

Northside Livable Centers Study
Workshop 1 Notes – January 14, 2010

In this Workshop we discussed the overall planning process and timeline, planning principles, existing conditions and the Draft Alternative for the Study Area. Below are notes from the break-out sessions during the second half of the Workshop.

ADAM'S TABLE

- Northside should have unique street signs to help foster identity
- Wider sidewalks cost more money for the City, we need a source of funds for this
- Incentives are needed for the right kind of development
- Variances should be looked at to allow less parking around the stations
- On-street bike lanes act as a gutter for trash
- Required on-site detention ponds are a major issue for redevelopment
- The Salvation Army causes problems with vagrancy on N. Main Street and makes it harder for redevelopment
- Attendees liked the idea of transit plazas at the stations
- The Little Oak Bayou should have a strong connection to transit
- Pedestrian lights around transit are needed
- Sidewalks are needed throughout the neighborhood
- New bike lanes shouldn't be "sunken" into the street
- Residents of the Heights will ride the rail if they can get to it easily
- How does Northside compare in terms of parks to other neighborhoods? Do we need more?
- We don't want Hardy Yards to soak up all the possible funds for neighborhood improvements
- Hardy Yards is currently a no-mans-land. Can they help to pay for the other neighborhood improvements?
- Fulton Street needs help, we want to make it nice while accommodating more traffic.
- Fiesta Grocery should be improved
- How do we incorporate the local Hispanic community?
- A farmers market is needed in the neighborhood
- We would like to see annual neighborhood festivals, right now everything happens in Moody Park
- The Little White Oak Bayou needs to be an amenity, now it has trash in it from flooding
- We need trash cans near stations and a pick up trash campaign
- The light rail tracks can't be a pedestrian barrier
- We need more pedestrian lights at crossings, especially along the rail route
- Safety is the biggest issue to address in Northside
- Redevelopment along N Main Street will be a key to walkability and positive change
- Old buildings should be repainted at the very least

TIM'S TABLE

- Urban Grocery located in the Hardy Yards development
- Tunnel will never work for Pedestrians. Find another Pedestrian way to downtown and back
- Stop San Jacinto St. @ Hardy Yards and then disperse it onto the existing street grid of Northside
- Don't destroy the properties on Fulton St. Just make it more efficient for trucks and buses as the direct route.

- Sidewalk priorities on: Main Street; Burnett Street; Hogan Street; Quitman Street; Fulton Street; Irvington and Collinworth St.
- Keep the rural quality of the streets in the neighborhoods
- Plaza's at the transit stations are a good idea
- Create safe crosswalks across the light rail tracks at all intersections
- Create a Town Center at Quitman and Fulton
- Increase the housing variety with more urban housing
- 3 to 4 story new buildings are OK on the main corridors and centers
- Increase the amount of affordable housing so as not to create gentrification
- Create a community center @ Moody Park
- Get rid of the Housing Projects and make it mixed income
- Make the elementary schools safe from the light rail lines
- With all physical improvements, make the area drain better
- Protect the existing neighborhood's character

KEIJI'S TABLE

- We need greater accessibility and wider sidewalks
- Street walking lights need to be improved
- We would like to have a Starbucks and other similar businesses in the neighborhood
- Education could be improved through neighborhood charter schools
- There is no sense of ownership in many parts of Northside, along with a lack of upkeep
- We would like to create an esplanade with landscaping in the neighborhood
- We need uniform landscaping and curb appeal with safety
- There needs to be efforts to increase homeownership
- Historic preservation is needed in much of the neighborhoods
- We don't want property taxes to be raised
- We need competition to improve grocery stores
- Safety features are needed near the rail stations, especially close to schools
- Cultural artwork and a public plaza would be well received, we want to preserve local culture and families
- The community could be slow to transition to rail usage
- We would like to see new SF housing along with multi-generational MF housing
- Drainage is an issue in the neighborhood
- We need even improvements throughout, not just on N Main Street
- A vocational school with child care would be a great amenity
- We would like tree-lined streets and new parks
- Removing/rerouting truck traffic would benefit Northside

DAVID'S TABLE

- Parks – trees with fruit and community gardens are needed in the neighborhood
- N. Main clinics – preserve nearby bus access
- Would like to see an additional library as well as grocery stores and fitness centers in the neighborhood
- Need to have sidewalks wider than 4' along the rail route
- Renovation and infill along N Main is desired
- Recycling stations are needed in the neighborhood
- Community centers and gathering places are needed
- A plaza as a gathering place for events would be great

- Public art would benefit the neighborhood
- Pocket parks and stopping points along pedestrian routes are needed
- Having a pedestrian way like Heights Boulevard would be ideal
- More trees and landscaping along pedestrian routes are needed
- A water area or fountain in the park/plaza would be great
- Skate parks and other teen gathering places are needed
- Bus routes will need to be reconfigured to better serve the area
- There is a concern about food trucks that currently park in the neighborhood
- Markets could be important neighborhood features

DIANA'S TABLE

- One family was at the table with a few spectators
- The family owns a jewelry store the mom walks about 2 miles daily her home and business is near the Fulton Cavalcade major intersection
- She also rides the local buses as well as the light rail to get into downtown or the medical center
- The furthest north she walks is Moody Park starting at around Fulton and Cavalcade
 - When she has been there she doesn't feel very safe because guys are just hanging out
- The area west of Main Street also feels unsafe to her and she doesn't usually cross over to that side of Main.
- They felt very concerned about the speed of traffic and drivers not respecting speed limits particularly when school lets out and in general requested speed humps as a possibility to slow traffic down
- Most of the pedestrian activity based on her observations was in and around Fiesta and the schools (Cavalcade & Fulton)
- Pedestrian access to downtown is limited to the tunnel and this is not a safe place to cross the only other pedestrian alternative is in and around the university parking lots
- One service that she must go out of the neighborhood for is the dentist/orthodontist
- Sidewalks need improvement they are in bad condition
- Family feels the rail will have a positive impact on the neighborhood bring resources and modernize
- Neighborhood street lighting needs to improve bulbs are yellow and dim
- Would like to see a new market & neighborhood recycling program
- She generally feels safe walking around because people see her all the time, know her and say hi to her
- Local places she frequents include:
 - Fiesta/Michoacana Markets
 - Library
 - Schools
- Other sites are listed on map

IAN'S TABLE

- Get more of the citizens involved next time.
- Create named or themes to the stops for identification and celebration of the cultural history of the Northside
- Create a new 'Hardy Yards' type development at the north end of the zone, connecting the park to Avenue CDC's development while and to preserve the historic neighborhood to the south to prevent gentrification as much as possible.
- Expand and improve the park, and let higher end development occur so the neighborhood that is preserved to the south can access the high quality urban redevelopment that is needed to bring forward the services they all want but the lower affluent neighborhood cannot support.
- Expand the Bayou trails into Little White Oak Bayou
- Build a new YMCA for the Northside at / adjacent to the improved park
- Create a zone for Social Services, near the schools and other public agencies already in the northside to serve the community

- Make the Fulton expansion pull people into the neighborhood so the spending dollars will not pass by or stop just short in Hardy Yards
- Have an entertainment district in Hardy Yards
- Encourage UHD to expand into the neighborhood providing services, amenities and opportunity to the neighborhood