

Kick-off Workshop Summary

Thursday, March 6, 2008

On Thursday, March 6th a group of interested citizens came together to be educated about form-based codes, to identify the key issues facing the City's welfare and to engage each other in healthy discussion about possible solutions for some of the City's toughest problems. Hazel Borys of Placemakers, LLC, led the initial discussion and education session, asking participants to identify both their hopes for what this project could accomplish, and their fears about the potential future growth of the City. The lists below are what the residents had to say.

Hopes

- Through traffic will be addressed
- The community will be brought together to build consensus
- Fairbanks will be beautified with high-quality buildings, taking on a graceful appearance as the gateway to Winter Park
- Blighted areas will be converted to walkable, pedestrian-oriented streets
- The City will feel "more green"
- Less and better signage will occur
- Property values will be maintained and/or enhanced
- The City will take advantage of the opportunity to master plan comprehensively
- There will be the ability to build a healthy, sustainable community
- Winter Park is full of real people and real neighborhoods, and it should be kept this way
- Diversity and variety of residential options will be important moving forward
- Property owners will be engaged
- Sidewalks will be wider to provide better pedestrian experiences and walkability
- More interesting open spaces and courtyards will be developed
- Big green setbacks will occur
- That group genius can be created through working together
- That the study area can eventually be expanded to allow more comprehensive planning

Fears

- The City will become more monochromatic
- Loss of older neighborhoods
- Loss of affordable housing
- Increased density without open space
- Loss of eclectic character
- Gentrification

To discuss the City's key issues and potential solutions, the participants formed five groups, with each group engaged on one of the issue topics that had been previously identified by the City's advisory boards and committees, including 1) Creating a Green City, 2) Ways to Increase the Tax Base, 3) Residential Options and Affordability, 4) Intensification of Land-Uses and 5)



Transportation and Walkability. Some groups identified issues and solutions while others held general discussion on the issues. The results are below.

Creating a Green City

Issues

- Can we afford to maintain our park standards, currently 10 acres per 1,000 residential units? We are at the limit now. Does this preclude additional annexation?
- Need setbacks for canopy trees everywhere and additional right-of-way will be required on some streets
- Public green spaces are lacking and are critical
- Funds for hardscaping to compliment landscape
- Maintenance enforcement
- Water supply is short
- Current codes do not allow some green design (green roofs, parking lots, run-off release)

Solutions

- Overhead utilities will need to go underground
- Use of native species that take less water, use of xeriscape and native Zoysia grass
- Re-use of water
- Master retention systems can be incorporated as amenities
- Provide adequate setbacks to maintain greenery levels

Ways to Increase the Tax Base

Issues

- Development needs to be controlled, and key aspects identified – what type? where? what character will it have?
- Empty commercial land needs to be guided towards proper development
- Expansion of Rollins College may decrease the tax base
- The implications of density

Solutions

- Utilize empty lots
- Predictable development standards
- Orlando Avenue Holiday Inn redevelopment as potential case study
- Transportation improvement plan
- West Fairbanks improvements
- Volunteerism

Residential Options and Affordability

Issues

- Affordability
- Access to alternative transportation
- Connectivity

- Lack of walkable pedestrian safe streets makes people get in their cars
- Need proximity to parks
- Lack of diversity in offerings and architecture – types, price ranges, dwelling sizes, lot sizes
- Lack of creativity in layouts
- Loss of community fabric and neighborliness
- Lack of rental options
- Limited starter houses and apartments
- Limited senior housing, no real mid-range option for seniors
- Lack of mobility for seniors with limited public transportation
- McMansion style housing

Solutions

- Independent Neighborhood Transportation
- Senior housing in or near the Central Business District that doesn't require parking so that seniors can walk to fulfill needs
- True connectivity and alternative transportation modes, i.e. buses, transit, rail, walking, biking
- Protect lot size options through zoning
- Restoration and renovation of historic properties, provide allotments for maintenance
- Land trusts and partnerships for workforce housing
- Allow secondary dwelling units (granny flats) within lots
- Allow flexibility with home-based businesses
- Education on options to preserve housing

Intensification of Land-Uses

- Retain the village character that makes Winter Park the premier urban village in Central Florida
 - Retain small town feel
 - Retain the eclectic diverse character that is important
- Change is okay if it is done...
 - In the right place
 - In the right way
 - It enhances the village character
- Mix residential into the various corridors to the extent that we can.
- Calm through traffic and deal with it in whatever manner is appropriate that will recognize the huge impact of through traffic and still make it as convenient as possible for Winter Park residents to use our major streets and highways.
- We want to identify the neighborhoods within the corridors that have specific characteristics that make them different and treat them in the appropriate way.
- We should consider annexation on the north side of Fairbanks to enhance the possibilities of the re-development on that side of the street.
- We can't let the car overwhelm the environment

- We can not let the car overwhelm the image of the community, especially with regard to parking structures and where they occur. They should not front streets. They should be lined and/or highly landscaped.
- We should configure our land uses so that we can exist with fewer cars or no cars by utilizing alternative modes of transportation.
- We should create many more walkable opportunities and solutions where you can live, work and play in Winter Park without a car.
- Building height, building wall to building wall should not exceed 1:1.
- Traffic on the major avenues needs to be controlled. Through traffic is a major problem from a walkability standpoint.

Transportation

- Village character needs to be defined
- Possible residential units without parking in the commercial areas for affordable senior/student housing
- Master planning with fiscal implications
- Consolidated parking as a solution
- Street types should match use and desired speed
- Boulevards can be used to make through-streets more pedestrian friendly and green