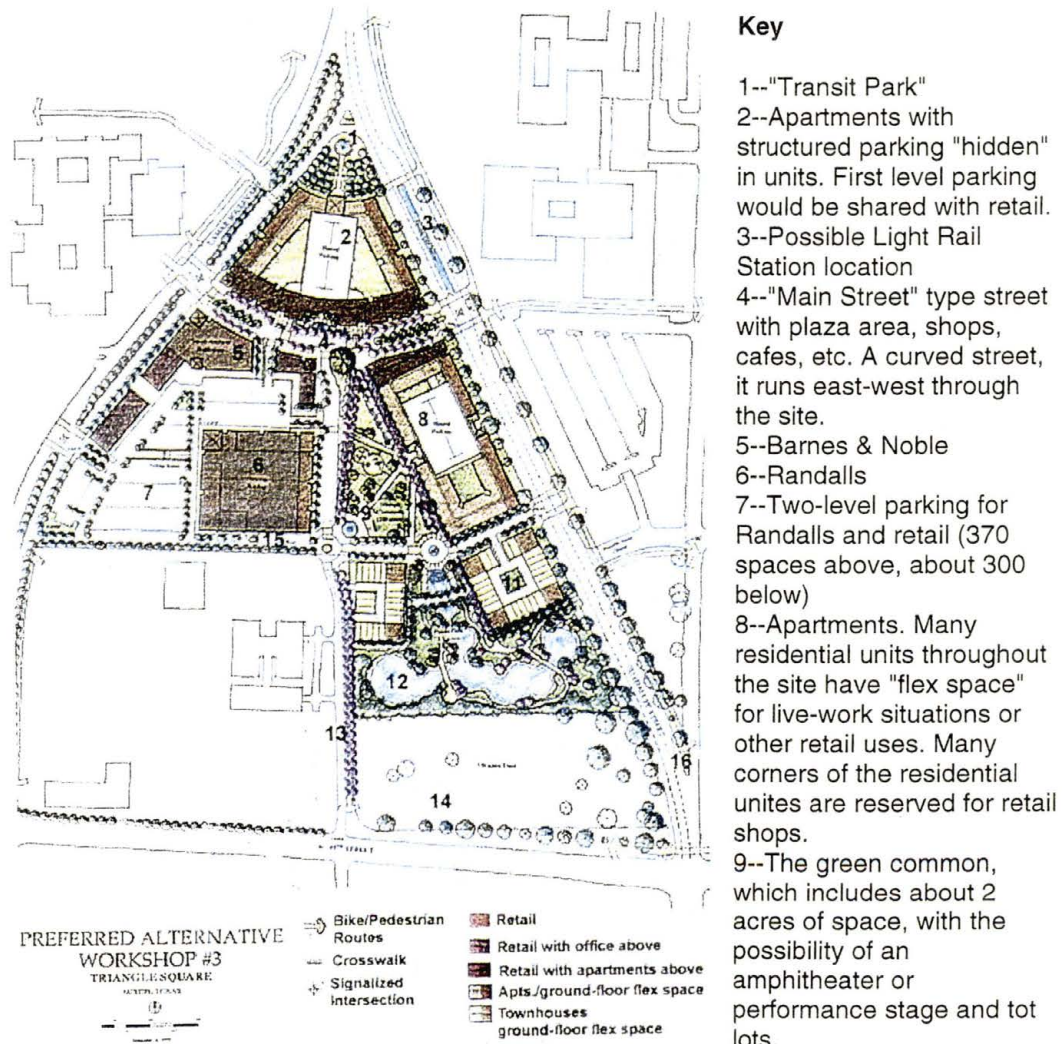


Figure 11. Approved Triangle site plan

Source: Calthorpe and Associates

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the evolution of the public input process in the Triangle Park negotiation process. What originally began as a few neighborhood representatives meeting with the developer following the advocacy planning model transformed into a process that included representatives from a neighborhood advisory group negotiating with other stakeholders on an equal level. As the controversy wore on, citizens demanded more input into the planning process, and as they were granted more power, the process shifted to the radical planning model. The final Triangle site plan differs from the original Cencor site plan as a direct result of neighborhood input.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

In *Space and Place*, Yi-Fu Tuan's (1977) classic investigation of people's connection to and experience of place, he explores the notion that our surroundings in some way define us. The neighborhood in which we live, an historic statue on the street corner, even a favorite armchair can all evoke an emotional reaction from the person whose daily experience includes these familiar landmarks of their life. The Triangle development site represented a community's control over what it perceives the neighborhood to be. The citizens who actively pursued legitimate input in the planning process shared a common vision of the potential development on the Triangle. Through perseverance and political activism, local citizens succeeded in including their vision in the design of a development that will eventually help define their neighborhood.

There is not yet a large body of research on the effect of citizen empowerment in the planning process. The Triangle controversy provides a strong case that citizens can actually increase their level of empowerment by the result of their actions. The process of developing the Triangle tract followed the traditional *rational comprehensive planning model* with the passage of Senate Bill 43. The legislative statute does not include provisions that would allow for public input in the development of state-owned property within existing neighborhoods. This approach to planning falls on the "informing" rung of Arnstein's ladder of participation representing the third –lowest level of citizen

empowerment. If the state agency in charge of developing the land followed the letter of the law, local citizens would merely be informed of the development slated for their neighborhood. In the case of the Triangle development, TDMHMR elected to expand the public's role in the planning process by encouraging input in the site design.

The actions of the TDMHMR to encourage public input into the process moved the decision-making process into the realm of the *advocacy planning model*. While citizens had a voice in the negotiations, they did not have power to institute change. Any changes to the site plan were doled out by the developer as he saw fit to do so. This process represented the "consultation" and "placation" rungs of Arnstein's ladder, which is a higher level of citizen involvement but still falls within the category of "token involvement". The developer's goal was to placate the neighbors so they, in turn, would endorse the development plan to the planning commission.

As the citizens pressed for more control over the design plan, the public participation process evolved from including token citizen involvement into a true partnership. As citizens became more vocal and demanded a more equitable position at the "planning table", their role was expanded. And, while it can be argued that the power differential between the citizens and the TDMHMR and Cencor representatives remained in the legislative statute, the public then went on to achieve a more powerful voice and influence through a sophisticated media campaign and by exerting political pressure on local politicians. As a result of this pressure, public representatives became equal partners in the planning process and sat at the proverbial planning table with representatives from the state, city, and the private developer. Thus, the public was able to transform the planning process into one that matches many of the criteria of the *radical*

planning model. The citizen's had the opportunity to officially state their concerns and the final, approved Triangle site plan includes many of the original citizen demands. The public's involvement in the design of the final site plan falls well within Arnstein's "citizen power" category. The citizens held a partnership role that could be classified as sitting on the "delegated power" rung, which falls just below absolute citizen control on Arnstein's ladder of participation.

In order for the planning process to truly follow the radical planning model, institutional change in favor of a more decentralized decision-making structure must be achieved. Calthorpe and Associates instituted a representative, decentralized decision-making process for the final Triangle site negotiations, but the true impact of the Triangle Park controversy is yet to be seen.

