Outstanding Media Coverage

This award recognizes outstanding media coverage of planning issues in written or broadcast media by a newspaper, television station, magazine, or radio station.
2012 ALAPA Awards

Tuscaloosa News

Coverage of the

“Tuscaloosa Forward, A Strategic Community Plan to Renew and Rebuild”

Nominated by Mr. John McConnell

Alabama Chapter of the American Planning Association
2012 ALAPA Awards
Outstanding Media Coverage

The Tuscaloosa News provided outstanding media coverage to the citizens of Tuscaloosa County in the days after the storm. Their continued effort to provide information to the community in an open and subjective format was excellent. In addition to editorials and other relevant stories, the News printed the entire planning draft for the recovery for the public to view.
Consultants outline vision for rebuilding city

By Jason Morton Staff Writer

TUSCALOOSA | A Kansas City, Mo., consulting firm on Tuesday offered a vision for reconstructing a better city after the destruction of the April 27 tornado that hit Tuscaloosa.

The firm, BNIM, introduced itself to residents during the weekly City Council meeting at City Hall.

But BNIM, which was awarded a $250,000 contract last week by the council, said it has no intentions of shaping the city on its own.

Robert J. Berkebile, a principal for BNIM, told the City Council that the process for constructing a plan to rebuild Tuscaloosa will require a “full, robust community dialog.”

“Allowing the whole community to be a part of the dialog will contribute greatly to your success,” Berkebile said.

BNIM will host a town hall on June 30 and has established two websites, tuscaloosafoward.com and townhall.tuscaloosafoward.com, to immediately begin the conversation.

The websites will operate in conjunction with the city task force that was formed to help craft a master plan for rebuilding the devastated areas of the city.

The websites also bear the new name of group: Tuscaloosa Forward Task Force. Its name was changed from the Rebuild Tuscaloosa Task Force in part because the website bearing the “Rebuild Tuscaloosa” name already had been claimed, officials said.

At tuscaloosafoward.com, residents will be able to follow along with the progress of the task force and the BNIM consultants as they work toward a July 15 deadline to craft a preliminary master plan for development.

But at townhall.tuscaloosafoward.com, residents can offer ideas about what they would like to see as part of the new Tuscaloosa. The website also

See CITY | 2A
2012 ALAPA Awards
Outstanding Media Coverage

Pooling ideas to rebuild

Residents speak out about plans to revitalize city after tornado

By Jason Morton
Staff Writer

TUSCALOOSA | Hundreds of residents attended a public information forum held by City Hall on Thursday night to learn about a plan that will influence the revitalization efforts of downtown Tuscaloosa.

Visitors to the come-and-go public information forum hosted by City Hall began arriving well before the doors opened. The room was packed with those who had lost their homes in the April 27 tornado to listen to residents who were critical about the city's response to the storm. Many residents who had lost their homes in the April 27 tornado to listen to residents who were critical about the city's response to the storm. Many residents who had lost their homes in the April 27 tornado decided to attend the meeting. The room was packed with those who had lost their homes in the April 27 tornado to listen to residents who were critical about the city's response to the storm. Many residents who had lost their homes in the April 27 tornado decided to attend the meeting.

Tuscaloosa residents have been working on a plan to revitalize downtown Tuscaloosa during a Thursday night community forum held by the Tuscaloosa Forward Task Force at the Bryant Conference Center.

Alaska Chapter of the American Planning Association
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Outstanding Media Coverage

City Council to vote next week on plan to rebuild after storm

Business leaders remain opposed

By Janet Martin
Tuscaloosa (City Council members on Tuesday heard the formal presentation of the Tuscaloosa Forward master plan, a comprehensive rebuilding approach for the tornado-devastated area of the city.

No public was taken during the presentation, which was led by Tuscaloosa Council President Harrison Taylor. The council members will vote on adopting the plan next week during its formal Tuesday night meeting.

However, the audience who packed the council chambers appeared to be interested in the proposal, which has come after nearly a year of planning and which has been in the works.

The proposal includes a strategic community plan to review and rebuild Tuscaloosa Forward, a community preview event, and a plan to review and rebuild the community.

Ray Saunders attends a Tuscaloosa Forward town hall forum at Central High School on July 23. After months of development and input from the community, the plan Tuscaloosa Forward master plan was presented on Tuesday to the City Council and members of the public, who appeared divided over the plan.

Business leaders remain opposed

By Janet Martin

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The proposal includes a strategic community plan to review and rebuild Tuscaloosa Forward, a community preview event, and a plan to review and rebuild the community.
You hold in your hands the most current draft of the Tuscaloosa Forward Strategic Plan. A final version of this plan will be presented to the Tuscaloosa City Council at a meeting on July 10, 2012.

