

Independence Boulevard – October 28 Meeting Responses – Focus Area 1

Note: The community comments shown below represent the comments from both public meeting sessions. They are grouped by focus areas and organized within each focus area by the planning principles.

Focus Area 1-Strengthen and Build Neighborhoods

- Connecting Bay Street (Chantilly) neighborhood to Briar Creek/Independence will hurt the entire neighborhood by increasing traffic (creating a danger to the residents), increasing crime (as demonstrated by the drop in crime levels when Chantilly was cut off from Independence and Monroe and decreasing property values.
- Narrow streets with sidewalks connected directly to road on Bay Street could create safety and crime issues to residents of Chantilly due to increased through traffic if Bay Street connector is put in.
- I live in Chantilly and have zero interest in extending Bay Street to Briar Creek – major concerns with crime and quality of life with increased traffic.
- The entire Chantilly neighborhood is concerned the connector road on Bay would become a cut thru from the node.
- Eastway/Sheffield likes the elimination of streets feeding into Independence. They like the idea of the businesses being demolished and a berm going into so they can strengthen their neighborhood.
- Bay Street connector introduces new traffic into neighborhood on narrow streets.
- Don't add access at end of Bay and too many people use that as a cut thru now and drive way too fast – this would increase that problem.
- No need for access point out of Chantilly at Bay as the point of the neighborhood is to be separate with access to Pecan – an access point at Bay would severely hurt Chantilly.
- No access road from Bay Street towards Independence. Safe, quiet neighborhood needs to remain the same. No connector to Independence.
- Chantilly neighborhood not involved in green and red dot exercise but connecting will increase traffic.
- We already walk Chantilly and have neighborhood feel. Street at end of Bay would mess that up.
- Increasing single family homes at the end of Shenandoah will cause more traffic and congestion at the end of the two streets.
- Put the frontage road through the node to act as a main street, not on the edge by Independence.
- Lots of new families in Chantilly (new babies). Don't make our streets busier.
- We don't feel \$7 million for a bridge is the best use of our tax money.
- Elimination of the Norland to Independence Blvd. mess is a good idea.
- Would like to see more connections between areas south of Independence (other than Monroe Road).
- Proposed addition to Greenway with Chantilly Corner project. Increase of pedestrian access. Across Independence and Briar Creek proper to transit station.
- Close Fugate Avenue at Independence.

Focus Area 1-Create Nodes

- Like neighborhood core area proposed on north side of blvd. across from arena with surrounding greenway and links to Eastway and Briar Creek Road.

Focus Area 1-Reclaim and Showcase Natural Systems

- Concern with Bay Street connector to Briar Creek. Connectivity for Chantilly residents is present currently. A greenway would be better use of land and in turn create better strengthening of Chantilly and surrounding communities.
- Connector bridge would cross new park and potential greenway. Traffic noise and pollution.
- All parcels in Briar Creek flood plain should remain green space.
- Flood plain development should be limited to parks – not more housing or roads.

Focus Area 1-Orient Towards Monroe and Central

- Connector bridge in Chantilly defeats orientation towards Monroe – orients toward Independence.
- Does not make traffic to Monroe/Central if add street at end of Bay. Creates traffic and cut thru.
- Bay St. connector orients Chantilly to Independence instead of Monroe or Central hence going against your goal.
- Connector bridge orients Chantilly toward Independence - not Monroe.
- Provide Chantilly the choice not to have their neighborhood destroyed with cut thru traffic.
- Removing focus from what was, and should be returned to Charlotte's premier business corridor is sinister and destructive to the entire eastern quadrant of Charlotte.

Focus Area 1-Leverage Opportunities

- When are they going to start some of these changes? Timing?
- Zone Highway 74 UMUD from Uptown to Idlewild 800 feet on each side.

Focus Area 1-Provide Choices

- Yellow area with Chantilly neighborhood should remain a green space – it is a flood plain.
- Consider more pedestrian links to transit stations other than adding streets.