Citizen input in the design of public-private partnership developments on surplus state land is not required by law. As it currently stands, each time a parcel of land undergoes development, the role of local citizens in the planning process is under the control of the administrative state agency that controls the property. In the case of the Triangle, TDMHMR requested public input and as a result, it can be argued that a more innovative and responsive site plan was achieved. However, the public controversy could easily convince other state agencies to avoid soliciting public comment on the planning process.

The debate over the Triangle development raged for over two years and required substantial resources to maintain. The citizens were required to invest an inordinate amount of time and financial resources to gain equal power in the development design process. In fact, it can be argued that the lack of efficient planning affected the equitable

nature of the process. Only those citizens who were in the position to commit the time, energy and funds were able to make their voices heard. In reality, this was a small percentage of the concerned public. But the efforts of these few allowed all citizens the opportunity to participate in the design of the final plan.

State Representative Elliott Naishtat is extremely concerned with the issue of public input in the surplus property planning process (Naishtat 1998). As a result of the Triangle Park controversy, he is currently pursuing a legislative amendment to SB 43 that could potentially grant more power to neighborhoods affected by the sale or development of land in the surplus properties program. Representative Naishtat is exploring the various degrees of citizen involvement in the surplus properties program. The degrees of citizen involvement could potentially range from notifying the neighborhood residents earlier to absolute veto power over a proposed development or sale of state property. The legislation has yet to be written, but it will most likely include recognizing neighborhood groups as legitimate stakeholders in the development process (Lucas 1998). If the legislative amendment passes, it would introduce institutional changes and grant local communities more effective control over the decision-making process, thus truly initiating a radical planning model.

This research provides a detailed account of the fluid nature of the Triangle planning process and contributes the citizen's perspective on the development of a prominent tract of state-owned land. As State Representatives prepare to pursue legislation that would grant more power to citizens affected by the state surplus properties program, it would be wise to review the case of Triangle Park.

The battle over the Triangle Park development demonstrates to what lengths the public will go to achieve their rightful place in the planning process.

APPENDIX 1

Chronology of the Triangle Planning Process

1995

October:

Request for bids to private developers for the Triangle site was issued.

September:

Neighborhood Compatibility Standards are written.

October:

First Triangle bid document is issued.

November:

First round of bids too inconsistent with bid document criteria. Bid document revised/clarified.

1996

April:

Second Triangle bid document issued.

June:

Triangle project awarded to Cencor Realty.

September:

First neighborhood meeting.

October:

Cencor proposed lease submitted to MHMR, rejected due to technicalities in sub-lease.

1997

February:

First article on the Triangle appears on the *Austin Chronicle*.

March:

MHMR Board grants Cencor a second extension on deadline to present the master lease with sub-leases.

May:

Article in the *Austin American Statesman*.

TDMHMR approves lease with Cencor.

Public meeting with over 300 attending.

MHMR Board approves Conceptual (Preliminary) Site Plan.

Austin Chronicle runs cover story: "Squaring the Triangle".

August:

Preliminary site plan submitted for GR zoning to City of Austin.

September:

Neighbors of Triangle Park continue organized meeting to protest Cencor's preliminary site plan.

October:

Citizens meet with City Council members in an attempt to develop alternatives to the proposed development

November:

Cencor submits a plan to the City of Austin Planning Commission.

Design charette with Genesis group open to the public (Representatives from Cencor, GLO, MHMR and the City of Austin are "active observers", not participants in the brainstorming sessions).

Neighbors of Triangle Park issues a "Community Statement" as a result of the charette.

1998

January:

Austin City Council Member Beverly Griffith released the official report outlining recommendations from the Genesis Group based on the November charette.

April:

City of Austin Planning Commission unanimously votes to recommend a denial for a change in zoning request for the Cencor development proposal.

May:

The Austin City Council unanimously votes to follow the Planning Commission's recommendation to deny the zoning request.

June:

The Special Board of Review votes to postpone a decision as the meeting is found to be illegal.

July:

The Special Board of Review votes to deny zoning for the current Cencor development plan and makes landmark decision to grant an additional 90 days for a new negotiation process to take place spearheaded by Calthorpe and Associates.

August:

Workshop I – Public meeting designed to introduce Calthorpe and Associates to the community. The neighborhood expressed their goals and desires.

Weekly meetings of the Community Advisory Group – designed to provide ongoing public input into the process.

Regular meetings of the Stakeholder committee consisting of representatives of the primary stakeholders and included representatives of the General Land Office, City of Austin, Cencor Realty, Randall's grocery, MHMR, residential developer, Barnes and Noble and neighborhood delegates from the Community Advisory Group.

Intense negotiations between all the stakeholders (mediated by Calthorpe and Associates) resulted in the generation of two alternative development plans.

September:

Workshop II The two alternative development plans were presented to the community at large. Participants divided into small groups and modified the plan to reflect more accurately the group's goals for the site.

Continued regular meetings with the stakeholder committee and community advisory group.

Workshop III – The preferred plan incorporating the insight gathered from the community at Workshop II was presented to the public.

October:

Special Board of Review unanimously votes to approve zoning for the new site plan.

APPENDIX 2

Neighborhood Community Standards

Revised to reflect comments of the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association

The Community Triangle

Declaration

The community will actively oppose a conventional retail strip mall (i.e., box-like structures containing large-scale anchor businesses that are surrounded by concentrated parking and have little street-front interaction). Many support the preservation of the Triangle as a greenspace; however, if development is to occur, we will refrain from opposing only the creation of a sustainable community that preserves as much existing greenspace as possible to create and enhance public spaces. Community support for any development on the Triangle also is contingent on the implementation of transportation improvements as designated by the community plan as well as adequate flood protection for neighborhoods downstream of the Triangle.

The Community Plan

An economically viable, mixed-use neighborhood development

based on the community's shared values.

The community plan includes SIGNIFICANT GREENSPACE (i.e., park space and other open areas). Additional greenspace could be preserved if a master plan approach for all MHMR land was pursued.

The community plan provides a REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN necessary to to mitigate the traffic impact of development on the Triangle, improve transportation throughout the community, limit traffic cutting through the neighborhoods, and create new pedestrian, bike, and mass transit corridors (e.g., light rail).

The community plan contains a RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY component that mirrors the density of the surrounding neighborhoods. A mixed-use design of apartments and office space over retail stores throughout the site creates a neighborhood where people live, work, and shop.

The community plan emphasizes true, dedicated COMMUNITY SPACE such as park land, libraries, civic centers.

The community plan creates a NEIGHBORHOOD STREET GRID that mirrors the street network of the surrounding community.

The community plan, like the surrounding neighborhoods, uses an OLD TOWN APPROACH to how businesses interrelate with drivers and pedestrians, placing the mixed-use buildings on neighborhood streets rather than on parking lots and focusing on businesses that support local residents (e.g., shops, daycare facilities).

