

**Midtown St Albans**  
**Confirmation Group Meeting 3**  
**February 5, 2019 4:30 p.m.**  
**Captrust Building, 12<sup>th</sup> floor**

Group members in attendance: Shelley Winters, David Jones, Stephen Brechbiel, Ted Kunstling, Stephen Sposato, Donna Rosefield, Alicia Barfield, Bonner Gaylord, Robin Hammond, Lee Hilts

City staff: Jason Hardin, Sara Ellis, Hannah Reckhow, Kristin Williams

Project consultants: Joe Seymour (VHB), Don Bryson (VHB), Larry Zucchini (JDavis), Maggie Connor (1 over 1).

Meeting began at 4:31 p.m.

Jason Hardin began the meeting off with a summary of the agenda.

Sara Ellis introduced the parking lot idea to keep track of important but off-topic ideas. She gave an overview of the outreach process to date.

- We are in the 'Confirming Our Findings' phase, moving towards 'Issues and Opportunities'.
- Outreach was done to area schools, churches, Latino businesses, apartment buildings, the confirmation group extended network, and on bus routes. Project team is open to ideas on how to connect with apartment residents more directly. Outreach was also done to Citizen Advisory Councils, North Hills & Midtown Raleigh Alliance, area sport and swim clubs, and by targeted social media posts, mailed post cards, and GovDelivery.
- We had feedback from in-person meetings, activity stations notes, and feedback cards
  - Any thoughts on the format of these events?
    - The process seemed to encompass a lot, I thought the meeting went well.
    - Compacting the events into one week did not work for some people, especially if it happened to be a bad week for them.
    - The timing was not a good opportunity for those who work in the area but don't live. A 5 pm or a weekend daytime would work better.
    - I liked the format of having timed stations.
    - Maggie asked if the group member felt they had enough time to understand content.
      - It was good if you went to multiple meetings, but once we're thinking about solutions we may need more time at each event for discussion.
    - I think these events were useful for gauging opinion but not for finding common ground.
- Feedback from in person meetings included 3 meetings, 105 attendees, 36 feedback cards, 22 maps marked up, 24 pages of flip chart notes. Of those who filled out feedback cards, many were happy with the opportunity to provide input. Some of the negative feedback was that too much information was provided.
- The survey had 615 participants, 1,520 comments, 140+ problem intersections identified.
  - Did you think the survey asked the right questions?
    - It was a little long, but the questions were well designed. A hefty survey.

- I don't think it's a good idea lumping walking and bike-riding, as they are very different.
- Some had multiple choices, where neither were my ideal choice.
- Why is a pie chart being used for questions where respondents could select all that apply?
  - A good point. These visuals are automatically generated from the survey website.

Joe Seymour started the overview of the survey analysis.

- Demographic statistics of survey respondents were older, had a higher household income, were less racially diverse, and more likely to be a homeowner than the Census shows the study area.
  - What do you do with the disparities?
    - This means this group has work to do moving forward. How do we reach the people who are not responding?
    - Public process participants in general tend to be wealthier and homeowners.
    - An interesting question to ask would be 'do you feel invested in this area?' and then address the root of why not. In addition, housing accommodation question did not identify accessible housing and what that means to people in this area.
    - A breakdown of non-white and non-homeowner responses, to see their viewpoint, would be useful so we are not looking at the average of all.
    - We could extrapolate from percentage of respondents per question.
    - We don't have demographic data for those who pass through, or work, etc; what is the demographic breakdown for those folks?
    - Group members had discussion of what you can and cannot glean from demographic data responses. Maggie expressed that there are some topic that are better to ask people to self-assess. Kristin clarified City commitment to inclusive engagement and how that manifests in careful survey creation and analysis.
- The consultants created four thematic buckets to help think through results. Most respondents identified transportation and housing as most important considerations.
  - Pedestrian/Bike improvements, parks and open space, and road connectivity were top three priorities infrastructure improvements.
  - Strong preference to balance cars and pedestrians.
  - Strong preference to balance approaches to traffic.
  - Worst traffic problems on Wake Forest, North Hills, Six Forks. This roughly matched congestion data.
  - Worst places for biking and walking are similar – Six Forks, Wake Forest.
  - Most respondents never ride transit.
  - Questions?
    - Is it reasonable to distinguish recreation biking and commuting? Group members briefly discussed this and then placed this item in the parking lot.