Focus Area 1-Balance Neighborhood, Community, and Regional Needs

- Neighborhood (Chantilly) does not want new connector into quiet neighborhood.
- Chantilly neighborhood has thrived because it is the most pedestrian friendly neighborhood in Charlotte. Introducing lots of traffic will bring down the community and property values.
- Bay Street connector would increase traffic to Chantilly which we DO NOT WANT.
- Pedestrian walk access from north and south.
- Connector into Chantilly unsafe for current residents. Keep out kids and families safe.
- We do not want single family homes/condo space/or apartments at the end of Shenandoah and Chesterfield.
- If you take access away from a business on US 74 that business is done – not going to be able to make it (like south to drive-in).

- TOD zoning should be at Briar Creek transit station. Just like zoning along South Blvd. at transit stations. Be consistent.
- Zoning should be neighborhood node. Not core. At a minimum.
- Please consider higher intensity use of land near Briar Creek station to justify cost of land and encourage development. Connect Coliseum Drive to Commonwealth.
- Neighborhood core doesn't promote stable values and ownership through apartments.

Focus Area 1-Define U.S. 74

- Add light rail out on Highway 74.
- Add light rail.
- Yes and do it faster than slower.
- Encouraged by proposed concept illustrated for Independence Blvd. showing double tree buffer and possible service road.
- Eastway cloverleaf should be maintained for westbound access. Briar Creek needs interchange.
- Until the type of road expressway/freeway, Independence will become the other development cannot proceed.

Focus Area 1-Implement the Plan

- Costs of building a bridge over a floodplain would be extremely costly.
- Develop greenway at motels as soon as possible. Remove an eyesore and create an amenity.

Independence Boulevard – October 28 Meeting Responses – Focus Area 2

Note: The community comments shown below represent the comments from both public meeting sessions. They are grouped by focus areas and organized within each focus area by the planning principles.

Focus Area 2-General

- Nice ideas, but think of these things: walking retail – fine and good, but where is parking? Is there enough parking. What about rainy days. People are very “fair weather” when shopping/walking. Parking example: Dilworth shops/restaurants open and close due to lack of parking, lack of ease in parking and lack of ease in parking and lack of discovery in parking/not visible, so where do I park? Elderly and disabled – how will that be handled with walking retail. Beautiful ideas over all. Looks like it will bring value. Are builders/investors interested? That’s a big deal for success. If they were, wouldn’t Eastland have help too? What kind of transit? Where will it reach beyond neighborhoods?

Focus Area 2-Strengthen and Build Neighborhoods

- Bike paths between retail/transit and park and housing areas.
- Can we have a berm that separates our neighborhoods from Independence like Eliz and Chantilly has?
- Can you bury the power lines on Independence and in our neighborhoods?
- Can you put a berm between Amity Gardens and the new Sharon Amity?
- Light rail?
- Put in light rail system down Independence.
- Pedestrian access north to south.
- If parcels too small to support business – turn over to green.
- Connection of Pierson through to Monroe is a plus to alleviate cut-thru traffic on Cutler Place and Kistler Ave. Good plan.
- Do not cut Pierson through to Monroe Road.
- A traffic circle at Mantel and Chippendale to slow traffic.
- Do nothing that will create additional traffic in any neighborhood. Extending Pierson to Monroe is a great example of a poor idea.
- Condos, not apartments, at Chippendale and Monroe.
- Do not cut thru Pierson to Monroe through Oakhurst. It will destroy the structure of the single family homes. It is enough to connect to north side only.
- What happened to Walmart plan for Amity Gardens? Is the City planning to assist Wal-Mart achieve the location at Amity Gardens?
- Buy land adjacent to Independence and sell to developers in public/private venture.
- Keep west bound traffic out of neighborhood when providing access to Wal-Mart.
- We need a YMCA type facility on south side of Independence to serve area – private/non-profit lower middle income.

- Pierson cut thru – BAD IDEA.
- What happens to Amity Gardens? Is Wal-Mart moving to Amity Gardens?