The community plan is a WHOLE PLAN of interrelated parts that creates a neighborhood, not simply a retail development. To be successful, all the conceptual parts of the community plan must be implemented together.

Note: This document was generated by a community design workshop, then given to the community for review through neighborhood newsletters and modified through neighborhood meetings and individual responses.

Subject: Triangle - Community standards and vision

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Commentary by Cecil Pennington

Here is a copy of the materials developed by the neighborhood representatives and distributed to potential developers of the triangle tract at the time of their submittal of qualifications (Dec. 14, 1995).

It was known that all of these action items would not be attained but that to the extent that a developer did implement these considerations into the design phase the happier the community would be with the end result.

More info will be sent to add to your files on this subject as time permits.

COMMUNITY VISION AND COMPATIBILITY STANDARDS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE "TRIANGLE" SITE

Statement of Purpose

The North Central Austin Community grew up around the Austin State Hospital. Its oldest neighborhoods have been sustained for over one hundred years in large part due to the relationship with the State and commercial lands at the community's core. Many residents still remember dairies and pastures on the triangle site. Others value the distinctive architecture, landscape, and community character that still draws visitors from around the state. Change is inevitable but the quality of that change will set a critical relationship for this community to build its next hundred years.

The following 156 action points sets forth the community standards for redevelopment of the "triangle site". These criteria for compatibility are drawn from the movement to use New Urbanism as a guiding philosophy to maintain investment, business vitality, tax base, and quality of life in American cities. Local government has recognized this goal in the area's transportation plan and City's initiative to re-write the land development codes. New Urbanism offers the most compatible manner of redeveloping our community without destroying its character.

In the June 1995 keynote address to the State's Roundtable on Sustainable City Design, that stated the case for New Urbanism, Land Commissioner Garry Mauro put it well:

"...we should try to make certain we don't replicate the mistakes we have made, and that we give ourselves more choices. I do believe that people in the market place are going to make the most of the decisions; we don't have to have mandates." and "The point is, we need to give ourselves true choices. If we do, the marketplace and the quality of life issues, and yes, even the energy issues will be resolved in a manner we will all be pleased with."

It is this choice in style of development that we ask for. Coordinated transportation, urban rather than suburban design, creating a place rather than a product. The actions we put forward support the long term interests of both TXMHR and the North Central Austin Community. They are practical steps that developers should address in determining their bids and proposed plans.

Please familiarize your self with New Urbanism, The Texas Sustainable Energy Development Council, and consider this community guide in assessing your proposals. The community stands ready to work with you to make this site a model for Austin's future.

LAND USE

AREA VISION Create a center of activity for the community with a mix of uses in a pedestrian oriented environment for people to live, work, and relax on site.

I. Mixed Use

Goal Encourage use of vertical zoning and multi-use clusters to enhance full time use and vitality of street life.

A. Objective Favor development that adds on site market for retail and maintains activity levels.

1. Action Require two story retail/office for a percentage of the commercial buildout.

B. Objective Maximize utilization of available space on the tract.

1. Action Require small retail in first floor of parking garages (especially for proposed state office building on site).

2. Action Require common parking areas for all but residential lessees.

3. Action Require small retail in first floor of structures (hopefully apartments) at the corner of 45th and Guadalupe.

II. Residential

Goal Don't reduce the overall residential density of the area (adjacent neighborhoods are at 10 units per acre) to relieve development pressure on adjacent neighborhoods and support transportation goals.

A. Objective Favor development that adds on site market for retail and maintains activity levels in the community core.

1. Action Require at least 400 residential units (40 acres at 10 units per acre) to be built either on the triangle or other ASH property as this properties fair share to maintain current density.

B. Objective Maintain residential character of 45th Street.

1. Action Favor pure residential uses along 45th except for the Guadalupe corner gateway.

2. Action Favor mixed use residential over single use commercial on 45th street.

C. Objective Increase compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods.

1. Action Require design of structures on 45th to more closely relate to residential vernacular architecture of neighborhoods.

III. Commercial

Goal Make the project a destination, reinforce preferred transportation and access goals, enhance not kill area business activity, and use designs compatible with the historical and urban character of community.

A. Objective Maintain and build on existing and successful specialty and alternative retail concepts in the area e.g., Central Market, 26 Doors, Jefferson/Kirby Lane, and Hyde Park Market Place.

1. Action Require a minimum number and variety of restaurant and food service uses eg. bakery, coffeehouse, ethnic restaurants, and ice cream shops in the tenant mix.

2. Action Favor locally owned or specialty shops over franchises, national chains, department, discount, or convenience stores in the tenant mix.

B. Objective Utilize many smaller and varied uses to encourage longer multi-purchase stays on site over short convenience trips, and to maintain pedestrian scale and interest of the project.

1. Action Utilize proximity to UT shuttle, existing bus service at the heart of the principle transit corridor, and proposed light rail transit to support retail and food services.

2. Action Limit size of lease spaces and building pads as a percentage of the site to favor number over size.

3. Action Select multiple mid-size retail or restaurants as anchors over large single retailer.

4. Action Utilize general interest entertainment (movie theater) as an evening anchor.

5. Action Utilize food services capturing adjacent employee base as morning and day time customer base.

IV. Public

Goal Include and encourage civic and community gathering by design of both exterior and interior public space.

A. Objective Provide urban amenities to encourage passive recreational use and increased interaction with the existing community both employees and residents.

1. Action Include sitting areas, galleries, public art, gardens, or other features in the site plan that encourage people to linger on site.

2. Action Provide a community room or encourage tenants to allow use at below market rates for civic groups or

individuals offering lessons or holding public meetings.

3. Action Encourage tenants to offer music or other performance venues and to hold seasonal celebrations (not sales) that draws the community together.

4. Action Require any park land contributions made for residential development be used in the immediate area for existing parks, to acquire new open space, or to support pedestrian bike linkages.

5. Action Design transit stops, pedestrian, bicycle, and drainage systems for dual use as passive urban recreation areas with maximum visual relief utilizing street furnishings and sophisticated landscaping techniques.

TRAFFIC AND ACCESS

AREA VISION Establish a mobility/access pattern for the core of North Central Austin that moves commuters to and past the site by all modes of transportation, encourages trips that reduce vehicular congestion, and limits negative impact on adjacent neighborhoods.

I. Automobiles Goal Reinforce differing intensity, mode of transportation, and character of function for designated area streets.

A. Objective Lamar Blvd. is the preferred auto travel corridor for the area.

1. Action Create major auto entrance/exit feature only on Lamar and disallow separate curb cuts for individual users.

2. Action Create turn bays and median break only at Lamar entrance.

3. Action Orient Lamar exits to direct exiting traffic away from Sunshine St. to the.

4. Action Locate large footprint buildings designed with set backs and at a scale for view by passing autos only along Lamar.

5. Action Maximize visual penetration of the project from Lamar especially at stop lights.

6. Action Utilize largest scale of signage on Lamar in a integrated entrance feature.

B. Objective Guadalupe is the preferred transit corridor through the area.

1. Action Disallow separate curb cuts for individual users limit entry by car solely to the single internal street and design to discourage use as an exit.