Maggie Connor gave an overview of the aesthetics and housing survey questions. Results show these discussions are difficult to have in the abstract, so this was a start to the conversation but not conclusive.

- Surprising based on conversations, equally balanced between concerns about transitions and lack of concerns.
  - This could be function of diagram vs reality.

- In-person conversations allow for follow-up questions and more information than survey does.
- We can breakdown answers to questions based on where they were answering from. Where transitions was not an issue showed up around areas of transitioning land use. There was a lot of concern about transitions around St. Albans and Millbrook.
- Identifying ideal maximum height can be difficult in the abstract. Most people said 3-4 stories. Design context may very well change responses.
  - Members discussed the Six Forks Study's look at this question for that corridor. There must be a concerted effort to provide a good visual to help public understand what is being proposed.
  - We all have a static picture in our mind, but 40 years from now these areas will transition. It's a dynamic process.
- We can break down answers based on location, and openness to higher buildings popped up on major corridors. Lower ideal heights in south of study area may be related to flooding concerns.
- The variety of responses to question about types of housing options to accommodate growth may expand as we hear directly from people, not have them choose from options. There was a preference for granny flats, more single-family homes, and townhomes.
  - Interest was expressed in cross tabulating these answers with how long someone has lived in the area and how long they plan to stay in the area.
- We can break down these answers based on location, and south and east of Wake Forest there is a presence of a preference for no change, a preference for new houses in existing residential areas, and a tolerance for density along corridors.
- The survey responses reiterated know issues related to parks and stormwater. There is some willingness to pay for additional parks.
- Overall there is consistency among in-person and survey responses.

Maggie Connor gave an overview of the planning principles. These help the team move from data collection to solutions and to establish scope of objectives that plan should address. These will be foundation for specific solutions.

- Is this the right direction?
  - Group members discussed this and where certain issues might fit into principles.
  - There is a tension in this area between aspiring to be urban but acting suburban – should we acknowledge this somewhere?
    - Perhaps streetscape goals get at this?
  - This is a really good reflection of what we've heard. This is a reflection document and has summarized it well.
  - Households and individuals are not one-mode only. There are lots of reason for trips, cars are needed even if kids walk to school. Group members discussed that there will be no silver bullet solutions, but the plan can provide options for diverse needs.
  - At some point will we be able to pick one of these areas we can focus on?
    - Hardin clarified that the role of the group is to verify that the plan reflects the public input received, but personally all members may participate fully as a stakeholder.
  - Could we ask how important is diversity to the people coming to the area, diversity in all its meanings? How do they see it and how we can grow together? This includes, ADA considerations as well.

Maggie Connor discussed next steps. The Opportunities and Issues report will describe issues identified. This is the stage where we will have drawings and ideas to react to. For the next stage of public engagement, we're considering how to adjust from your feedback. We've heard that another time possibly could work better, but that the format generally worked. Hardin explained that next phase will have preview of options. We will verify that we are approaching it right before these meetings which will occur in March or early April.

- There are clear key issues that you've described, the public will need more time at this stage. More thoughts and conversation when considering concrete suggestions.
- A suggestion was provided to have the next meeting on a Saturday at the First Citizens building in the first-floor conference room.

Jason Hardin backed up to planning principles to get additional thoughts and get a sense of if they were generally hitting the right notes.

- Group members indicated they were generally comfortable with planning principles.

Meeting ended at 6:17 pm