

Communication
Planning and Urban Development Department
Planning Division



To: Housing & Community Development Committee

From: Alex Jaegerman, FAICP, Planning Division Director

Date: August 3, 2012

Re: Congress Square Meeting August 1, 2012

The Congress Square Redesign Study Group (CSRSG) met on Wednesday, August 1, 2012, to consider the proposal by RockBridge Capital to acquire a portion of the plaza for the purpose of constructing a ballroom/events facility. This proposal has been previously discussed by the CSRSG and HCDC on October 19, 2011 and May 9, 2012 respectively. The original proposal was reduced modestly in size, and the CSRSG was asked to send comments or a recommendation to the HCDC for consideration at the August 8, 2012 meeting.

Attached is the memorandum summarizing the proposal for the CSRSG, which presents the proposal and process leading up to these two meetings, and a framework for consideration that suggested three possible recommendations – to proceed with the proposal as presented; to continue to assess and evaluate the proposal; or to proceed with redesign of the plaza without further consideration of the proposal by RockBridge.

The CSRSG received a presentation by me and by Adam Valente of RockBridge Capital, engaged in a series of questions to clarify the proposal and process to date, and then opened the meeting to public comment. There was a lengthy public comment period, including 32 individuals who testified, of which 7 were generally supportive of the proposed development and 24 were opposed.

In the CSRSG deliberations that followed the public comment period, it was clear that there were diverse views among committee members. Several felt that the proposal as presented, while not necessarily acceptable as is, was worth further consideration and exploration. Others expressed strong support for keeping the plaza intact, and not allowing any land to be developed privately. After discussion and debate, the CSRSG voted on a motion to recommend to the HCDC that the RockBridge proposal not be further considered, and that the plaza be redesigned in its entirety. This motion passed with seven (7) in favor, two (2) opposed, and three (3) abstained.

It is recommended that this communication be received and the matter be deferred to a future meeting to allow time to consider the input received from the public and CSRSG. RockBridge has indicated that they would like to continue discussions toward providing a revised proposal.

Attachments:

1. Memorandum dated July 26, 2012

2. Written public comments (3)