2. Action Locate buildings designed with minimal set backs and at a human scale along Guadalupe for view by passengers stopping at transit station and at bus drop offs.

3. Action Create bus and LRT pull offs on Guadalupe or internal to the tract.

4. Action Coordinate with Capital Metro to reserve right of way for all alignments of the LRT.

5. Action Create "key hole" vistas into the project from Guadalupe transit stops with visually clear and convenient pedestrian access into the project.

6. Action Design project signage for view from entering and stopped transit vehicles on Guadalupe and utilize only window and store front signage for shops.

C. Objective 45th Street is the residential connector street between neighborhoods feeding into the community core.

1. Action Encourage curb side parking along 45th (possibly over drainage) street to provide convenience parking for visitors.

2. Action Minimize visual penetration of the project from 45th except for pedestrian linkage at the Guadalupe corner.

3. Action Utilize minimal signage for residential and State office identification and only window or door front commercial signage except for project monument at 45th and Guadalupe.

4. Action Create a true median to replace the "chicken lane" on 45th.

5. Action Create no right turn pull off at the entrance thus slowing and calming traffic on 45th.
6. Action Design 45th street project entrance as a formal intersection mid-block to connect triangle and ASH traffic pattern.
7. Action Disallow separate curb cuts for individual users to limit access solely to the internal street.
- D. Objective 46th, Sunshine, and other nearby streets are low volume residential streets.
 1. Action Orient project exits to discourage auto entry into adjacent neighborhoods.
 2. Action Develop and institute a comprehensive traffic calming plan for the area street system to redirect discourage or severely slow down and reduce auto flow.

II. Transit

Goal Maximize the attractiveness and utilization of transit to customers, tenants, and employees both on and adjacent to the site.

A. Objective Connect current and near term commuter, area, and community circulator routes to focus rider pedestrian connections through the retail area at the heart of austin's principle rail corridor.

1. Action Site convenience uses, entrance features, comfort amenities, and attractive landscape at transit stops to invite riders to disembark, return later, or linger while transferring.
2. Action Utilize Capital metro, area, and national transit oriented development specialists to assist in designs that capitalize on transit
3. Action Coordinate with Capital Metro to reserve right of way for all alignments of the LRT.

III. Bicycles

Goal Create a destination and linkages that attract both commuter and recreational bike traffic to the site.

A. Objective Create an East west bike route connecting the Grover bike route to the Speedway bike route through the site.

1. Action Facilitate agreements to place bike and pedestrian paths on state and university lands west of Lamar and east of Guadalupe.
2. Action Participate with state and local government in application for federal transportation funds for intermodal enhancements.
3. Action Commit to superior crossing designs on Lamar and Guadalupe.
4. Action Utilize modal separation via tunnels or bridges on Lamar and Guadalupe.

IV. Pedestrians

Goal Make pedestrian orientation the unifying element of the project and capture latent market share created by adjacent uses and concentration of transportation flows.

A. Objective Create daytime pedestrian travel preference for employees from the state office complex.

1. Action Locate crossings on Lamar and Guadalupe to centrally to draw employees from adjacent state offices.
2. Action Commit to superior crossing designs on Lamar and Guadalupe.
3. Action Utilize grade separation via tunnels or bridges on Lamar and Guadalupe.

B. Objective Create nighttime pedestrian travel confidence for customer use of joint use parking in the state office complex.

1. Action Commit to superior crossing designs on Lamar and Guadalupe.

2. Action Utilize modal separation via tunnels or bridges on Lamar and Guadalupe.
3. Action Provide separate pedestrian lighting systems that extend onto adjoining state property.

V. Trucks

Goal - Minimize impact of construction, service, and delivery traffic on surrounding neighborhoods and businesses.

A. Objective Direct truck traffic through means of site plan design and contractual agreements.

1. Action Require joint-use service bays for delivery and refuse pickup for lessees.
2. Action Require full site contract for waste haulers with specifications on pick up time and route of haulers.
3. Action Specify delivery times and route for construction suppliers.
4. Action Specify construction worker and staging areas.

VI. Internal traffic circulation

Goal Focus, formalize, and create a system of traffic flows for each mode of transportation entering the site.

A. Objective Create internal "streets" for bike, pedestrian and auto traffic to optimize their useability and ability to attract the desired customer base to the site to the site.

1. Action Design to attract retain customers to the site rather than one stop activity.
2. Action Address needs of each travel group i.e. multiple bike parking, wider sidewalks, internal walks that encourage window shopping.
3. Action Separate service drives and access points for trucks, pedestrians, transit, and single occupant vehicles.

VII. Parking

Goal Minimize the use of surface and non shared parking.

A. Objective Maximize potential of off hour and weekend use of state parking facilities.

1. Action Select anchors and use mix with differing peak hours from state offices eg. movie or performance theaters, sit down restaurants.
2. Action Seek agreements with SPGSC for parking in the Winters complex, and to design the future office as a shared facility.

B. Objective Select a use mix that does not cater to or is dependent on auto bound customers.

1. Action Avoid stand alone uses that require car ques, auto service, or is in/out auto oriented eg. dry cleaner, quick photo.
2. Action Avoid pad site development that requires dedicated surface parking.
3. Action Seek agreements with the city to utilize access counts for all modes of travel in setting parking requirements.

C. Objective Encourage curb side parking on appropriate internal and external streets for both convenience and traffic calming effects.

1. Action Design internal streets as a main street.
2. Action Place parking on or adjacent to 45th street possibly over the existing drainage ditch.
3. Action Support efforts of local merchants in maintaining and restoring parking on Guadalupe.

D. Objective Plan for phase out of surface parking.

1. Action Use interim lots built at different standards for surface parking to be handled in structured parking or re

allocated to transit trips as development grows.

2. Action Seek agreements with SPGSC for use as interim surface parking on the site of the future state office.
3. Action Seek agreements with the city to utilize access counts for all modes of travel in setting parking requirements.

SITE DESIGN

AREA VISION Create a town center for the North Central Austin Community following principles of new urbanism and transit oriented development to create a people place for businesses, services, and social activity.

I. Density

Goal Focus density onto this tract to meet use and transportation goals.

A. Objective Utilize this infill tract to direct re- development pressures away from the surrounding neighborhoods.

1. Action Design for an ultimate build out of the site not the immediate needs of individual lessees.
- B. Objective** Provide adequate density and activity at build out to support the future mass transit system.
1. Action Design for implementation of transportation systems in development.

II. Site Layout

Goal Adopt new urbanism standards to differentiate the project and the community from the suburban auto dominant development north of the State Complex.

A. Objective Define the tract as the unified product rather than autonomous users as found along suburban stretches of highway.

1. Action Seek agreements with the city to utilize new urbanism and transit oriented development codes as found in cities such as San Diego and Portland.
2. Action Deny separate curb cuts to individual users redirect and focus auto access into the main entrance.
3. Action Utilize higher aesthetic standards for signage and landscaping to set the project apart.
4. Action Utilize project wide design, maintenance, and installation of lighting, signage, and landscape to assure continuity and quality of implementation.

