



Elizabeth *Area Plan*

Mid-point Public Meeting
June 9, 2010
5:30 – 7:00 p.m.
St. John Baptist Church
300 Hawthorne Lane, Charlotte, NC 28202

Meeting Notes

The meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

Alan Goodwin began the meeting with introductions and general housekeeping items. He reviewed the meeting format and described what an area plan is, what can be expected from an area plan and why an area plan for Elizabeth is underway. Alan also reviewed the plan webpage and what can be found there, the public kick-off meeting and survey. He explained that when this meeting was originally scheduled at the beginning of the process, the thought was to review preliminary plan recommendations, particularly for East Seventh Street. However, although much work has been done to date, there are not draft recommendations at this point. The meeting instead focused on work completed to date and next steps.

Alan then introduced the Citizen Advisory Group that has been meeting since September and the work the group has undertaken during that time, including Parks/Open Space and the Environment, Community Design, Land Use and Transportation. He introduced the preliminary land use concept map and described the market analysis completed as part of the project.

Brian Horton with CDOT then provided background information on East Seventh Street, described CDOT's focus on complete streets and the results of the transportation portion of the survey from the public kick-off meeting. He described the traffic analysis work that has been completed for East Seventh Street and compared its traffic volumes to that of East Boulevard. He outlined the current lane configuration on East Seventh Street and the assumptions for a possible three lane conversion and the challenges that it poses, most especially because of the Pecan/Caswell/East Seventh Street intersection configuration. Brian explained that the next steps are to return to the CAG at their next meeting and refine the concepts for East Seventh Street with the intent to return to the public with recommendations in the fall. CDOT will also continue to work with NCDOT to evaluate the recommended alternatives.

Alan then reviewed the area plan process meeting schedule. The CAG has met eight times over the last nine months and has two more scheduled meetings. A final public meeting will tentatively be scheduled for the fall to present the draft area plan and recommendations, followed by the review and adoption process. Alan described the review and adoption process and the plan's review by the Planning Commission and City Council, with opportunities for public input. Alan then reviewed the next steps and opened the meeting to questions and comments.

The following is a summary of questions that were asked:

Question: Is the intention to maintain the current curb line, ROW and transitional setback?

Response: Yes, but there may be strategic locations where changes may be recommended. In general, the transitional setback has not been maintained in this area.

Question: Why can't traffic just be shifted to Independence?

Response: Traffic modeling work completed as part of this process showed that a majority of traffic does not move to Independence but, instead, to Randolph, Providence and Central Avenue before Independence. This may be because most of the traffic is local and CDOT has concerns about increasing traffic on these streets.

Question: Who advocates for the plan once it is adopted?

Response: City staff and the community. As part of the rezoning process staff considers area plan policies as part of the rezoning analysis and technical reports. City Council approves rezonings.

Question: Developers meet with City staff, can the public?

Response: Yes.

Question/Comment: Councilmember Kinsey stated that there are many plans that affect Elizabeth, including Centers, Corridors and Wedges. She is very concerned about Elizabeth being part of a Corridor and asked how it will affect Elizabeth.

Response: Centers, Corridors and Wedges is a very broad plan that provides a growth framework for the entire City and County. It recognizes Elizabeth as an established neighborhood. The Elizabeth Area Plan will provide more detailed recommendations that, in effect, will update CCW and provide guidance for the plan area.

Comment: Parking spaces in the Independence Park parking lot are being used by institutional uses.

Response: In the long term, these spaces will go away.

Comment: Removing 25 cars from Elizabeth should be considered as there are transportation alternatives to the automobile. Large institutions should be more responsible.

Comment: As an older person, I need to drive to the park and know there are others like me.

Question: How does CCW affect the decision to widen East Seventh Street?

Response: It does not affect it. CCW is a broad growth framework and recognizes that there are areas that don't fit the broad "Corridor" definition. The area plan will include a recommendation for the East Seventh Street cross-section and it is expected to be within the current curb line.

Comment: Crossing East Seventh at Pecan/Caswell is unsafe for pedestrians due to the traffic light timing.

Response: CDOT will look for short term solutions such as holding the pedestrian signal to allow pedestrians to cross while traffic is stopped.

Question: I noticed that there are recommendations to preserve alleys, but many are being used by property owners. What can I do with my alley?

Response: It depends on the specific alley and whether or not it has been abandoned. CDOT staff can help property owners determine this.

Question: Are there plans to develop a path along Deacon Creek?

Response: Not at this time.

Question: What is the latest on the CPCC deck?

Response: As far as we know the situation has not been resolved.

Comment: The idea of putting more development along East Seventh Street will increase traffic.

Question: What is the plan for Armory Drive?

Response: Construction is proceeding; Armory Drive will shift slightly, but will remain public.

Question: Is it possible to negate the transitional setback?

Response: This will be discussed with Planning and CDOT Leadership.

Comment/Question: Elizabeth was supposed to get the cross-section that East Boulevard got, but CDOT and Planning disagreed. Thank you for getting together on this plan. What is a road diet?

Response: It is a road conversion process.

Question: When will rail go into effect through Elizabeth?

Response: There is a contract for Conceptual Engineering work and a grant has been applied for to advance work from the Transit Center to Presbyterian Hospital.

Question: If a historic district is pursued, could the area of Elizabeth that is not included in this plan be part of the district?

Response: Yes.

Staff was available for specific questions and the meeting ended at approximately 7:00 p.m.

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