

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY—PALM STREET CLOSURE
PRESENTATION ON DEVELOPMENT ALONG MAIN STREET**

Documents Referenced are posted on www.museumparkna.org

At the June 1, 2016 MPNA Membership Meeting, Trammell Crow, will make a presentation regarding the development of property along Main Street, adjoining both sides of Palm Street. The meeting is structured to allow for a presentation and questions from members.

All members are asked to attend and offer their opinions and questions. **NO ACTION ON THIS PRESENTATION WILL BE TAKEN AT THIS MEETING.**

This is a summary of information the Board and members of the Museum Park Neighborhood Association have gathered on the proposed closure of Palm Street between Fannin and Main Streets, and the related proposed development of the properties on either side of Palm Street between Fannin and Main Streets.

It is important to remember that development will continue in our neighborhood, and this is not a meeting to shut development down.

CHRONOLOGY

January 6, 2016 MPNA membership meeting, MPNA members were informed of an effort to have Palm Street abandoned between Main and Fannin by Dr. Mann, the owner of property on both sides of that segment of Palm Street. Individual members called, emailed, and wrote letters expressing their concerns and objections to the City of Houston but the abandonment process continued to move forward.

February 3, 2016 At this regular meeting of MPNA, the membership present voted to support the MPNA Board in making a formal objection, on behalf of MPNA, in the form a Board Resolution. The Resolution is posted on the MPNA website. It objects to the City's published process for street closures not being followed and requests various actions to be taken prior to City Council approval of the Palm Street Abandonment, including calling for more professional/technical studies and for public hearings. The intent of this resolution is not to deter development, but to ensure that a transparent and complete process is followed, with input from the neighborhood.

March 8, 2016 The resolution is submitted to Councilmember Boykins. CM Boykins formally objected to the Palm Street Abandonment to the City of Houston Planning Department citing his concerns and the MPNA Resolution.

April 27, 2016 The City of Houston Public Works and Engineering Department issued a letter declaring the abandonment would not go forward due to “unresolved opposition from the community as indicated by the Museum Park Super Neighborhood, the Museum Park Neighborhood Association, and the office of Council District D.”

Prior to the issuance of the PWE Letter, Dr. Mann made a request to the Board to present at the May MPNA Membership meeting. A majority of the MPNA Board voted to invite Dr. Mann to first make a presentation to a special joint board meeting of the MPNA and MPSN Boards on **April 27, 2016**, and then to the membership to the **June 1, 2016**, MPNA Membership meeting.

May 4, 2016 At this MPNA Member Meeting, an update was presented and it was announced that Dr. Mann and his team would be making a presentation at the **June 1, 2016** MPNA Membership meeting.

June 1, 2016 The MPNA Member Meeting is structured to allow for a presentation and questions from members. All members are asked to attend and offer their opinions and questions. No action on this proposal will be taken at this meeting.

CONCERNS ON CLOSING STREETS

- **NEIGHBORHOOD ISOLATION AND TRAFFIC FLOW PROBLEMS**

- There are 16 east/west streets in the MPN—from Wheeler to the north to Hermann Park at the south. Only 8 are open between Main and Almeda. In the interior of the neighborhood, only FOUR east/west through streets go through to Main Street.
- Fifty percent of the east/west streets have been sold to private landowners or closed for the Metro Rail line.
- The proposed HWY 59 Suppression will diminish north/south access between Museum Park into Downtown, meaning fewer through routes.
- Traffic is expected to increase due to the combined effect of population growth and denser residential development.
- Closure of more streets cuts off our neighborhood, and will increase traffic congestion.

- **LOSS OF CONTROL**

- Once a street is abandoned, it is actually sold to the Developer. Proceeds go to the City of Houston general fund, and are unlikely to be used for amenities in our neighborhood.

- The developer is not required to actually complete the development as presented to us.
- Proposed “green space” may be effectively inaccessible by the public.
- The abandoned street, once sold to the adjacent owner, can be sold with the adjacent property as a larger parcel.

MPNA/MPSN BOARD CONCERNS ON APRIL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

From the presentation made on April 27 to the joint MPNA/MPSN Boards, the following concerns were raised. These may or may not have been addressed in what will be shown on June 1.

- **PROPOSED USE OF SOUTHMORE BLVD CONTRADICTS LIVABLE CENTERS STUDY GOALS**

- The plans currently show parking garage and service entrances on Southmore Blvd. service entrances are generally unattractive and disruptive, causing increased traffic noise and street blockages from delivery trucks and other large vehicles.
- The Museum Park Neighborhood Livable Centers Study encourages the use of Southmore Blvd. as a primary gateway entrance to our neighborhood and encourages pedestrian friendly, outward facing pedestrian amenities.
- Putting trash pickup and deliveries on Southmore Blvd. is contrary to the intentional “front yard” feel of the current venues, the Montessori Country Day School and Asia Society.
- Palm Street as public ROW will be an asset for garage and service entrances, and the increase in general automobile traffic.

- **DENSITY, TRAFFIC CONGESTION, AND PARKING**

- The April plan for the proposed development shows 3 towers: a 300+ unit residential tower, a 150-180 room hotel, and a medical office building. Height and setbacks of buildings was not clear.
- The development will increase traffic. That traffic could be placed on Palm Street in addition to the streets it borders.
- The location is in an urban corridor, which allows the owner to develop with less parking than normally required.
- The developer acknowledged that they are proposing to widen Southmore Blvd. from Main to San Jacinto to accommodate the increased traffic. This may be accomplished with the existing paving, by re-striping to three lanes. If it requires paving additional ROW, it will result in the loss of mature tree canopy along Southmore, which will decrease the green space and shade in that corridor.