This draft plan is the product of extensive community input and ongoing discussions. The Tuscaloosa Forward Strategic Plan is a living document, subject to frequent review and regular updates.

The Tuscaloosa Forward Strategic Plan is a comprehensive effort to develop a strategic vision for the future of the city of Tuscaloosa, including the following areas:

- Infrastructure
- Sustainability
- Community
- Economic Development
- Quality of Life
- Public Safety
- Education
- Health Care
- Environment
- Transportation

The Tuscaloosa Forward Strategic Plan addresses these areas by providing a framework for decision-making and ensuring that the city's resources are directed toward the attainment of the strategic goals.

The Tuscaloosa Forward Strategic Plan is the result of the collaborative efforts of the Tuscaloosa Forward Steering Committee, the Tuscaloosa Forward Technical Team, and the community at large.

The Tuscaloosa Forward Strategic Plan is a living document, subject to frequent review and regular updates.
Alabama Chapter of the American Planning Association

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Outstanding Media Coverage

City consultants unveil proposed rebuilding plan
Officials, residents invited to influence the final version

PROPOSED MASTER PLAN

A proposed master plan has been released to city hall by JACKSON. The plan outlines the rebuilding of the neigborhoods that was Coweta Street destroyed on April 21. The plan will have a public review in the coming months. Additionally, the City Council will review the plan after the public hearing.

WHAT'S NEXT
Here is what will happen before the final plan is adopted:

- App. 1: The: The plan is reviewed by the Planning Commission, which will meet to discuss the plan and hear public comments.
- App. 2: The City Council will review the plan before it is adopted.
- App. 3: The final plan will be adopted by the City Council.

Alabama Chapter of the American Planning Association
Master plan passes after three weeks of vocal opposition from business owners

By Jason Morton
Staff Writer

TUSCALOOSA | After more than three months of gathering ideas to influence the vision for rebuilding Tuscaloosa, the City Council on Tuesday unanimously adopted the Tuscaloosa Forward master plan.

The vote came after three weeks of intense, vocal opposition from 15th Street business owners to the guidelines put forth in the nearly 90-page plan, which was crafted during multiple public meetings with input from two city-formed committees.

The opposition, however, was tempered some by supporters who called on city leaders to adopt a vision for a new Tuscaloosa and not allow the same, pre-tornado appearance and lack of amenities to return.

Now, the city will turn to the Code Studio consultant firm of Austin, Texas, to help craft building codes, zoning rules and other policies that will turn the elements of the Tuscaloosa Forward plan into reality.

Mayor Walt Maddox said he hopes the City Council would have a set of policies, codes and ordinances to consider by Thanksgiving.

And to work alongside Code Studio in the formation of the new rules, Maddox said he intends to call on the City Council by Thanksgiving.

WHAT’S NEXT?
The Code Studio consultant firm of Austin, Texas, will craft Tuscaloosa Forward’s building codes, zoning rules and other policies. The goal is to present that work to the City Council by Thanksgiving.


Alabama Chapter of the American Planning Association
Zoning changes within tornado zone unveiled

Draft focusing on multi-use areas met with skepticism by some business owners

By Jason Morton
Staff Writer

TUSCALOOSA | Residents and property owners were given their first look Monday night at a proposed set of building codes and development guidelines for the planned multi-use corridors within the tornado recovery zone.
And to many, the details were eye-opening.
The proposed regulations were unveiled during a forum at the University of Alabama’s Bryant Conference Center by consultants with Code Studio and BNIM, who indicated the goal of the design standards is to create safe and walkable zones that allow for a mixture of uses ranging from residential to retail. Code Studio and BNIM are the respective building code and master plan consulting firms hired by City Hall to assist in the redevelopment process.

A similar forum is planned for Oct. 27 to discuss proposed changes to neighborhood zones, but Monday’s initial draft pertained strictly to the multi-use areas stemming from the Tuscaloosa Forward master plan adopted unanimously last month by the City Council.

The proposed changes focus on three key areas of the city: the 14th Avenue and Interstate 359 corridor, the confluence of 15th Street and McFarland Boulevard and Alberta, which also included areas around Five Points and the intersection of Skyland and University boulevards.

ONLINE
To view the proposed building codes and zoning rule changes, visit www.tuscaloosanews.com.

See Zoning | 7A

Alaska Chapter of the American Planning Association

Bert Tingle, left, Jeff Thompson and Eddie Thompson talk with BNIM consultant Aaron Ross during a Tuscaloosa Forward forum to discuss possible code and zoning regulations for business and multi-use corridors at the Bryant Conference Center Monday. STAFF PHOTO | MICHELLE LEFKOW AT CARBER