

Tyler 21 Plan A Beginning, City Officials Say

By MARK COLLETTE
Staff Writer

As the Tyler 21 Comprehensive Plan moves closer to becoming a completed document, many citizens may wonder: Just what in the world is it?

"Comprehensive," after all, means it's big. And "21" appears to indicate that the scope is this entire century. So it seems the plan wouldn't amount to a hill of beans for a Tyler citizen trying to get his neighborhood street lights repaired.

"It does have a long horizon," said Larissa Brown, a consultant working on Tyler 21. "But to make a plan real to people, it does have to have some early actions."

For the section of the plan focused on revitalizing the city's north end, that could mean street light repairs, Mayor Joey Seeber suggested. Other visions — such as a Gentry Parkway that actually looks like a parkway, with medians

"It does have a long horizon. But to make a plan real to people, it does have to have some early actions."

— Larissa Brown,
Goody Clancy

and landscaping — could take longer to realize, he said.

The next six weeks will bring some of the most important work before the committees, said Ms. Brown, of the Goody Clancy planning firm in Boston.

On Friday, the Tyler 21 working group tailoring the section of the plan on downtown revitalization will cap a weeklong series of working group meetings. Most of the groups

are nearing completion of draft proposals.

Those proposals will go before the Tyler 21 Steering Committee, which will then forward a final draft to the City Council. The committee met Wednesday.

Some of the groups have had impassioned debate, but that only helped formulate thoughtful recommendations, committee members said.

"A group that came in very emotional and really wanted to point fingers and blame folks ended up with a good product," City Councilman Derrick Choice said of the north-end revitalization group.

But many people still seem to be asking how the plan will become reality.

"If it takes 30 years for downtown to get really great," someone recently told Ms. Brown, "I'll be 90 years old."

Steering committee members

said parts of the plan will be slated for early action. They also suggested that it could be reviewed every five years to keep up with changing conditions and goals. City Councilman Nathaniel Moran, however, was cautious about how much power future officials should have in making amendments. Seeber gingerly suggested that debate wait until later in the planning process.

Steering committee members seemed to agree that providing tangible results of Tyler 21 in the short term is paramount. But ultimately, they said, it's about creating a better city for successive generations.

Here is a sampling of recommendations emerging from some of the working groups:

□ Enact an ordinance that will allow the city to establish historic conservation districts in various parts of the city, and give residents

See TYLER 21, Page 3C

TYLER 21 Continued From 1C

more leverage to push for historic designations.

□ Employ a historic preservation officer.

□ Better use the city's three lakes to the benefit of citizens.

□ Provide housing for all income levels through public and private partnerships.

□ Bolster code enforcement and rehabilitation of existing housing.

□ Encourage mixed-use development at major intersections citywide.

□ Promote designs focused

on people rather than vehicles.

□ Promote connectivity, rather than isolated neighborhoods.

□ Expand downtown housing.

□ Install new amenities at existing parks.

□ Upgrade or install water, sewer and other services in areas that need it.

□ Make Tyler greener.

Staff writer Mark Collette covers Tyler city government. Reach him by phone, 903-596-6303, or e-mail, news@tylerpaper.com.

77
70-8-2