

Western Station Area Planning

Community Leader Group Meeting

February 29, 2024

Welcome & Introductions

Sarah Shaughnessy (Raleigh Planning & Development) welcomed the group and led a round of introductions of the project team and Community Leader Group (CLG) members. The meeting was attended by three members of the public. One member of the public representing the Wake County Housing Coalition streamed the meeting live to interested neighbors and Wake County Housing Coalition members via a virtual meeting platform.

Engagement Round 2 Summary

Sarah Shaughnessy gave a presentation on the second round of community engagement which included:

- 5 Community Leader Group Meetings
- 3 pop-up events
- 4 in-person open houses
- 2 online open houses/webinars.
- 5 Neighborhood meetings
- 3 Small group meetings
- 2 1:1 interviews
- 1 online survey
- Mailed and distributed over 40,000 flyers to corridor residents and business owners
- Posted 20 yard signs along the 12-mile corridor
- 3 rounds of canvassing
- And through all of this, talked to or connected with over 500 people

A summary of the feedback received during those engagement efforts included six major themes: mobility, housing, land use and development, existing neighborhoods, supporting businesses, and public spaces. Discussion questions were presented to the group including:

- Have you attended any of the open houses or other engagement events so far?
- What did you observe? What feedback to you have for us?
- What have you heard about the Western BRT or Station Area Planning? Do you think people are aware and connected to the project if they want to be?

Conversation and Questions

The group discussed engagement to-date, responses to station area planning activities, and how the project team could more effectively reach more members of the community, and opportunities for additional engagement in the final phase of the project.

See below for a summary of questions asked and feedback provided by community leaders and attendees of the public, along with responses provided by city planning staff.

- **Question:** Is there a way to find out who the members of the Community Leader Group are?
 - Yes, information is available online on the [project webpage](#). Residents of the corridor were invited to apply and were appointed by the City Council to participate in this planning project. Information about the selection and appointment process is available [here](#).
- **Question:** How can we better communicate the timeline to the public, so they have an expectation of when they will be able to use the Bus Rapid Transit?
 - This is a long-term project with several phases. The station area planning process is anticipated to conclude in the fall of 2024, which will include plans for the neighborhoods around the corridor. The design for the BRT corridor itself is currently at 10 percent and anticipated to advance to 30 percent by

the fall. Construction on the corridor is expected to be complete in 2030. Information about the timeline for the project is on the city's [Wake BRT: Western Corridor webpage](#).

- **Feedback:** Many people confuse Western BRT corridor with other BRT projects happening concurrently. For example, some neighbors are confused about the large DMV building on New Bern Avenue, and whether the intent is to build something similar on Western Blvd. We need to give Western BRT its own identity, so people don't get confused.
- **Feedback:** People are very wary of the BRT project in general and want more clarity on how it will impact residents along the corridor. Communication and information about how the project will benefit people would be helpful. People think that BRT stops are going to be analogous to the negative perceptions of the Moore Square Bus Station.
- **Question:** Why is the City of Raleigh investing so many resources for the Project? There is concern that federal funding is still needed to be confirmed for construction of the project. What if we don't get the funds?
 - The City has received federal funding for the design and station area planning for the Western BRT corridor. Station Area Planning is an important component of developing a competitive application to secure funding for the construction. The city has already received funding for construction for the New Bern Ave corridor and the Southern corridor.
- **Feedback:** The project team should think about ways to condense information so that people read it, but balance that with providing sufficient information to dispel misconceptions. When we send notice of open houses, pop-up events, etc. as much information should be provided as possible to try to refute the public's misconceptions about funding, timing, and ultimate outcomes of the project.
- **Question:** Could the project team host an interactive webpage with the maps and visuals that people are able to interact with in person at the open houses? It may be helpful to provide that option to provide feedback spatially on maps without having to show up to events in-person.
 - City staff are currently working on a new survey to post on the website. The idea of adding an interactive map or images is well taken and staff will investigate if that is possible.
- **Feedback:** The project team should add a video tutorial to the website to help the public navigate the website as it relates to Wake BRT and the four separate corridors.
- **Feedback:** The project team could help people better understand what makes BRT different from a regular bus. Ways to that include:
 - A side-by-side time comparison of current bus, future BRT, and driving?
 - Tell the story of an average person using the future BRT how will it be used for the practical day to day travels of a Raleigh resident. From the rider's perspective, how the experience of public transit improved through the BRT.
 - Renderings have been made to illustrate what the bus will look like and how it works. The project team can continue to share those renderings.
- **Feedback:** Raleigh's Department of Transportation could also be sharing information about BRT events, surveys, updates, etc. on their websites and social media pages to cross-promote station area plan events.
- **Feedback:** At pop-ups, the project team should think about interactive ways to record where people live/come from.

- **Question:** Is there a list of property and business owners that asked to be included or excluded from the Transit Overlay District (TOD) mapped along Western Blvd?
 - The TOD was applied generally over the Western Blvd corridor through a public rezoning process in 2022 ([Z-18-22](#)). [This website](#) summarizes the criteria staff used to determine where the TOD was mapped. At the time of that rezoning, property owners could petition to be added to or removed from the TOD. Information on that process is available [here](#).

- **Question:** Where can people find information about the Western BRT related rezoning?
 - The TOD was applied as a result of rezoning case [Z-18-22](#), which was approved by City Council in 2022.
 - At this time there is no active rezoning filed related to the Western BRT station area planning project.
 - If recommendations for rezoning come out of this station area planning process, there could be smaller scale city-initiated rezonings, or land-use policy changes that are initiated following the adoption of the Western Station Area Plan. These actions would be separate from the adoption of the Western Station Area Plan and would involve their own public, legislative processes.

- **Feedback:** In the next round of deliverables, which will include implementation recommendations, it would be helpful if the feedback from the public could be presented spatially (geographically on a map) and tied directly to recommendations. It should be clear how resident feedback collected at the open houses, pop-up events, and through online surveys are directly incorporated into the Western Station Area Plan.

The meeting concluded with an overview from Sarah Shaughnessy on next steps, which includes a focus on prioritization of projects and implementation strategies including affordable housing tools, business stabilization strategies, and planning and zoning tools.