



MEETING MINUTES

- Date:** May 29, 2014 (6:00pm to 8:00pm, City Hall Incubator Room)
- Purpose:** City of Brookhaven Comprehensive Plan 2034
Steering Committee Needs and Opportunities Work Session
- Attendees:** *List of Steering Committee members and members of the public in attendance is provided at the end of minutes.*
- Prepared by:** Sycamore Consulting, Inc.

Upon arrival, attendees were provided with a meeting agenda. Additional handouts were distributed during the Character Area exercise, including Character Areas and Defining Narrative, Questions for the Steering Committee, and Comment Form.

Summary

Amanda Hatton (Jacobs) welcomed the group and thanked them for being in attendance. After leading the attendees through introductions, she explained that this meeting will focus on Character Area Implementation Strategies and Overarching Needs and Opportunities, with discussions and exercises to solicit input from the attendees. Amanda then gave a brief overview of the public outreach to date, including high-level results from the Visioning Workshop, Community Survey, and Stakeholder Interviews. Additionally, she stated that the survey will remain available until June 12, 2014 and the summary of interviews will be posted to the City's website.

A comment was made that the attendance at the Visioning Workshop was low, and that the more effort must be made for the next workshop. The City replied that the turnout was not unusual for a planning effort. Amanda stated that the project team did have some ideas to increase attendance, to be discussed at the conclusion of the meeting.

Character Area Implementation Discussion

Jonathan Webster (Jacobs) led the group in the exercise to discuss the character areas. Using the handouts, he selected key character areas within the City to discuss with the group. For each area, Jonathan posed questions to the group. The questions, noted in italics, are below with the summary of responses.



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Perimeter Center: (JW) *The previous plan permits up to 120 units per acre, is this an appropriate density moving forward for this area? Do you envision high or mid-rise development?*

- I see a mix of high and mid-rise. I would like to see the highest density adjacent to I-285 serving as a buffer, with the mid-rise as a step down towards the residential areas.
- I see that area as a real nexus of access. There is I-285 and the MARTA facilities. It is a natural place for higher density, as long as the residential areas are respected.
- The area should be supported by sufficient lighting.
- Townhomes would be appropriate.

Murphey Candler-Nancy Creek-Silver Lake: (JW) *Is there a more appropriate name for this area? Are there locations where you could see neighborhood commercial?*

- How about the “Lake District”? The lake is a unique feature.
- I don’t find the name offensive as-is.
- Educational needs: I see Montgomery Elementary as a key priority; it is a key aspect of the northern gateway into the city. It is the top school in DeKalb and it really is in bad shape structure. It must be addressed. Chamblee High School improvements are a good model to consider.
- I would like to see some commercial at the park. I can see a coffee shop or something like that to serve the park users and ball fields. I could even see a Starbucks.
- I would not like a Starbucks. I think a concessions run by the Parks and Rec. Department is more appropriate.
- My concern with adding commercial in that area is that a “soft spot” will be created, changing the overall neighborhood character.
- *It was concluded that allowing a refreshment use as a part of the parks and recreation program makes sense, but the future land use plan should not propose change in land use within the park.*

Blackburn Park Neighborhood Center: (JW) *What is the appropriate density for this area? The previous plan permits up to 24 units per acre.*

- I like the newer development in the area (Brookleigh); that is appropriate to me.
- Allowing higher densities, with up to five story development, will allow for more flexibility resulting in nicer, creative design, and desirable amenities such as publicly accessible open space and pedestrian facilities.
- There is not a lot of land left in this area; I assume we are talking about redevelopment? *Yes, future growth in this area and most areas of the city would result from redevelopment.*
- I would like to see small scale commercial in the neighborhood that just serves the neighborhood and not a regional shopping destination.



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Peachtree Corridor Overlay District: (JW) *This area is identified as an ideal location for government complex, is this appropriate?*

- Yes, specifically somewhere near the MARTA, or the old Harris Teeter.
- Yes, I think that idea is very compatible with creating a city center in this area.
- I would like to see this area develop creatively with more character and an active pedestrian environment.
- Parking will be an issue, the corridor is too shallow to do any significant development, but shallow restaurants are a possibility. Potential exists for a pedestrian “promenade”.
- The highest center of gravity for the area should be at the MARTA station, with office as a key use.
- There is opportunity for creative redevelopment with the warehouses down Apple Valley.