III. Drainage

Goal Utilize creative and flexible design to increase use while meeting the standard that no incremental impact be seen on either main stream or branches (especially Hemphill) of Waller Creek.

A. Objective Utilize innovative drainage techniques.

1. Action Use several smaller facilities rather than one large area.
2. Action Utilize multi purpose areas for drainage control eg, landscaped wet ponds, pervious cover surface parking areas, buried retention structures under access systems or buildings.
3. Action Include water quality mechanisms and design characteristics into drainage facilities and other aspects of site design.
- B. Objective** Utilize off site areas and regional facility participation to lessen demands on site.
1. Action Seek agreements with SPGSC to utilize portion of the Winters complex area for drainage (possibly as cost participant in complex expansion).
2. Action Seek agreements with the city of Austin to participate in up stream regional flooding controls on Waller Creek.
3. Action Seek agreements with UT to utilize portions of Whitaker field for a storm water retention facilities.

IV. Landscape

Goal Set a standard for the area of a strong sophisticated urban identity and green gateway to the urban core of Austin.

A. Objective Preserve enhance and complete the pattern of allees as an identifying image for the site.

1. Action Accentuate the existing Guadalupe allee by entering a maintenance agreement with SPGSC to prune, establish oversize sidewalks, and coordinated ground covers and accent plants on both sides of the street.

2. Action Complete the 45th street allee by entering an agreement with TxMHMR to install and maintain the suitable pattern of trees on the State Hospital and headquarters property south of 45th.

3. Action Establish and implement a pattern of tree types and planting arrangements with State owners and lessees to establish an identity for the Lamar corridor.

4. Action Seek an agreement with the City of Austin to participate in and coordinate with private owners to extend the allee patterns along the access routes.

B. Objective Create a pedestrian friendly landscape.

1. Action Provide a system of shade and sound protection for out-door use through requirement of both hard an softscape elements in landscape and building plans.

2. Action Install areas for passive use with visual appeal through public art, water feature, plantings or other techniques.

3. Action Create a durable attractive and varied landscape through use of native and xeriscapic techniques.

V. Parking

Goal Utilize parking as a strategic element of the site design and marketing plan.

A. Objective Use size and placement of surface parking to define identifiable sub-areas on the project.

1. Action Allow only small parking lots in direct line of site to building entrances, placed between and behind structures these create parking court yards.

2. Action Require on street parking to define speed limits as conducive to pedestrians while offering the chance of convenience parking that draws people into the project.

3. Action Design internal traffic patterns to pull cars past on street parking and into structured lots behind stores and off site.

4. Action Implement unified parking information signage as is being developed by the Downtown Austin Alliance.

B. Objective Provide pedestrian amenities to draw customers into the areas street life.

1. Action Position exists and entrances from lessees shops to carry shoppers past several other shops.

2. Action Link parking areas to shops with superior walking paths including shade and sound protection.

3. Action Site shops around common areas and encourage outside uses such as sidewalk cafes, stages, courtyard sales "Bazaar areas" etc.

VI. Services

Goal Relocate and reduce impact of city and private services needed for development on the adjacent neighborhoods and street fronts in the community core.

A. Objective Reduce visual clutter and by re moving overhead lines from Guadalupe, Lamar, and adjacent areas.

1. Action Seek and participate in a joint agreement to master plan and redesign infrastructure required for redevelopment of the North Central Austin core area.

2. Action With the state determine and set aside required right of ways and easements.

3. Action Press to include utility relocation with installation of light rail transit.

4. Action Identify potential compatible incorporation of cellular telephone, cable television, and other communications facilities on the site or in conjunction with the state.

B. Objective Reduce frequency and degree of disruption of street and overhead service construction through co-location arrangements of providers.

1. Action Incorporate utility relocation with installation of light rail transit or any traffic improvement projects.

2. Action Design the project with underground services and ability to easily link into the service redesign when implemented.

3. Action Identify and allow for needed future capacity through use of conduits, access tunnels, false facade transmission platforms etc.

VII. Lighting

Goal Emphasize pedestrian character, require stylistic consistency, connect with and compliment off site lighting to make a safe active environment twenty four hours a day.

A. Objective Provide an exterior environment that is crafted to a specific purpose or set of purposes.

1. Action Create standards for lighting including type, size, placement, and intensity for each lighting function: auto circulation, parking, pedestrian ways, security, public space, landscape, wall washing, signage, windows, and entrances.

2. Action Seek an agreement with the State to provide a linked lighting system between the area tracts.

3. Action Create a lighting plan that establishes the environmental goal for outside areas and specifies acceptable lighting styles for each area.

VIII. Safety

Goal Minimize crime through open layout, increased activity levels, and conscientious design of public, semi public, and private spaces, both interior and exterior, to discourage need for aftermarket security such as walls, fences, controlled gates, bars, etc..

A. Objective Provide an exterior environment that is crafted to a specific purpose or set of purposes.

1. Action Design to minimize spaces lacking activity generation that promotes crime.

2. Action Require a security evaluation of all plans by police and planners to identify liabilities and hazards and force design changes up front rather than costly and distracting add-ons.

IX. Signage

Goal Emphasize site identity not individual users through restrained, thematically consistent, and coordinated signage.

A. Objective Provide an exterior environment that is crafted to a specific purpose or set of purposes.

1. Action Create standards for signs and advertisements including type, size, placement, and design for each function: site identification, store identification, window display, informational directional, etc..

2. Action Create a signage plan that establishes the environmental goal for outside areas and specifies acceptable sign styles for each area.

X. Orientation

Goal Reinforce pedestrian attractiveness, reduce scale, and create positive space, transit connections, and away from auto parking.

A. Objective Provide an exterior environment that is crafted to a specific purpose or set of purposes.

1. Action Create a siteing plan that establishes the line of sight goal for each major point of view.

2. Action Create standards for how buildings and shops will address each line of sight goal.
3. Action Design for a high degree of visual penetration into buildings and interior areas
4. Action Lease to achieve uses with a high degree of pedestrian level visually interesting human activity.

XI. Scale and massing

Goal Building pads and layout should create a clear hierarchy of related structures and spaces around pedestrian friendly open space to create a distinctive identity.

A. Objective Provide an exterior environment that is crafted to a specific purpose or set of purposes.

1. Action Establish a landmark structure or visual focal point to reinforce the gateway transition point created by the states highrise buildings.
2. Action Create a siting plan that establishes the line of sight goal for each major point of view.
3. Action Create standards for how buildings and shops will address each line of sight goal.
4. Action Identify and design to reinforce view sheds of significance such as views of the UT Tower.
5. Action Establish a landmark structure or visual focal point to reinforce the gateway transition point created by the states highrise buildings.

XII. Buffering and screening Goal Separate people, both pedestrians and riders, from view, smell, or sounds of service, support, parking, and non dual use drainage areas.