Focus Area 2-Create Nodes

- There is a single family neighborhood and Oakhurst Elementary School at the intersection of Commonwealth and Monroe Road. Why have you placed an employment district right across the street? Please look at the negative effect the proposed employment district will have on the predominately single-family neighborhood and elementary school right across the street. This district needs to be shifted on the other side of Eastway.
- Don't create more cut-thru traffic.
- Entrance from Driftwood into neighbor mode.
- Diversity in housing (mid to upper scale) would encourage and spawn new retail. More neighborhood retail, like coffee houses, etc.
- How to get across Shawn Amity from one side to the other in neighbor mode.
- Trolley down Central!
- Made area where shopping center connects with Eastway.
- Restore Amity Gardens as a nostalgic 1950s shopping center rather than replacing it with another lousy Wal-Mart.
- There will be residential nodes in the future where people live now. Will you still tear down or move people out, then build new homes for people to move back into?

Focus Area 2-Reclaim and Showcase Natural Systems

- Preserve the creek along Pierson thru shade valley behind proposed Wal-Mart.
- Will daylight streaming resolve problems with flash flooding of Albemarle, Central and Independence.
- Protect our trees as we change.
- Offer discounted transplanting of vegetation and mature trees to home owners who have space and a desire to own and display them.
- Transplant trees and natural vegetation to areas along major roadways to enhance both pass-thru and inhabitant's surroundings.
- Improve connectivity with green ways to maximize community use.
- Introduce more parks and greenways on south side of Independence in this area.
- You talk about naturalizing the creeks – what is the plan or are the ideas for drainage creeks such as the creek between Kistler Avenue and Erickson? Please don't annex people's property.
- We need all the open, green space we can save and incorporate in whatever development we accomplish.

Focus Area 2-Orient Towards Monroe and Central

- Increase vehicular and pedestrian connections to Monroe and Central – more streets, shorter blocks.

- Central and Monroe were mentioned numerous times during the presentation and Monroe is included in this plan while Central is not (since it is a separate study). Is there any coherence between this plan and Central to ensure things are balanced and do not become disjointed?
- Why is Eastland Mall area not included? No node? I thought we were orienting toward Central Avenue?
- Let's not let Monroe become ever more congested and unwalkable. It is not an inviting road short of Eastway/Wendover.
- Most of the focus was on Monroe. Nothing on Sharon Amity towards Albemarle Road and Central Avenue.
- The City makes it too difficult. Too costly to do changes of use in business zoned and office zoned parcels that were originally built as residences. This difficulty is slowing development and impeding commerce.
- A bad compromise relative to restoring access to and access on Independence.

Focus Area 2-Leverage Opportunities

- Provide small-business assistance to neighborhood home owners who would like to start their businesses like new mixed-use retail space near their homes.
- Enable CATS/CDOT to purchase and develop land to start the process.
- I see strong potential to market mixed-use developments to younger professionals who desire a car-free pedestrian and mass transit lifestyle without the uptown price tag.
- Make mixed use properties contemporary to attract more professionals to area.
- We have an opportunity to discourage car and truck use by not improving 74 – why do we not take advantage of it?
- Keep B-2 zoning in neighborhood core.
- Streetcars use historic low impact infrastructure not heavy modernistic expensive infrastructure – thank New Orleans. Do it now.

Focus Area 2-Provide Choices

- Allow/incentivize residential above on-street business and behind current residential (backyard small rentals).
- Keep Woodland Drive access to Independence. Don't force neighborhoods to use only a few entrances – cheater congestion at these locations.
- We need a grocery store around Albemarle and Sharon Amity area (not ethnic) Focus Area 1.
- Each node needs to offer affordable “urban/stylist” pedestrian friendly homes for sale.
- Air quality???
- More diverse retail that is pedestrian friendly.