Buford Highway Corridor: (JW) *The previous plan allows for 14-18 units in the majority of the area, is that appropriate?*

- We can go higher in this area; this should be the second highest density area in the city after Perimeter Center.
- There is an opportunity for the City to work with GDOT on potentially dropping a travel lane on Buford Highway. More contemporary lighting is desirable.
- The area near I-85 could accommodate high-rises.
- I am concerned over transition, we would need to protect the existing residential areas. There should be a step-down from the Roxboro character area to Buford Highway (similar to what is being discussed for the Perimeter Center area).
- There may be a market for a hotel in the future.
 - We don't want another Red Roof Inn, we want high-rise.
- We always need to think about mass transit in a corridor like this. We need to protect and encourage amenities for transit.
- The City is very interested in redevelopment in the area, however we want to make sure we are protecting the current residents, providing safe and affordable housing. It's complicated to redevelop without displacement.
- We also need to preserve Buford Highway as an international corridor; it is a real asset to the region.
- Peachtree Creek is a critical feature here in this area.
- The demographics here seem to support smaller pocket parks, or “parklettes”. Residents are walking and not driving in the area.
- This area is the least walkable, yet has the most pedestrians in Brookhaven.



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- Increasing the density will drive land sales up, so we must be very careful to direct development only where we want it, in order to protect the affordable and ethnically diverse character of the area. Perhaps we need to break this area up, so it is not all one character area.
- What about creating a Tax Allocation District (TAD) or completing a Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) study in this corridor?
 - I am not sure I am saying that; I just think we need set aside certain areas of the corridor for preservation.
- I would like to see a policy of reducing impervious surface in the corridor.
- Higher building heights make sense as you approach I-85, with lower building heights on the western side of Buford Highway. Another way to look at concentrated density and building heights is by activity node, such as around key intersections.
 - Potential activity nodes identified included North Druid Hills and Buford Highway, Briarwood and Buford Highway, and Clairmont and Buford Highway.

Lenox Park: (JW) *Is the draft vision for this area as a live/work/play appropriate?*

- The park needs better access, it is currently “locked” inside an office park.
- The area is very pretty, but sterile. It is very dependent on the car.
- Neighborhood scale commercial would be good, but not big box. The retail needs to support the neighborhood, not just the tenants of the buildings.
- The area has a 24 hour a day, 7 day a week population but does not have the mix of uses (primarily commercial) to support it.
- Restaurants would be good to support the “play” component.
- *Rewriting of the zoning ordinance will follow this Comprehensive Planning process. There we will be able to define the neighborhood scale uses.*
- What about land covenants? They may preclude some uses.

Ashford Park - Drew Valley: (JW) *Are there any additional locations for appropriate neighborhood commercial in this area?*

- I am against any commercial continuing down Dresden. We need to protect this residential area.
- I don't feel the neighborhood could support any additional commercial. Outside traffic would have to be brought in, and that would not be good.
- We need to solicit input from the neighborhood.
- We can revisit this area after the public workshop.
- What about a linear park along Clairmont Road? Abernathy Greenway Linear Park is a great example.



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Concluding the discussion, Amanda asked that the Steering Committee members submit any additional input on any of the character areas on the provided comment forms, and drop them off at City Hall or send via email to the planning team. She then moved directly into the next exercise.

Overarching Needs and Opportunities Discussion

Amanda presented to the group boards depicting Draft Community Goals and Needs and Opportunities for Land Use, Communities Facilities and Resources, Housing, and Population. Ranada Robinson, Market Street Services, presented the Needs and Opportunities for Economic Development. Amanda explained the input for the boards came from feedback of the Steering Committee, the Visioning Workshop, and stakeholder interviews. After review of each board, the Steering Committee was asked to comment on the stated needs and opportunities and whether any should be deleted, revised, or added. Below is a summary of the discussion.

