

Midtown-St. Albans Confirmation Group Meeting 6

September 10, 2019

Green Road Community Center, 4201 Green Road

Attending: Stephen Brechbiel, Ted Kunstling, Donna Rosefield, David Jones, Willard Ross, Bonner Gaylord; Jevon Peterson (Duke Raleigh)

Consultant: Joe Seymour (VHB)

Staff: Jason Hardin, Hannah Reckhow

The meeting began at 4:05.

Hardin started the meeting with a reminder of the process. The current phase is a last chance of weigh in on recommendations are focused on thinking about prioritization among the projects and ideas.

There are two in-person meetings scheduled for the final phase of public input. One Saturday morning and one Thursday evening. These will include a longer presentation that tells the story of how we got to these recommendations and a prioritization exercise in an open house style. There will also be an online survey ongoing during these meetings.

Outreach includes postcards (over 7,000), social media posts planned for coming weeks, press releases, confirmation group network. Staff will share information with group to help get the word out.

Consultant is preparing final materials, including maps that show projects, cost estimates, and beginning of prioritization. Public input exercise will interface with this information. Consultant is also working on improvements to land use recommendation materials.

Hardin framed the project recommendations through the 'Seven Big Moves': The beltline crossing, the Midtown Ring, a connected street network, the Midtown Waterfront District, Midtown frequent transit and BRT, housing and employment/land use guidance, green streets. Rosefield asked where building height issues along Six Forks Road are represented. Hardin responded that this is a part of land use guidance.

Hardin talked through land use guidance. These got positive responses in last round of input and are being brought forward. Feedback on Six Forks height transitioned resulted in changes to the recommended heights and added direction for a separate study for cross street. The plan includes some conceptual ideas for Crabtree Creek adjacent properties to connect to redeveloping areas to the north.

Kunstling brought up water runoff from construction sites, traffic safety at Hardimont/St. Albans, review of traffic speed policies. Jones echoed these points and discussed experience with Anderson Drive speed limits. Hardin remarked that street design dictates speed in a lot of cases, it can be a problem when it doesn't match the posted speed. We heard this during the process, we could add a policy this to the plan. Infill/stormwater is a hot button issue, there is a residential infill development ongoing. This a better focus for city-wide process. Hardimont/St. Albans is likely candidate for signal, there are other techniques for making it clearer than a stop is necessary.

Seymour walked through transportation recommendations and prioritization from last round of input. Consultant team put together cost estimates, timeline estimates, and project maps for each project. Bridge and tunnel connections. Bicycle pedestrian crossings, bike lanes, greenways. Turn lanes, signals, school studies, new street connections.

Jones asked about Navaho/bike connections. Seymour remarked that project team is thinking through timing and phasing.

Rosefield asked about school study timing. Seymour remarked that school study is likely in 0-3 years category initially, but this will be part of input process.

Green streets. Kunstling asked about GPS direction contribute to cut through traffic. Seymour remarked that its difficult to test. You can look at where people go, but not test pre/post GPS usage. Design can affect comfortable speed, which could affect that.

Transit routes and center. Hardin talked about how frequent transit makes it more usable and reliable and a big change from what exists. Kunstling asked if they are commuter focused. Hardin responded that that is a common reason but will need to look into it more. Kunstling responded that frequent buses can cause more congestion and have the opposite effect. Hardin added that unlike other cities Raleigh has seen an increase in ridership and that frequency is just one option to increase bus usability.

Rosefield considered expanding rapid transit in an affluent area and optics of this compared to other places. Hardin remarked that transit works as a network, doesn't mean that others aren't traveling for employment and shopping. There is a benefit to have transit network even for those who can afford cars. Jones added that it connects to pedestrian/bicycle use, some roads just won't work for those. Seymour added that transit agencies revisit resources when ridership changes.

Seymour walked through composite map of all projects, which includes initial phasing information. This will be examined in next phase. Kunstling asked if anything would change near Duke Raleigh. Hardin responded that the Wake Forest/St. Albans and Wake Forest/Navaho intersections will have improvements. (***)Note that this is a corrected version of the minutes. The earlier version incorrectly referred to the Hardimont and Navaho intersections with Wake Forest, not the St. Albans and Navaho intersections, as was stated during the meeting.)

Seymour discussed project cost estimates. Total cost is estimated by construction costs, miscellaneous costs, contingency costs, and escalation costs.

Hardin walked through final input format. The objectives are to confirm the recommendations and understand the community priorities. Format is to host a group exercise requiring attendees to allocate a finite amount of 'Midtown Bucks' across a set of major projects. Open house format will still allow drop-in participation. Jones asked if group exercise will be done at Midtown CAC. Hardin responded that it will be a presentation, but not an exercise. Rosefield recommended that staff make sure Midtown CAC

understands group activity. Gaylord responded that groups will make the activity work well. Based on past meetings, group activity can work well with a time limit.

Kunstling talked about effect of projects on taxes and impact on traffic of safety projects. Hardin responded that staff's goal is to give enough information to make an informed decision.

Rosefield stated that Wegmans traffic will add impact to Wake Forest Rd. Hardin responded that traffic modeling incorporates future changes. Jones asked if Wake Tech meeting will include one or two activities. Hardin said they were planning on two but that's worth thinking through. Stephen asked about online survey. Hardin responded that prioritization exercise will be translated to survey.

Hardin presented schedule for remaining adoption process. Next group meeting mid/late October. Final meeting would be in December to discuss final report. Planning Commission review to begin in January.

Ross asked if there was a picture of Midtown Ring. Hardin walked through alignment. Gaylord likes this slide.

Meeting ended at 5:30.