A. Objective Distinguish the streetscape from the industrial like pedestrian hostile environment along Lamar, north of 51st.

1. Action Locate all services, parking and support areas with regard to the line of sight, landscape, and transportation goals.

BUILDING DESIGN

AREA VISION Build a collection of distinctive structures with a variety of use and scale that display compatibility with each other and surroundings through a common pallet of materials and an adopted common design style.

I. Styles

Goal Establish a project style complimentary to the areas vernacular and existing styles with certain set features to be uniquely interpreted for each building.

A. Objective Distinguish the streetscape and its surrounding community from the market standard suburban development style.

1. Action Choose a style that emphasizes building relationship with people rather than cars.
2. Action Create buildings to be viewed from all sides not just from the roadway.
3. Action Emphasize a variety of interpretations of the style rather than a monolithic, uniform, or repetitive use of a style component.
4. Action Prohibit franchise building designs instead require adaptation and interpretation of franchise elements into the site's adopted style.
5. Action Require some form of material or design continuity of each building that ties it to other buildings in the project or immediate area.

B. Objective Utilize the transition point created by the large scale state office complexes to establish a more formalized urban building type.

1. Action Treat the project as an integral component of the overall district instead of an autonomous effort.

2. Action Adopt more vertical building types and require facade features that reinforce the vertical relationship such as base, body, roof.

3. Action Require lessees to deal with the issues of close proximity and compatibility of adjacent elements and their contribution to the street front and outdoor space.

4. Action Utilize creative components not typically addressed in suburban codes such as air rights over public right of way, arcades, terraces, balconies, display windows, and pedestrian courts.

C. Objective Utilize the historical context of the commercial and residential development in the area to create a human scale pedestrian sensitive environment.

1. Action Integrate the use of and relationship to the public right of way into the building's design.

2. Action Utilize design elements of pre-world war two residential and commercial structures in the buildings e.g. Whole Foods office and store Lamar at West Sixth.

3. Action Utilize a high degree of attention to detail as humanizing elements in the design style.

II. Materials

Goal Choose a palette of materials and colors that reinforce the chosen style and achieve the preferred high quality of place.

A. Objective Require buildings that impart permanence, human concern, and sophisticated character.

1. Action Utilize natural materials and blends of materials to impart textural variety in the building exterior.

2. Action Utilize a variety of colors that are compatible to achieve a varied but coherent overall effect rather than discordant attention getting treatments for individual lessees.

3. Action Utilize material combinations rather than single treatment surfaces.

III. Roof

Goal Require variety in height and design of roofs to screen all rooftop mounted systems, differentiate each building at a distance, and create an appealing character to the project viewed from adjacent office buildings.

A. Objective Utilize roof treatments as major identifiers for individual uses and to set the project apart from standard strip development.

1. Action Require a definite treatment of the roof to visibly cap the structure.

2. Action Utilize elements from the area vernacular such as standing seam metal or braces on overhangs to visually link the project to the community's historic era.

3. Action Require a rendered design perspective of all proposed buildings to assess visual impact of building on customers' views from adjacent high rise offices.

IV. Windows

Goal Utilize punched windows frequently in a variety of sizes and treatments to increase visual interest and individuation of each building and strongly link the interior and exterior activities.

A. Objective Make buildings more inviting by utilizing openings with a human scale and visual interest.

1. Action Require first floor windows that emphasize reinforce activity and connect interior with the street life.

2. Action Windows should be distinct and have visible set back to break the mass of the facade.

3. Action Multiple panes or faux treatments should be employed to tie to area vernacular style.

4. Action Vary window treatment as a tool to emphasize verticality of urban building type.

5. Action Limit walls without windows and set goals for percent of facade coverage by windows.

V. Entry

Goal Design and locate entrances to be easily identified, distinctive, emphasize landscape or outdoor use, and create concentrations of activity.

A. Objective Make buildings more inviting by utilizing openings with a human scale and visual interest.

1. Action Structures should have front doors delineated by detail, material changes, or other design treatment.
2. Action When ever possible doors should have amenities such as shade, benches, or specimen landscape feature.
3. Action Orient doors to create an activity node along the pedestrian way.

VI. Building Base

Goal Provide a distinct visual anchor at a scale appropriate to pedestrian proximity.

A. Objective Make buildings more inviting by utilizing material changes to create human scale and visual interest.

1. Action Change materials at a lower level the closer pedestrians will approach the facade.
2. Action Increase the change in texture and level of detailing the closer pedestrians will approach the facade.

VII. Height, Scale, and Massing

Goal Emphasize the gateway effect of the state office buildings.

A. Objective Vary height of uses on site and in relation to adjacent structures.

1. Action Push taller structures south and central to the site to maximize the relationship difference with the state offices.
2. Action Vary height, set back, and footprint size of structures to distinguish different functions of frontages and to contrast with respective offices on opposite side of the street.
3. Action Group buildings and large footprint uses to pull customers through the complex's pedestrian system.

B. Objective Maintain a buildings human scale of reference.

1. Action Use articulations, step-downs, and clustering to reduce overall impact of actual size of a building.
2. Action Limit size of individual footprint and number of large footprint uses.
3. Action Require single large footage users to split operations into smaller components with individual access points while maintaining a shared infrastructure.

TRIANGLE PARK PRESS

The Newsletter of Neighbors of Triangle Park • Volume 2, Issue 1 • February 1998

Neighbors of Triangle Park is a community group created to preserve green space and encourage responsible development in Austin neighborhoods.

IT'S NOT OVER YET: NTP Talks with Developer, But Still Opposes Strip Mall Plan

Recent meetings between Neighbors of Triangle Park (NTP) leaders and Cencor Realty have sparked rumors that NTP has compromised its "No Strip Mall" position, but NTP leaders are continuing their efforts to either drastically change Cencor's strip mall plan or stop the development completely.

"The community will never accept a conventional retail strip mall," said Sabrina Burmeister, NTP spokesperson, citing the thousands of yard signs that remain in the neighborhoods and polls that confirm that over 90 percent of the respondents in Hyde Park and Brentwood oppose Cencor's plan. "If Cencor tries to build one, we will fight them all the way."

In the past few months, Charles Burmeister and Sabrina Burmeister have represented NTP in meetings with Cencor, asking the developer to design something the community could support.

"We are trying to show the developer how to build something that is *not* a conventional retail strip mall, using the community plan from the charrette as a guide," said Charles Burmeister. "We want something that complements our neighborhood."

In November, more than 100 members of the community participated in a design "charrette" that produced a community plan for Triangle Park. The community plan is based on the "small town" approach of nearby neighborhoods like Hyde Park and Rosedale. The plan is designed to produce a vibrant community with street grids, large green spaces, residents living in apartments above shops, and community services such as a library and day care.

But so far, Cencor has made no fundamental changes to its plan in response to the community plan, other than the possible addition of 40 to 50 apartments. Cencor's current plan, which the developer submitted to the city planning commission in November, still includes many elements that neighbors find objectionable, including a 62,000 sq. ft. Randalls supermarket, a 12-screen Act III theater, and 1600 parking spaces, creating about 90 percent impervious cover.

