

Northlake

Northlake Area Plan Summary Notes

February 6, 2007
Advisory Group Meeting
Northlake Mall
5:30-6:30 pm

Advisory Group Attendees: Alvin Avery, Juanita Merritt, John Corrigan, Phil Morosco, Ron Withrow, and John Jones.

Staff: Jonathan Wells, Tricia Rudisill, Claire Lyte-Graham, Melony McCullough, and Mari Sigmon.

Consultants: Ed McKinney (Glatting-Jackson) and Stan Harvey (Urban Collage)

1. Welcome and Overview

Patricia Rudisill (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department) provided to the group a brief overview of activities occurring at the February 5, 2006 Northlake Area Plan sessions. Ms. Rudisill then stated to the group that consultants working on the Northlake Area Plan/Eastfield Station Area Planning projects would be updating the group regarding progress thus far. Mr. Ed McKinney (Glatting-Jackson) would focus on the station area concept, and Mr. Stan Harvey (Urban Collage) would concentrate on the area plan and visioning around the mall.

2. Eastfield Station Area

Mr. Ed McKinney (Glatting-Jackson) spoke about the purpose of working with the public and discussing opportunities around Eastfield. He provided a working map identifying key locations around the proposed station.

Mr. McKinney described a series of exercises that were conducted at the Monday, February 5th meeting, with input provided primarily by property owners on the west side. He noted that these owners are mainly interested in maximizing development potential. Mr. McKinney also noted that Glatting-Jackson had conducted interviews with these property owners that focused on how to accomplish this task.

Mr. McKinney identified and discussed the Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT) and Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO) street network on the working map. He also noted the incorporation of the Alexandriana historic area and opportunities for integration of the existing historic homesteads along Old Statesville Road. He described that there were houses owned by a family dating back to the 1830s. He talked about organizing higher intensity uses around the Alexandriana park site and extending the green space to the station, as well as longer-term possibilities of potentially relocating the 1830s historic home to the Alexandriana park site.

Mr. McKinney identified the main property owners to within the Eastfield Transit Station area: Independence Hills Baptist Church, the Davis family, and a group of family owners. He noted that the Gandy Communities' development is already approved.

Mr. McKinney then reviewed the schematic land use and transportation map with the group. He identified the ½ mile radius, representing a 10 minute walk. The area within the 10 minute walk indicates an area where intensification of development could occur. He noted the South Corridor as an example of this. He also discussed that with approximately 100 acres of undeveloped land there are a lot of opportunities for development, including connecting the Alexandria historic site to both the Dixon Branch greenway and the Eastfield Transit Station.

He then discussed the differing types of transit-oriented development (residential mixed-use, employment mixed-use, and transit oriented mixed-use), noting that employment based would be most appropriately suited towards the I-485 interchange.

Mr. McKinney concluded his discussion with mention of the proposed signalization in the transit station area. He indicated a need to ensure that signals work in sync with the type and intensity of development. He identified signals at Hucks/Metromont, I-485, and Eastfield. He noted the need to create a parallel road to Old Statesville, which could potentially be situated between I-485 and Hucks/Metromont. A parallel road would help to increase connectivity, while also serving as the spine for a more unified block system. The creation of a block system would also allow for development to be framed on both sides of the street.

3. Northlake Pedestrian District & Regional Mixed-Use Center

Mr. Stan Harvey (Urban Collage) stated that his group had synthesized the comments from exercises conducted with the public on Monday, February 5th and began to create a broad land use and circulation plan. He reviewed the boundaries of the Regional Mixed-Use Center and the pedestrian district, noting that intensification would occur in these areas.

He also noted that Urban Collage had conducted a series of interviews with major property owners/stakeholders for the areas around the mall. Discussions took the better part of Tuesday, February 6th; therefore, the land use/circulation plan was still being refined. He described the initial land use scenario, questioning how to get to more dense development and what improvements would be needed to accommodate it. He also noted the needed to balance auto-oriented realities with pedestrian-oriented design.

Mr. Harvey also discussed the ability to use the floodplain/greenway as an open space organizing feature.

Mr. Harvey noted that an east/west road connection across the study area is being examined. He also indicated that this planning initiative is looking at the road network as an organizing function but also pointed out that there needs to be improved connections

for pedestrians. He noted the potential need for providing pedestrian connections across Harris Boulevard to/from the mall and the Perimeter Woods development.

Mr. Harvey noted that talks with Huntersville have assisted in assessing land use relationships with Northlake. He also indicated that flexibility should be permitted in locating residential throughout the planning area. He also mentioned that more intensified residential development as opposed to low-density single-family residential should be considered.

He stated that there was a lot of discussion about retail, he and noted that successful retail is desirable. But, from the broader perspective, scattering it everywhere does not accomplish transportation goals. Therefore, it needs to be strategically located. Therefore, there is a need to examine strategic locations for retail in more detail.

He then referenced the general land use map and discussed with the group the areas within which may be appropriate for differing types of land uses. Mr. Harvey stated that the concepts would be more refined by Wednesday evening. Preliminary discussions compiled from Monday and Tuesday included:

- Northcrest – relatively built out with retail and would expect it to remain
- Area surrounding mall – mixed-use residential and non-residential (retail/office)
- Greenway – mix of uses with a residential focus; concept of “eyes on the park”
- Areas bordering the interstate may be more oriented towards office
- Areas north of mall but closer to I-485 may be better suited for higher density residential
- Market will drive the new types of residential
- Specific plans for Northcrest and Perimeter Woods will show approved plans but with opportunities for residential redevelopment
- Gale/Gandy property – discussed residential focus on proposed Dixon Branch greenway

Questions posed by those in attendance included the following:

- Eastfield Station ½ mile boundary and 10 minute walk. Where would the 10 minute walk be from the mall?
- Potential bridge and pedestrian access to transit station, and associated grading problems (alignment not yet established).
- Crossing of I-77 to area north of Northlake mall from the Hucks/Metromont Road area
- I-485/Hwy 115 circulation/accessibility

Number of lanes bridge over I-77 would have (four, including bike lanes)

4. Wrap Up and Next Steps

Ms. Rudisill concluded the meeting by announcing that there would be no formal meetings during the day on Wednesday, February 7th. The consultants would be focusing on refining the plans in preparation for the Wednesday night Advisory Group Meeting, which would be held from 5:30-6:30 pm.