

Upper Kirby Livable Centers Study
Workshop 1 Notes – January 13, 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

- Rail will be key to making this area walkable
- How likely will the area be redeveloped as the highest and best use without zoning?
- A goal of the TRZ is to help to provide amenities in Upper Kirby
- Attendees want Upper Kirby to have the "total package"
- Having a vision and a plan will help to guide growth and minimize unknowns to developers
- We should consider the right-of-way as building face to building face
- Parking should be treated as a utility/amenity
- Smart growth concepts can be embraced regardless of rail
- There is a fear that the rail will cause more congestion in the area
- Discovery Green is a great model for the Civic Center project
- The northwest district is ripe for redevelopment
- We need bike connections from Alabama to Richmond
- Families should be encouraged to live in the neighborhood
- Affordable housing will continue to be a challenge in redevelopment
- Kirby Drive looks much better than it did prior to reconstruction
- Community Gardens should be incorporated into new open spaces
- The property on the northeast corner of Kirby and Richmond has high redevelopment potential
- It all starts with sidewalks and crosswalks
- Upper Kirby has the best schools and restaurants in town, how do we make it the best walkable place?
- Rice and Highland Villages are good examples of places where people walk, though not with the best pedestrian infrastructure
- We need to promote Upper Kirby's urban identity
- We need a people-centric approach versus an auto-centric approach

TIM'S TABLE

- Connect the residential enclave on Wakeforest and Richmond to Richmond. There is a fire access lane that could be connected to Wakeforest
- Complete all of the proposed street connections where possible except the connection to Buffalo Speedway
- Prioritize enhanced sidewalks on Richmond, Kirby, Eastside, and Alabama
- Gateways" at I-59 and Buffalo Speedway, Kirby and Greenbriar are critical. Need signage, lighting, landscaping and safe sidewalks
- Create more greenspaces and small pocket parks where possible
- Let all streets that intersect Richmond allow for Pedestrian crossings across the light rail tracks.
- Create small plazas on both sides of the Richmond/Kirby station on Richmond. Find places for a kiss and ride

- Make the Civic Center more mixed use with much more intensity to keep Levy Park safe and lively
- Create or identify bike routes
- Keep the Station @ Richmond and Kirby
- Create more Street Trees and landscapes
- The schools in the northwest district also need kiss and rides
- Overall, traffic needs to slow down
- Create a Parking District Master Plan for the different areas
- Create a Neighborhood parking program
- Allow for Shared Parking
- Need Pedestrian Crosswalks at all Intersections

KEIJI'S TABLE

- Increase income and wealth
- Preserve the existing businesses and their viability in the district
- Maintain affordability of the real estates and economy for the current residents and businesses
- Provide adequate access and service access to the businesses in the corridors
- Provide adequate pedestrian safety along US 59 frontage road
- Provide adequate mobility routes for Red Cross from 59 and to Wakefield
- Consider the Richmond corridor as retail based corridor not just Kirby
- Provide adequate parking and access for the existing businesses
- Preserve trees and Plant evergreen shade giving street trees

DAVID'S TABLE

- How easy will it be to implement new street connections? They should be ped/bike connections at the very least.
- Plans provide a guide of what the community wants.
- More greenspace is needed near Kirby.
- 10' sidewalks would be great.
- Concern expressed for train parking in David Crockett subdivision.
- Possible infill station at Audley?
- Need sidewalks redone on Alabama and Audley.
- Drainage will be improved by Kirby work. Good.
- By 2030, US 59 will need to be reconstructed. Could it be put below grade like it is further east? Wakeforest could connect across.
- Different police patrol/response is needed in urban pedestrian areas.
- Need more marked crosswalks, especially at unsignalized intersections.
- US 59 at Kirby is not a gateway so much as a transition; there is a need to improve pedestrian amenities south of 59.
- Don't forget pedestrian crossings of US 59 at Buffalo, Greenbriar, and Shepherd.
- Need to publicize this plan and plans in general a lot more.

TRAVIS'S TABLE

- Partner with Metro on rail construction to provide "grass tracks"
- Plan Richmond's cross-section such that it can easily be adapted to a 2 lane each direction configuration once transit has proven to take cars off of the street. Consider on street parking in place of the existing outside lane
- Along Richmond, maximize lighting and sidewalk width but maintain fairly narrowly spaced street trees and planters to maximize the green area and provide a buffer for pedestrians

- Incorporate logical, clearly delineated mid block crossings on Richmond, Kirby and other all major thoroughfares that interact with transit. Use pavers or buttons to provide texture and calm traffic. Suggestions included crossing Richmond at Wakeforest, Lake, Audley and Kirby at all non signalized intersections
- Develop a "bike plan" for the area that addresses identifiable bikeways parallel to major auto thoroughfares to bisect the 4 quadrants of the study area. Address bike rack locations
- Consider the impact of rail transit on vehicular turning movements when considering new access street locations (blue dotted lines) and consider which locations should be accessible to cars, bikes and pedestrians and which locations are more appropriate for just bikes and people.
- Address Lexington (off of Wakeforest between 59 and Richmond) as a pedestrian through street. Currently it is an "abandoned street" as far as fronting uses, lighting and activity. It should open up to Kirby Drive and have residential and commercial uses fronting the street.
- Partner with property owners adjacent to the transit station and develop plaza areas with appropriate retail uses.
- On the north side of Richmond extending west from the Lake station, consider extending the station plaza across the animal clinic and through the wine bar property as a linear pocket park/pathway
- Develop the streetscape on Audley and Eastside with students in mind

IAN'S TABLE

- Civic Center, should be a unique institution, celebrating the location of Upper Kirby, its unique institutions and its current mixed use framework.
- Take advantage of the new Rail's proximity to the site
- Take advantage of the unique non-profit nature of the property's ownership for mixed development options
- Maintain as much green as possible, such as green roofs, below grade parking
- The development shouldn't be overly tall.
- Link with pedestrian routes to neighborhood
- Create a conference center with a sliding scale that is high tech and will interest local businesses, organizations and schools, and be available to the non-profit center that Upper Kirby wants to include. Also, the idea of a special 'theatre' should be included too.
- High Design
- Highly activated, always something to do
- Specialty flex spaces for athletics, such as basketball, that can be used by others during the day, maybe not a full / typical YMCA
- Parking for neighborhood, Rail and facility
- Have Eastside extend thru to the feeder road
- Consider 1 way traffic around the site, for circulation improvement
- Relocate Girl Scouts into the facility
- Include affordable housing