Land Use:

- Change “Establish landscaping requirements along major corridors” to “Establish streetscape standards and/or incentives along major corridors”.
- Establish incentives for incorporating publicly accessible open space as a part of new development.
- Establish incentives for donations of public art. Art can be used as a gateway for the City. City could consider completing an Arts Master Plan to guide such investments.
- Remove “Maintain human scale of the city” – wording is awkward and intent unclear.
- City could pursue a Bicycle Friendly Community designation.
- We should encourage publicly accessible open space within developments in order to be beneficial to the public.
- Incentives should be explored to provide enhancements, such as sidewalks, sculptures, and public art.
- Clarify visual clutter as being addressed through sign regulations.

Economic Development:

- Concern over “strategic destinations” language. Creating a destination of regional draw was of concern by multiple Steering Committee members. /
 - The vision of the City is live/work/play for residents, not to create a destination where others come to and then leave.
 - City needs a balance of live/work/play uses. We need to create more office development as part of mixed use.
 - Potentially a movie studio could be a destination.



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- *It was agreed that this need should be* Remove “Redevelopment of old Kroger shopping center” – this is too specific, and redevelopment is covered by other needs and opportunities.
- Clarify and expand upon alcohol licensing need.

Community Facilities:

- Reduce franchise fees for utilities.
- Add “Protection of Nancy Creek corridor.”
- Burying utilities throughout the city will also help with preserving and expanding the city’s tree cover.

Housing:

- Add provide for a range of housing types to support diverse populations, such as affordable housing, accessory units, assisted living, and senior housing.
 - A policy regarding accessory housing units requires further discussion and debate.
- Ensuring compatible infill housing development should be limited to the character area vision and implementation strategies, rather than a community-wide need or opportunity.
- Support aging in place.

Population

- Accommodate aging in place and address needs for diversity of ages, including ADA compliant facilities and streetscape and community facilities.
- Remove “create a greater sense of community” as this is covered in overarching community goals.

Concluding the discussion, Amanda noted that the attendees could provide any additional comments on the needs and opportunities on the provided comment form.

June 9th Workshop

Amanda stated that the project team will continue to collect input on the character areas at the upcoming public workshop. In general, the format of the workshop will be highly interactive, with only a short presentation to provide context for the attendees. A comment was made that a graphic resource booklet with Georgia based examples of density would be helpful for the workshop attendees. Amanda then explained a needs and opportunities exercise planned for the workshop. Attendees will be given fake currency and a budget. They will be asked to allocate the funds as a means to prioritize their key areas of opportunity or need. This input will shape the priority needs and opportunities to be addressed in the community work program. The last five minutes of the workshop will be devoted to next steps.



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The comment was made that attendees may need more flexibility for moving through exercises, instead of directing them to make defined transitions. An open house format was suggested where attendees could visit stations at their own pace. It was suggested that members of the Steering Committee assist at the workshop, serving as ambassadors to help educate attendees and facilitate their participation in the exercises. It was suggested the Steering Committee members arrive at 5:30pm to be ready to assist the public as they arrive.

Returning to the earlier comment regarding attendance at the public workshops, Amanda asked Kristine Hansen-Dederick (SCI) to discuss publicity efforts. Kristine explained that kiosks or 2'x3' boards with envelopes of flyers announcing the public workshop were created and available for the Steering Committee to take with them and place at an area of high public traffic. Several committee members volunteered and in total nine kiosks were taken by the committee.

Amanda stated that the project team would be in touch with the Steering Committee early in the week of June 2nd to confirm their role in the public workshop. The meeting was then concluded.

Attendees

Steering Committee Members:

Shannon Cameron
Jack Honderd
Collette McDonald
Adrian Schmidt
Stan Segal
Todd Terwilliger

Members of the Public:

Andrew Wells
Patricia Hunt
Andrew Pearson, Seven Oaks Co.
Alison Lontz, Drew Valley
George Daniel
Lance Toland
Eugenia Poulos
Blair and Sharon Beltar
Kathy Forbes
Bill Roberts, BPCA

Project Management Team:

Amanda Hatton, Jacobs
Jonathan Webster, Jacobs
Ranada Robinson, Market Street Services
Kristine Hansen-Dederick, Sycamore Consulting

City Staff

Susan Canon, Assistant City
Manager/Community Development Director
Marie Garrett, City Manager
Ben Song, Deputy Director of Community
Development