

Meeting Notes

4-20-11 West Asheville Library, 6:00 PM

Focus of the meeting: Sustainability

Sustainability is not a stand alone topic but rather a guiding principle that can inform the other parts of the Haywood Road vision plan. The group participated in an exercise based on the interconnected systems approach from a conversation about permaculture. A key principle from the standpoint of sustainability is that things are changing from an energy and economic standpoint and that we need to allow for growth and greater density in the corridor area that includes greater variety of development with rental units and condominiums, townhomes etc.

Ideas to incorporate sustainability:

Focus group planning meeting April 20, 2011:

Landscape and streetscape infrastructure:

- a. Use City landscaping ordinance to improve habitat creation, opportunities for treating storm water runoff and encourage diversity of the landscaping that may include fruiting trees. The current ordinance is focused on providing shade in parking areas and screening incompatible uses (such as a busy commercial use adjacent to a residential home)
- b. Expand options for pervious paving in parking lots and other hardscape surfaces
- c. Planting appropriate landscaping so that it can age in place and be appropriately sized for the use and space it has to grow in to avoid poor pruning and removal
- d. Encourage 'environmental site design' which protects the most vulnerable resources on a site first to protect and then groups the development to the lesser vulnerable aspects of the site (may be most useful for large tracts without prior development). This is sometimes called conservation site design or context sensitive design such as when referring to multi-modal transportation.
- e. With an improved street scape design people would be willing to walk further to get to their destination.
- f. Include opportunities for recycling along the corridor.

Historic preservation and new building construction:

- g. Encouraging renovation of older structures instead of replacing them and maintaining them to protect them from demolition from neglect.
- h. Façade restoration initiatives to preserve historic buildings which could be through low interest loans in a revolving loan program.
- i. Consider cultural sustainability which includes the aspects of local history and preservation of buildings, sites and relics of the past.
- j. Encourage the use of quality building materials that extend the life of the building.
- k. When new buildings are constructed building setbacks from property lines or the street edge could have a dual purpose to provide areas for solar access and green infrastructure.
- l. Existing buildings along the corridor have a variety of front setbacks some with small front yards. This pattern should be encouraged as a viable option along Haywood Road to maintain some open space and ease urban density.

Housing:

- m. Identify renters who may be able to purchase housing in the community and thereby stay here as part of the community.
- n. Rental properties in the community often maintain the affordability of the area which is one of the positive aspects of west Asheville.

o. Reduce the requirements of a townhome to not require them to be placed on a city street since this is a disadvantage to them compared to condominium development.

p. The city adopted Sustainability Bonus was discussed (affordable housing and green building within a distance of the corridor can have expanded density or scale of building) and an additional idea was offered that residential properties in close proximity to the corridor may be good candidates for higher density development and/or limited commercial uses

q. Consider expansion of the City adopted sustainability bonus from 1/8 of a mile to 1/4 mile.

Business activities:

r. Encourage/ allow a range of businesses uses to be sure that every-day needs are met on the corridor.

s. Include zoning to ensure a mix of uses even on a single site.

t. For home occupation rules which allow only a portion of the home to be used for a home-based business, consider expanding the % of the area on the home since west Asheville generally has smaller bungalows.

u. Maintain and expand the walkable components of the streetscape which supports small businesses, increases bus ridership, viability of the corridor.

v. Identify locations to promote business incubation. Small spaces for start-up businesses offices spaces to incubate small businesses; this could be mandated in new construction especially in mixed-use buildings

w. Make greater allowances for live-work units

Organizational sustainability:

x. Sustainability of the community organizations was noted as an important goal and the West Asheville Business Association (WABA) is in place to be that organization but it still needs to be the supported by residents and businesses to keep going and promoting west Asheville.

y. Currently WABA is putting information about the vision plan process on its website to share with interested neighbors.

z. It was noted that there could be a planning role for the area such as a West Asheville Commission that would provide advice/ direction regarding west Asheville issues.

aa. Stay informed about events via the City e-news.

Transportation:

bb. Expansion of the bus service along Haywood Road are noted as positive changes to supporting sustainability along the corridor.