



MEETING MINUTES

Date: May 6, 2014 (10:30 to 12:30pm, City Hall Community Room)

Purpose: City of Brookhaven Comprehensive Plan 2034
Steering Committee Goal Setting Meeting

Prepared by: Sycamore Consulting, Inc.

Upon arrival, attendees were provided with a meeting agenda, the Baseline Conditions Analysis, Final Public Involvement Plan, Steering Committee Meeting #1 Homework Assignment, a Future Land Use Map, and a Community Facilities Map.

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 begin the process of establishing the basis of the plan. Since the last meeting, the team has focused on the baseline conditions. This meeting will include a brief overview of the baseline conditions analysis, a vision statement activity, a character area activity and an overview of the public visioning workshop.

Baseline Conditions Analysis

Amanda reviewed the results of the Baseline Conditions Analysis which began with a review of existing plans and policies in and adjacent to Brookhaven. Ranada Robinson (Market Street Services) discussed some key demographic indicators. The team utilized year 2010 census data at the census tract level and draws comparisons for Brookhaven, the Atlanta Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and the state of Georgia. Data shows a high Hispanic population and loss in African American population. Brookhaven is home to a very educated work force and attracts a population with higher educational attainment. There is a high percentage of people with higher income and those in a lower income bracket nearing poverty, however the middle-class population is shrinking. Commuting patterns of Brookhaven residents show that most spend less time in traffic as compared to the Atlanta MSA and the state. There is a higher percentage of the population that utilizes public transit to get to work as compared to other geographies.

Ranada discussed economic development statistics which were gathered using zip code data. The research shows that the fastest growing job sectors are lower paying jobs while there is a decline in



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higher paying jobs. However, when observing the jobs held by current residents the data shows there is a highly skilled and professional labor pool within the City.

Amanda discussed housing data beginning with an overview of overall housing characteristics. The data shows a high percentage of multi-family units but a large amount of residential uses, in general. Most houses were built in the 1960s or later. There are an estimated 126 residential neighborhoods and 66 apartment complexes. The City is currently doing an independent analysis of the 66 apartment complexes to be sure they are healthy and safe places to live. This will be completed after the Comprehensive Plan is complete.

Infill housing is described as a dynamic factor in Brookhaven. Most infill is focused to the north and south of Peachtree Road. The City will provide additional data to supplement the infill housing data analysis. There is a low vacancy rate in Brookhaven when compared to county and state. This could potentially be due to the city's location, accessibility to employment and the mix of housing types. There is a high renter occupancy (approximately 52%) which is higher than the state and county. However, 71% of the rents in Brookhaven are greater than \$999 per month as compared to 45% of the rents in DeKalb greater than \$999. It will be important to consider the impacts of renters in planning for community resources. For owner occupied units, over 70% are valued at \$300,000 or more. It is important to note that expensive housing may be a barrier to entry for younger potential residents who are looking for a place to settle down and to start a family.

Jonathan Webster (Jacobs) talked about the existing land use analysis which revealed that the primary use is single family residential (59.3%) followed by multi-use residential (12.6%) and commercial (9.9%). The majority of Brookhaven is built out with remaining property being mostly undevelopable (in a floodplain or within the airport compatible overlay district). However, there is significant redevelopment potential in strategic locations. Mixed use development is a trend in the City and there is potential for more to occur. The team took a detailed look at current zoning districts and what is allowable, including the Brookhaven-Peachtree Overlay District. The analysis also reviewed the County Comprehensive Plan and its future designations as well. An important part of this process will be to consider if the City has the right zoning designations and if the most appropriate development is occurring.

Lastly, Amanda discussed community facilities and services. The team has documented services to date offered by the City. The police department has increased its force to 60 officers. The Park and Recreation Master Plan process has identified all city parks. Though the City is currently coordinating with DeKalb County on some services such as fire and rescue, schools, libraries and utilities, it will be important to evaluate what the county is doing in these areas to be sure services delivered meet the residents' needs.

Cultural resources were outlined including Oglethorpe University and the Historic Brookhaven community. Natural resources such as waterways and flood areas have also been identified. Lastly, a list of top assets and opportunities for the City was discussed. Among those listed were the fact that Brookhaven is a regionally significant location; has a youthful and diverse population; has potential new mixed-use opportunities; and has an opportunity to leverage and incorporate parallel planning efforts.

