

Person Street Visioning Charrette

Strategies for creating a vibrant center



Presented by the Department of City Planning in partnership with the Public Works Department

Charrette Process

Staff from the Department of City Planning and Public Works Department met with local business owners and neighborhood residents Saturday June 7th at Peace College for a charrette to address the Person Street Business District roughly bounded by Peace Street and Delway Street.

The genesis of this meeting was a neighborhood request to Council, and a subsequent meeting with neighbors at Nicole's Art Studio. As a result of these meetings, Mitchell Silver generated a draft vision statement that served as a starting point for the charrette. The draft vision statement for the area, written (in February 2008):

To create a vibrant "village center" experience that is pedestrian friendly, safe and attractive. The village center should be a special destination with unifying design features; a pleasant streetscape; ample parking for shoppers; and, public spaces, wider sidewalks and safe crossings for pedestrians. Person Street would serve as the "village main street" with special consideration given to pedestrian routes to and from the surrounding neighborhoods.

The purpose of the charrette was to identify policies and generate development concepts to help implement that vision. The group gathered for the charrette consisted of city staff from the Department of City Planning and Public Works Department as well as roughly 16 community members, 2 business owners and staff of Peace College.

During the charrette the group toured the site, participated in a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis and then drew their concepts on base maps of the area. There was much active discussion during the day between staff, residents and business owners, with everyone learning more about the role various city department play, as well as the dynamics of business and property ownership in the area.

After the small groups presented their maps and concepts to the larger group there was a discussion of the next steps. City staff agreed to compile a summary report for City Council as well as to evaluate any short term repairs needed. The group also agreed that the concepts generated at the charrette would help everyone "hit the ground running" once the Comprehensive Plan update was complete.

SWOT Analysis results

STRENGTHS

- Location
- Lots of residential
- Affordable rent?
- Sidewalks on almost all streets
- Clearly defined edges
- On a grid
- Strong businesses
- Regional and neighborhood businesses
- Available parking
- Infrastructure in place for new development
- Traffic flow/ visibility
- Krispy Kreme
- Strength of nearby residential
- Peace and Person- strong intersection
- New/additional residential
- Southbound gateway
- Street trees/ large trees on private property
- Shade
- Adjacent to strong developments
- Stability/ captive audience
- Green space
- Engaged community
- Bus stops with bench



Example of a good block and streetscape pattern



Person St features a concentration of established businesses

WEAKNESSES

- Vacant/ boarded buildings
- Absentee landlords
- Speed of traffic (incl. 35 mph on Franklin)
- Direction of traffic
- Sidewalk conditions
- Grass strip condition
- Overhead power lines
- Business mix
- Power pole and anchor line placement
- Large parking lots and underutilized property
- Public trashcans- poorly maintained
- Missing crosswalks
- NCDOT requirements for street width- 60' on Franklin makes development difficult
- NCDOT/COR- street has "2 owners" Adopt a HIGHWAY- doesn't give right impression. This isn't a highway
- Is adopt a highway program active?
- Need additional pedestrian signs
- Pedestrian district doesn't equal thoroughfare
- Potential parking impact on Oakwood- Competition for on street parking at night
- Need a plan for more parking
- No business association
- pedestrian access not accentuated
- Long/wide curb cuts reduces availability of on street parking
- Lack of crosswalks/connectivity
- Encroachment- trees, landscaping and parked cars on sidewalk
- Visibility of business signs
- Uncooperative developer with lack of commitment
- No off street parking
- No restaurants
- Need time limit on parking
- TPY requirements
- Missing trees
- Need better street lighting
- Need 2 sided traffic lights



Parked car illustrated lack of barrier between sidewalk and parking lot



Large number of overhead wires



Tree canopy is too low for pedestrian passage

OPPORTUNITIES

- Land available for development- Hobby Property
- Population growth
- Increased pedestrian traffic- reduces need for more parking
- Retail mix
- Already built and ready to be improved
- Unified look
- Proximity of Blount St commons and Seaboard
- Pending legislation dealing with vacant commercial spaces
- Ripe for redevelopment
- Looks like a gateway
- Could be bike friendly
- 2 way conversion a possibility
- Use the curve in the road to slow cars down
- Neighborhood and businesses support initiative
- Street too wide- need to reevaluate traffic plan- there is room for bike lane



What is Person Street's identity- highway or street?