Focus Area 2-Balance Neighborhood, Community, and Regional Needs

- Business district area around Albemarle especially west side has poor access onto Independence and shops didn't have access to neighborhoods behind. Possibly put on south side of Independence in current undesignated area.
- Return to constable on patrol practices that encourage policy to be seen more via or foot, segways, etc.
- Make frontage "main streets" within nodes, not on side by Independence.
- No speed humps!!
- "If you build it they will come" look at Noda and S. Blvd. and the "spark" a defined plan and vision helped stimulate (and quickly). Mass transit.
- Provide more outreach of policy to neighborhood associations.
- We need a Y-type facility to match general incomes on south side of Independence. Private/non-profit?
- Nothing done or not done in this area is in a vacuum – how does it impact adjacent areas further away?
- Condos not apartments at Chippendale – Monroe node.

Focus Area 2-Define U.S. 74

- If 74 access becomes limited, then put light rail to one side of highway not middle.
- Replace bus lanes with light rail and upgrade to be more aesthetically pleasing.
- Solidify and define future mass transit plans and build off of it to accentuate the new features. Transit centers were mentioned frequently.
- Light rail for Highway 74.
- Eliminate the 175 foot setback on Independence to allow dingy, empty retail to be restored.
- Mass transit – light rail.
- Put back the big oak trees DOT cut on 74 between Eastway and Sharon Amity and require DOT to plant in the future.
- It appears to be turning into a huge obstacle with the additional impact of destroying good commercial locations. We don't need to create more problems to move more stuff.

Focus Area 2-Implement the Plan

- This input process has not made clear what elements are public investments and what would be private investment.
- I can't discern how the public input has actually guided this plan.
- Ultimately none of this will occur without the right commercial players and developers.
- Who pays? Bond votes? Time frame?
- Nothing special enough to implement yet – waste of time.
- Include light rail plans.

Focus Area 2-Strengthen and Build Neighborhoods

- No MF rental period.
- No more rental.
- Keep “N core” area between Albemarle and Sharon Amity Orient Towards Monroe and Central.
- B-2: node at Sharon Amity and Albemarle should be a neighborhood core. Access is limited at the intersection because of the medians. It is a barrier and limited to one direction at each side.
- Get rid of deteriorating and crime-ridden Idlewild Apartments.
- Rezone to create mixed use office-retail-residential buildings.
- We need light rail, not buses.
- Create mixed use retail/residential areas to replace blighted apartments. No bus transit – will not improve the neighborhood - will not attract business.
- Curtail crime in the area. Tear down Idlewild Apartments. Build mixed-use apartments instead.
- What has happened to the development of Independence Woods? What will the costs of new homes be?
- When multi-family is created near Independence, change high density apts. In other areas to mixed use so not too much multi in relation to single family.
- Consult with Tom Lowe! New urbanism perfect for us.

Independence Boulevard – October 28 Meeting Responses – Focus Area 1

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Focus Area 3-Create Nodes

- No industrial on n. side of Independence between Farmingdale and Idlewild. Make neighborhood core.
- No commercial in residential neighborhood.
- If this node is developed with a strong aesthetic and pedestrian friendly, it will become part of Southpark.
- Use more public elements, i.e. schools, to strengthen node concepts =- use elements to get nodes started.
- Sharon Amity from Independence to Monroe on the Idlewild Road side – why not zone to allow it all for a neighborhood core?

Focus Area 3-Reclaim and Showcase Natural Systems

- Need parks, greenways north of Independence between Sharon Amity & Idlewild.
- Develop additional acreage for Cedarwood Park.
- Put some parks into industrial mix on Independence.
- Independence Woods? What's going on there?
- Will greenways really help with flooding?
- Expand Alpine Park passed Harris Blvd. and connect to Idlewild Rd. with parking.
- Has environmental study been performed?

Focus Area 3-Orient Towards Monroe and Central

- Lantern Ave. does not appear to be changed by the plan. It is a dated, non-uniform street and would benefit from change.
- Ignoring Independence is a 9 step boulevard and detrimental to all of east Charlotte.
- Need connections across the blvd. – not just reorientation we need to be able to access library, high school.

