

Vine City/Washington Park LCI Study

Public Kickoff

November 19, 2008

Meeting Notes

Dot exercise:

The meeting started with an interactive activity, allowing the citizens to place green dots on areas where they liked or where something good was happening. Conversely, they placed red dots over areas of places they do not like or where something bad was happening.

Introduction and Welcome:

This exercise was followed by a brief introduction from District 3 Councilmember Ivory Young, Jr. and the consultant team:

- Atlanta Regional Commission
 - LeVar Rice
- City of Atlanta
 - Garnett Brown
 - Tameka Wimberly
- Tunnell-Spangler-Walsh
 - Caleb Racicot
 - Woody Giles
- The Collaborative Firm
 - Michael Hightower
 - Jessica Guinn
- Contente Consulting
 - Contente Terry
- Croy Engineering
 - Dan Dobry
- Marketek
 - Melissa Mailloux

Kickoff Presentation:

Caleb Racicot with TSW provided an introduction to the LCI program and the Vine City/Washington Park LCI study. The Vine City/Washington Park LCI covers over 530 acres of land, including 2 MARTA stations. The study area includes parts, if not all, of Simpson St., MLK Ave., J.E. Lowery Blvd., Ashview Heights, over to the Georgia Dome and World Congress Center.

Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Program Background and Goals

A program instituted by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), it encourages local jurisdictions to plan and implement strategies that link transportation improvements with land use development strategies to create sustainable, livable communities consistent with regional development policies.

Much of the goal for the Vine City/Washington Park LCI is to bridge the study area by way of accessible transportation to the town center area of downtown Atlanta, and to break the divide set by the Dome and GWCC. The LCI will set initiatives that will allow and encourage walking, bicycling, bus/train transit, as well as driving.

The Planning Process

- Involvement and Analysis
 - From now until December 2008: the 1st meeting, process of analyzing what's good and what's not
- Visioning
 - January 2009 to February 2009: the 2nd meeting
 - Community Workshop, January 2009
 - Draft Plan, February 2009
- Implementation
 - Begins March 2009
 - Final Plan, March 2009

An advisory committee will be developed to represent the community on specific concerns. This group will be composed of residents, MARTA officials, GDOT officials, and other stakeholders to serve as eyes and a soundboard to new ideas, issues and concerns as they arise.

Previous Area Studies

Contente Terry outlined previous planning studies that have been conducted in and around the Vine City/Washington Park LCI study area in recent years. Over the past five years, there have been seven studies in the surrounding area.

1. Vine City Redevelopment Plan (2004)
 - a. Focus on housing, economic development and parks
2. MLK Corridor Plan (adopted in 2005)
 - a. Focus on maximizing public transportation and providing a facelift for the area
3. Simpson Road Corridor Plan (2006)
 - a. Focus on traffic flow and transit options
4. The Beltline (2005)
 - a. Focus to link neighborhoods, from the northside to the southside
5. Imagine Downtown (2003-now being revisited)
 - a. Focus on creating a 24-hour downtown, establishing mixed use residents and retail
6. Northside Drive Corridor Plan (2005)
 - a. Focus to provide a facelift of the area starting at Spelman College, north along Northside drive, targeting vacant land and transportation other than buses
7. Connect Atlanta (2008)
 - a. Focus on an effort to connect the entire city of Atlanta

Vine City is different because it has the advantage of building upon previous plans. It also has the support of committed stakeholders to see the project through.

This study area has a focus on transit oriented development, while preserving the presence of Vine City's community strength and history. The area has housing, schools, higher-level education institutions, police stations, recreational centers, MARTA, parks and commercial uses. This study seeks to further develop vacant property and redevelop or preserve present sites.

First Impressions

Melissa Mailloux with Marketek explained that, from a marketing viewpoint, implementing mixed-use and mixed-income housing will help stop price declines due to foreclosures and vacant or abandoned property.

Dan Dobry said that through the LCI study, there is a focus on providing traffic calming procedures and restoring on-street parking. One step will be to develop the technology to handle the area's traffic and vehicle influx during GWCC and Dome events. Also, sidewalks can be added to accommodate pedestrians, especially in school zones. Furthermore, a trail may be added that will connect the west side area to downtown.

Next Steps

Currently in the analysis stage, next will be the beginning of stakeholder interviews and then the convening of the advisory board.

Questions

How much will be given towards this project?

LCI grants range from about \$1-5 million, mostly to improve pedestrian transportation, to create optimal live, work and play communities.

LCI only funds 1 or 2 transportation projects

How long will this project take?

It is 25 year plan with 4 years before any seen critical improvement (process of funds being applied for and then awarded, and lastly the building process).