While NTP leaders meet with Cencor representatives and city and state officials, they are encouraging supporters to continue showing their opposition to the strip mall by writing letters, posting yard signs, and participating in NTP events.

The Issue: A Proposed Mall at Triangle Park

Cencor Realty plans to develop the public land known as Triangle Park (bordered by 45th Street, Lamar, and Guadalupe). They plan to pave over most of the 25 acres of grass, trees, and wildflowers and build a strip mall that would include a Randalls supermarket, a 2,000-seat Act III theater, retail stores, and chain restaurants. The buildings and 1600 parking spaces would create more than 90 percent impervious cover on the site.

The mall would cause up to a 51 percent increase in traffic in our neighborhoods. The 12-screen theater would generate significant amounts of traffic on Friday and Saturday nights. Austin taxpayers may be asked to pay up to 85 percent of the cost of road improvements necessary to support the mall.

Local businesses such as Fresh Plus, Upper Crust Bakery, and the Avenue B Grocery could suffer from the competition brought by giant corporations such as Randalls.

Also, Triangle Park currently provides water retention to help alleviate serious flooding problems downstream from Triangle Park in Hemphill Park. An independent study by the city states that 46 acre feet of water retention are needed at Triangle Park to solve the problems. In their plan, Cencor would pay for 17 acre feet and would ask the city to pay for the construction of 10-12 additional acre feet.

POST AN NTP YARD SIGN!

CALL 467-5283 TO REQUEST A

"NO STRIP MALL" YARD SIGN

(NTP Volunteers Will Deliver Your Sign within 7 Days)



TRIANGLE PARK PRESS

The Newsletter of Neighbors of Triangle Park • Volume 1, Issue 4 • December 1997

Neighbors of Triangle Park is a community group created to preserve green space and encourage responsible development in Austin neighborhoods.

Community, Design Team Propose Alternative Triangle Plan

In a November 15 design workshop known as a "charrette," more than 120 residents from around Triangle Park worked alongside city officials and national design experts to create a community-oriented design alternative for Triangle Park. In stark contrast to Cencor Realty's strip mall, all of the community proposals included large amounts of greenspace, no expanses of surface parking, and reduced traffic impact. "It is very simple," said Neighbors of Triangle Park (NTP) spokesperson Sabrina Burmeister. "The community will not support a project unless it has a significant amount of greenspace and reduces the traffic impact on the surrounding area."

Common themes included a village concept with a main street and community park, small retail stores with apartments on the second floor, and no megastores. Many plans included civic uses such as libraries and museums.

The charrette's team of experts used the community plans to develop a single plan based on a small town with street grids, large green spaces, residents living in apartments above shops, and community services such as a library and day care. Where Cencor's plan was a modified strip mall, the charrette plan is a structured community. As Stacy Abel of the Community Investment Corporation said, "In Cencor's plan, if you remove the anchor stores, you're left with a parking lot. In the charrette plan, if you remove the anchor stores, you're left with a community."

Many residents were disappointed that a large grocery, cinema, and bookstore were included in the experts' plan. In response, planning expert Ramon Trais said, "This plan is not the solution, but rather one alternative." Referring to Cencor's leases with Randalls, Act III Theatres, and Barnes and Noble, planning expert Brian Wheeler said, "Nothing is set in stone. All of these contracts have contingency clauses."

Experts Agree: Strip Mall Plan Will Not Work

The charrette design team concluded that a regional transportation plan is integral to any development at Triangle Park. "What will not work is [Cencor's] plan as proposed in isolation

(continues on next page)

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NTP MEETING NOTICE

Please Join Us to Discuss the Alternative Plan Developed at the Charrette

Monday, December 8, 7 p.m.

Hyde Park United Methodist Church

4001 Speedway St.

A Community Statement Triangle Charrette Results

The Triangle design charrette gave the community a voice in the creation of a comprehensive plan for the Triangle and adjacent public land. Over 100 neighbors met for an entire day to identify shared community values. These community values are manifested in the statement below and were used to produce a financially-viable alternative plan for the Triangle.

A Community Statement

- ▲ The community will not accept a conventional retail strip mall.
- ▲ If development is to occur, we will only accept the creation of a sustainable community that preserves as much greenspace as possible.
- ▲ Many support the preservation of the Triangle as a greenspace, and we believe that an option for no development or a less intense development should be explored further.
- ▲ Community support for a development hinges on the simultaneous implementation of transit and transportation improvements.
- ▲ The State of Texas must give some decision-making power to the City of Austin, respecting a municipality's right to plan its future, and to the central Austin community as neighbors of the development, taxpayers, and citizens of Texas.

The Triangle Charrette Plan

- ▲ The charrette plan provides 400 APARTMENTS encouraging people to live, work, and shop in their community, thus reducing traffic and increasing safety.
- ▲ The charrette plan includes SIGNIFICANT GREENSPACE. Additional greenspace could be preserved if a master plan approach for all MHMR land was pursued.
- ▲ The charrette plan REDUCES THE TRAFFIC IMPACT on surrounding neighborhoods.
- ▲ The charrette plan creates neighborhood streets that connect the development with the surrounding community via an extension of the existing street network.
- ▲ The charrette plan emphasizes true, dedicated COMMUNITY SPACE such as park land, library, civic center, and day care center.
- ▲ The charrette plan provides MORE WATER RETENTION by utilizing greenspace and creating streams and ponds throughout.
- ▲ The charrette plan produced an old town approach to how businesses interrelate with drivers and pedestrians placing the mixed-use buildings on urban, neighborhood streets rather than on parking lots.



Neighbors of Triangle Park

A community group created to preserve green space and encourage responsible development in Austin.

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Austin, TX 78765

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Sabrina Burmeister, Neighbors of Triangle Park, hm.453-7084, wk.471-5857,232-2823.

Susan Moffat, Co-President, Hyde Park Neighborhood Association, hm.453-4280.

NEIGHBORS TO ASK PLANNING COMMISSION TO REFUSE STRIP MALL ZONING WITHOUT DELAY

Crowds of Neighbors to Speak Out

Crowds of concerned citizens will speak out at the Planning Commission meeting tonight, urging the commission to deny commercial zoning for the proposed strip mall on 22 acres of public greenspace known as Triangle Park. The developer has requested a delay.

Planning Commission Mtg
Tuesday, April 7, 6pm
City Council Chambers
307 West 2nd Street

Developer Attempts Delay to Defuse Neighborhood Opposition

"The developer is afraid the display of overwhelming neighborhood opposition to the strip mall will persuade the commission to vote against the zoning," said **Sabrina Burmeister**, spokesperson for Neighbors of Triangle Park (NTP). "The developer is hoping people will be discouraged from coming out next time."

Delay Could Be Stall Tactic, The Development is on a "Six Month Clock"

The developer could be attempting to stall the city planning process. If the City does not act on a zoning request for state land in six months from the filing date, the zoning request is automatically approved. The six month clock for the Triangle case runs out May 11. The Planning Commission will consider the delay tonight. Without a delay the meeting would proceed as planned.