Traffic and sidewalk improvements would enhance area for pedestrians

Development, program and policy ideas

Development Ideas

- Develop a “Krispy kreme café”- retail stand out at sidewalk
- Consolidate driveways
- Encourage development of Hobby Properties parcel
- Incorporate green space at Franklin and Blount- gateway to downtown
- Current attorney’s office could be new bar/restaurant with outdoor seating or a community square
- Create monuments at each end of business district
- Use different color/textured crosswalks
- CAC, Council should make contact with property owners and encourage investment
- Plant more, taller trees
- Bury power lines
- Awnings are too bright- need a coordinated, toned down color palette
- Need delineation between public and private- use a grass strip, trees between sidewalk and parking lot
- Put a building in the Krispy Kreme truck parking lot
- Screen the driveway to the transmission shop
- Long term there should be a 3 story building at the corner on Dollar Store property
- Add a crosswalk across Peace Street at Boundary Street
- Add a flashing light at Franklin and Blount
- Explore joint development partnership- Hobby and Peace College
- Bring all buildings to the street
- New development should include a series of courtyards- sidewalks too narrow to put cafes there
- Need more multi-family residential- neighborhoods aren’t enough to support district
- Bookend the district with residential- Blount St Commons, Hobby development



Opportunity for reuse/infill of parking lot



Charrette team discussing ideas

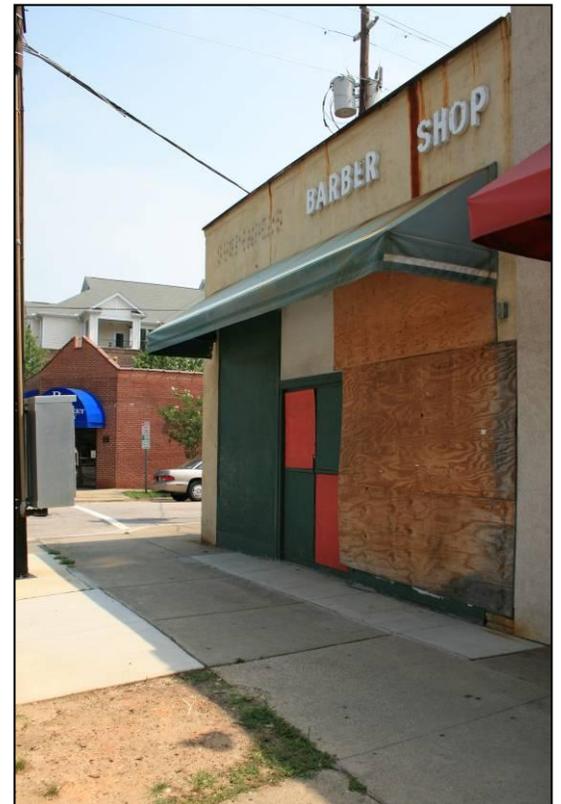
Program Ideas

- Establish a music festival in Marsh Woodwinds parking lot
- Open courtyard at Governor's Square for bluegrass once a month
- Develop a unified façade scheme
- Create a business association
- Limb up low branches on trees in ROW
- Use Dollar store parking lot as a short term festival/market site
- Develop an identity for the area
- Develop a strategy for attracting neighborhood oriented businesses
- Identify district with gateways- "NOP" – North Person?
- Work with concept of an "arts district"- already have several businesses related



Policy Recommendations

- Leave street one way, with more parallel parking on both sides (possibly off peak on west side)
- Require a minimum of 14' wide sidewalks to allow/encourage outdoor dining
- City should develop a policy to address vacant/boarded up buildings
- City should create a new streetscape plan
- Reduce speed limit on Franklin St to 25mph and do not allow additional driveways



Person Street Study Area



Person Street Concept Plan



While many development concepts were proposed for private property, they are only conceptual in nature and should not be construed as a plan for public acquisition or a mandate for redevelopment of private property.

Charrette Attendees

A special thanks to Peace College

Sandy Briscar
Rebecca Leggett
Michael Magoon

City Staff

Elizabeth Alley
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Dan Douglas
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Residents and Business Owners

Mike Anderson
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