Focus Area 3-Leverage Opportunities

- Demonstrate more/stronger linkage to transit station in proposed concepts.
- Keep B-2 zoning between Buick and 74.
- Find place for home economist, Brazas, Nomaste, Steak N Hoagie before they move. Use them as base.

Focus Area 3-Provide Choices

- More residential.
- Public transportation on cross streets, i.e., Central Avenue to Monroe Road on Sharon Amity.
- Not interested in transit station so close to residential neighborhood.
- Knock down Silver Oaks apts. And build condos.

Focus Area 3-Balance Neighborhood, Community, and Regional Needs

- I thought the #2 priority has our neighborhoods.
- Neighborhood – not commercial.
- No bus station.
- What are the traffic congestive projections/problems in regards to East Mede at 6:30 a.m. Balance Neighborhood, Community, and Regional Needs:15 a.m. and 2:15 p.m. Reclaim and Showcase Natural Systems :00 p.m. each weekday?

Focus Area 3-Define U.S. 74

- No need so please delete pointless suggested connector from Farmingdale through “industrial” area.
- No bus transit - will not improve the neighborhood. Will not attract business.
- Bus station brings a lower view of the area thus more deterioration of the neighborhood.
- Light rail. No bus.
- Center bus lanes need to be made more palatable to the eye.
- No bus station.
- Revisit transit station. Think rail rather than buses.

Focus Area 3-Implement the Plan

- All zoning & rezoning must be conditional.
- Tougher rezoning process. Public input on all subdivision approvals that increase density.
- Need more efforts to connect north and south of independence – restaurant, coffee shop or something to connect – I thought connecting east and west was a principle.
- Bikeways to connect – walkways to school – library.
- Proposed street in purple area – no industrial or factories.
- This plan seems to be making the community deteriorate more.

Independence Boulevard – October 28 Meeting Responses – Focus Area 1

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Focus Area 4-General

- There is a disconnect in the planning along Thermal Rd. The neighborhood core is included (apartments) but the Thermal connection or possible new connection isn't included.

Focus Area 4-Strengthen and Build Neighborhoods

- Freshen the look of Village Lake.
- Pale yellow is fine. Clear streets.

Focus Area 4-Reclaim and Showcase Natural Systems

- Expand Mason Wallace Park into available land occupied by shacks on Wallace Road.
- Interconnect McAlpine greenway to Mason Wallace Park via Cherry Trip Dr. (proposed).

Focus Area 4-Orient Towards Monroe and Central

- Ignoring Independence Blvd. is harmful to East Charlotte, we need the economic engine back.

Focus Area 4-Leverage Opportunities

- Possible retail section on Village Lake.

Focus Area 4-Provide Choices

- Connectivity options (pike/ped) to cross Independence safely, ped bridges, tunnels, etc.

Focus Area 4-Balance Neighborhood, Community, and Regional Needs

- Good areas need everyday services.
- Is there any possibility that the development will happen without expansion of the greenway. The greenway's balance is needed to avoid sprawl.

Focus Area 4-Define U.S. 74

- Sharon Forest Road crossing of Independence eliminated.

Focus Area 4-Implement the Plan

- Buy land as it becomes available. The frontage road from Wallace to Village Lake is a great idea.
- Could you run light rail up the existing track along Monroe?

Independence Boulevard – October 28 Meeting Responses – Focus Area 1

Note: The community comments shown below represent the comments from both public meeting sessions. They are grouped by focus areas and organized within each focus area by the planning principles.

Focus Area 5-General

- Please preserve the stream and falls and topography on the north side of Independence.
- Maintain and create connections across Independence. Community is vital.

Focus Area 5-Create Nodes

- Employment district adjacent to the regional node breaks up the node and cuts property ownerships between the regional node and the employment district.

Focus Area 5-Orient Towards Monroe and Central

- Restore the business corridor and economic feeder that Independence once was. This plan is destructive to all of East Charlotte.

Focus Area 5-Provide Choices

- Suggest build train on Independence Blvd. to Levine campus and beyond.

Focus Area 5-Implement the Plan

- Coordination with town of Matthews would help the implementation of the regional node.