Vision Statement Activity

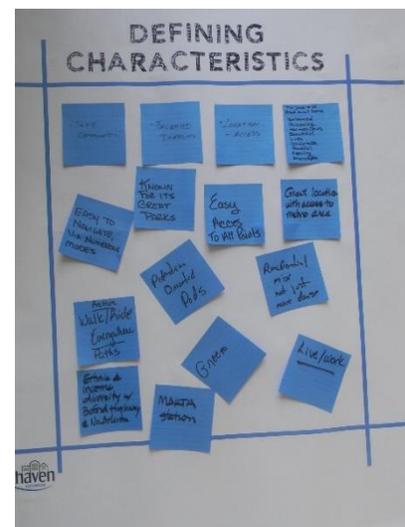
Jen Price (Sycamore) led the group through a visioning exercise beginning with an overview of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) definition of a vision statement and its usefulness in the Comprehensive Planning process. Members were given three sticky notes to summarize responses to three homework questions from the previous Steering Committee meeting:

- What should be the **defining characteristics** of Brookhaven in the long term?
- What will **people say** about Brookhaven 20 years from now?
- What will set the City apart in the metro Atlanta area and make it a **unique place**?

Input received from the visioning exercise will be crafted into a draft vision statement. Below is a summary of the input received for each question.

Defining Characteristics:

- Safe community
- Balanced Diversity
- Location – access
- The place to be proud to call home: balanced, welcoming, harmonious, beautiful, lush, comfortable, peaceful, appealing, desirable
- Easy to navigate, via numerous modes
- Known for its great parks
- Easy access to all points
- Great location with access to metro area
- Active – walk/ride – everywhere – paths
- Pedestrian oriented pods
- Residential mix not just more dense
- Green
- Ethnic and income diversity with Buford Highway and north Atlanta





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- MARTA station
- Live/work

Brookhaven Is:

- Home – where we live
- The best place to come home to
- Safe, easy to navigate, walkable, approachable, great place for businesses, great place to be active
- A great city
- Where people want to live and not leave
- Active – paths
- Diverse and educated
- Rich with ethnic and income diversity
- Respects current residential neighborhoods
- Place you can live without a car
- Economically stable
- Great place to live, work and play
- Vibrant small town community, in the middle of Atlanta
- Pedestrian friendly



What Makes Brookhaven a Unique Place?

- Passive parks
- 3 major interstates border (3 unique areas – 1, 2, 3)
- Connectivity compared to other areas
- Parks & lakes; urban
- A bicycle friendly community designation along with Athens, Roswell and Decatur
- To work-live-play, an oasis, vibrant/green, where business and life can thrive, where you walk/bike/ride easily completely from one end to the other
- Is the best stop on MARTA
- Intermodal by paths & trails
- A Brookhaven beltline that unites the city
- Has great gathering places
- Interconnected green space
- Diverse communities within one city
- Gem of the south





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- Great community feeling
- A defined city center with public plaza

Responses for each question revealed some clear commonalities among Steering Committee members, including the desire for a place that is walkable, bikeable, green, and is a destination.

Character Area Map Activity

The consultant team established a base character area map based on existing conditions analysis, including development patterns, land uses, common features, and community focal points. Jonathan began with the DCA definition of a character area and then reviewed the draft character area map which are broad areas defined by similar housing types, development and geography. The group was invited comment on the draft character areas, to identify where gateways may be considered, and where neighborhood-commercial development should be focused. To bring more specificity to the broad character areas, the Team also could possibly develop an overlay policy map, such as areas appropriate for neighborhood commercial and gateways that would be more detailed. The following comments were received regarding the draft character area map:

- Residential neighborhoods in the northern portion of Brookhaven should be grouped together as one character area, as they are generally similar in development style and character.
- Gateways were identified along:
 - Chamblee Dunwoody Road
 - Harts Mill Road
 - Johnson Ferry Road – East and West
 - Peachtree Road – East and West
 - Tobey Road
 - Dresden Drive
 - Buford Hwy – East and West
 - Briarwood Road
 - North Druid Hills Road
 - Roxboro Road
 - Windsor Parkway
 - Mill Creek Drive
 - Perimeter Center Parkway
 - Ashford Dunwoody Road
 - Perimeter Summit Parkway
- Neighborhood commercial is identified for the intersection of Osborne Road and Windsor Parkway.