Neighborhood Leaders Cry Foul at Developer Claims that "Changes" are for the Neighborhoods

In their filing with the City, the developer claimed the delay was necessary to make changes to their site plan. "It's ridiculous," said **Susan Moffat**, Co-President of the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association. "We met with Cencor for the last four months and they refused any changes to accommodate the neighborhood concerns, and now they suddenly need a week? It's a little fishy."

"We know what Cencor's other plan is," said **Ms. Burmeister**. "It's been around for a few months. There is a token token addition of a little unusable greenspace. Token changes won't satisfy the neighborhoods."

Delay May Be Diversion from Incomplete Traffic Plan

Some neighbors feel the delay is an attempt to conceal Cencor's incomplete traffic plan that was brought into question by city staff. Staff felt that the 15,000 cars per day estimated by Cencor was far too low.

Overwhelming Community Opposition to the Strip Mall

NTP has collected over 6,000 signatures opposing Cencor Realty's strip mall plan and distributed over 2,000 yard signs that read, "No Strip Mall." Recent polls have shown that 95% of Hyde Park residents and 91% of Brentwood residents responding oppose Cencor's plan. The Hyde Park N.A., Northfield N.A., Sierra Club, and Guadalupe Owners and Merchants Association have all passed resolutions rejecting Cencor's plan.

Board of review meeting: June 15, 5:30pm
ALO Building 1700 North Congress



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Neighbors of Triangle Park is a community group created to preserve green space and encourage responsible development in Austin neighborhoods.

CITY COUNCIL REJECTS TRIANGLE ZONING

In 7-0 Vote, Council Cites Traffic and Smart Growth Issues

In a five-hour May 14 meeting attended by more than 150 concerned neighbors, Mayor Kirk Watson and the Austin City Council voted unanimously to deny zoning for Cencor Realty's proposed strip mall at Triangle Park.

In making their decision, the City Council followed the city Planning Commission's recommendation to deny the zoning. In their comments, the councilmembers cited their concerns about traffic congestion, neighborhood compatibility, and the State's land development process. They also said that Cencor's strip mall plan did not fit in with the city's current Smart Growth initiative, which is part of a nationwide movement that seeks to manage growth while preserving unique community character, protecting citizens' quality of life, and giving neighborhoods a voice in development decisions.

The councilmembers expressed great concern over Austin's increasing traffic problems and said that the proposed Triangle Square strip mall could increase traffic beyond the capacity of surrounding streets. Several councilmembers said that Cencor's retail-centered plan would draw much more traffic than truly mixed-used alternatives. As Mayor Watson said in a letter mailed to meeting attendees and others involved with the issue, "The mix proposed was 71 percent retail, but only 16 percent office use and 13 percent multifamily use. This very top-heavy ratio of retail to other commercial and residential use gives the surrounding neighborhoods the heaviest traffic impact, the most intense parking requirements and a design that is least likely to preserve a sense of neighborhood."

The mayor's letter also addressed concerns about the State's public land development process. "I believe that public ownership should allow us to achieve solutions and public benefits beyond squeezing every dollar out of a development site. As a taxpayer, I want the State to make intelligent money decisions, but I also want the State to consider community goals such as building strong neighborhoods, increasing affordable housing, and providing certain uses that fill voids in our community," Watson said.

"This is another great victory for the neighborhoods and the City of Austin," said Neighbors of Triangle Park spokesperson Sabrina Burnmeister after the meeting. "Like the Planning Commission, the City Council stood up for our quality of life and our right as neighborhoods to have a voice in planning our community's future."

Special Board of Review May Hear Triangle Zoning Case

The City Council's unanimous vote to deny Cencor's zoning request was a significant victory for the neighbors. But if the developer appeals the zoning case, the final verdict may rest with a Special Board of Review. Current state law allows the Board of Review to overturn local community planning decisions, including the City Council's right to decide zoning cases. The hearing could be scheduled for as early as mid-June, but the City will provide two weeks' notice to neighbors on the final date.

The six-member Board of Review is chaired by Garry Mauro, Texas Land Commissioner and 1998 Democratic candidate for governor. The five other members include two state appointees, the chair of the TxMHMR board, Travis County Judge Bill Aleshire, and Mayor Watson.

The City Council's zoning decision is the default decision at the Board of Review. Therefore, only three out of six votes—a tie—are needed to uphold the City Council's decision. Mayor Watson has pledged to vote against the strip mall unless it changes substantially. Potential second and third votes may come from Bill Aleshire and state appointees Louis Renaud and Bill Warnick, but none of their votes are guaranteed.

Now more than ever, your letters are crucial. Be sure to contact the Special Board of Review members and Governor George Bush (see the addresses on the reverse side) and encourage them to support the City Council's zoning decision. Emphasize that appropriate, well-planned development can meet the state's budgetary requirements and also protect the city's ability to determine where and how it grows. With your continued support, we will stop Cencor's strip mall and create a development that best meets the needs of the neighbors and the state.



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21 May 1998

Dear Neighbor,

You can help us win a major battle in the protection of Austin's unique character and quality of life, now threatened by an unfair state law.

A Dallas-based strip mall developer wants to pave over Triangle Park, some of the last public green space in central Austin. Over 7000 concerned neighbors like you have come together to stop the developer from turning the green triangle of trees and wildflowers formed by 45th Street, Lamar, and Guadalupe into a Randall's megastore, a 14-screen movie megaplex, and a sea of 1,800 parking spaces. Neighbors fear the danger of 26,000 additional car trips per day through our already-crowded neighborhood streets. Even more appalling, the developer is asking for millions of your tax dollars to pay for traffic improvements and sewage improvements made necessary by their own development.

The community has worked for a year to try and find common ground with the developer, but the developer has refused to design a neighborhood-friendly plan. That's why a host of community groups oppose the strip mall including Austin Neighborhoods Council, Hyde Park Neighborhood Association, Guadalupe Owners and Merchants Association, and the Austin Sierra Club.

Our grassroots effort has been an astounding success. We have met with the Mayor and City Council Members, Senator Gonzalo Barrientos, and State Land Commissioner Garry Mauro. We've had many letters and editorials in the *Austin American-Statesman* and large advertisements in the Austin Chronicle. We've kept the community informed with mass mailings, and the distribution of over 30,000 informational newsletters and 2,000 yard signs. Supporters like you helped co-sponsor a community design workshop led by national urban design experts to draft alternative visions for Triangle Park.

Our greatest victory came last week when the Austin City Council voted unanimously to refuse zoning for Cencor's strip mall plan!

So why do we still need your help? The developer is counting on an unfair state law to overturn OUR City's right to plan OUR future. Current state law allows a Special Board of Review to overturn local decisions in community planning, such as the City Council's right to decide on zoning cases. The *Austin American-*

(OVER ➡)

**I Won't Shop
at the Triangle**

▲ Neighbors of Triangle Park • 467-57

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