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- A potential park has been identified for the Nancy Creek adjacent parcels along the western city boundary.
- The area between Osborne Park and Lynwood Park should be investigated for park expansion.
- The northeast corner of North Druid Hills and Cliff Valley Road/Lenox Park Blvd could potentially be a park or neighborhood commercial.
- The southwest corner of North Druid Hills and Cliff Valley Road/Lenox Park Blvd could potentially be a park or neighborhood commercial.
- The triangle parcel between Goodwin Road, Roxboro Road, and North Druid Hills would be an ideal park.
- The parcels on the western side of North Druid Hills south of the merge with Roxboro Road could serve as neighborhood commercial.

Next Steps

The Steering Committee was encouraged to spread the word about the May 15th Public Workshop. The format of the session was discussed and the following feedback was received regarding the best way to engage the public:

- Interaction – should spend most time on workshop portion versus a presentation.
- There is some concern breaking the discussion into three geographies because of the need to create consensus and to show Brookhaven as a unified area. The committee understands the need to get fine details, but caution the Team about coming into the workshop with 3 pre-defined areas.
- The Committee suggests starting the conversation with an overview of whole community and then move into narrow discussions for a time period before letting the groups rotate.

Questions/Comments/Concerns

The following summarizes the questions, comments and concerns raised throughout the discussion.

- Will comments received in the general email inbox be incorporated into the Steering Committee discussions/plan? *Yes. The team is monitoring the inbox and is developing a way to summarize and track responses to each. A version of the comments received will be made available and updated periodically.*
- The founding date for Oglethorpe University should be 1835.
- Regarding demographics, the team should consider incorporating findings of the Brookhaven Community Insights report (2014) which uses projection data. There are differences in some demographics between the data presented today and this analysis. *Data from the Brookhaven Community Insights report is from a different source and is projected data which explains why there are differences between statistics. The Team will review the data and will take advantage*



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of opportunities to incorporate newly updated demographic data as it becomes available from the Atlanta Regional Commission and the US Census Bureau.

- The Real Estate industry is seeing residents with high incomes and college/advanced degrees as well as some empty nesters who are relocating to the City. Single family detached purchases have been robust. Renters are relocations to the area who want to experience the City before making a purchase. Today, the average price point of the housing stock, even for “fixer uppers” is around \$300,000-350,000.
- Would like to consider comparing Brookhaven against the other cities that are similar.
- First time homebuyers are typically people moving in from an unaffordable city but who find Brookhaven affordable and are able to buy here. Other first time homebuyers are immigrants. The industry is not seeing the typical first time home buyers (Generation Y and X). Many cannot afford to move because of losses sustained to home values during economic downturn. Homes are available that they could move into, but they are underwater in their current homes and cannot move yet.
- Brookhaven can use down payment assistance or some mechanism to make people eligible for FHA funding. This has been successful in other places across Atlanta and could be a way to make this area more affordable for new homeowners.
- *What is the gateway? Gateways will identify possible entry locations into the City. They are usually on prominent corridors and can be used to identify the geographic area. Gateways should help create a sense of place and identify when you have arrived in Brookhaven.*
- The character area map would make a good community council map.
- Consider breaking the character area map up by elementary school zones or some other geography to get more focused feedback from the public
- It makes sense to incorporate input from the park and recreation planning process to plan for parks and greenspace in strategic locations.
- This character area map should also integrate the Buford Highway study recommendations.

Attendees

Steering Committee Members:

Susan Canon, Assistant City Manager, Staff Liaison

Stan Segal, Steering Committee Chairman

Charles Gerrick

Jack Honderd

Collette McDonald

Adrian Schmidt

Todd Terwilliger



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Members of the Public:

Tom Riley, National Wildlife Federation

Blair Belton, Drew Valley

Rebecca Williams, Brookhaven City Council

D. Woodley

Don Neustadt, New Homes, Inc. /Pure Energy Solutions

Project Management Team:

Paul Culter, Jacobs

Amanda Hatton, Jacobs

Jen Price, Sycamore Consulting

Ranada Robinson, Market Street Services

Jonathan Webster, Jacobs

City Staff

Ben Song, Deputy Director of Community Development