

Western SAP Community Leader Group Meeting; June 25, 2024

Agenda Overview

City staff presented a refresher summary on what we have heard from the community over the past two rounds of engagement.

- First two phases were focused on talking to a variety of groups from across the city
- Key challenges
 - Need for affordable housing, complete and safe connections to transit, and support for local businesses to stay in place during the process
 - Major themes: connections, housing affordability and types, maintaining culture and community for historic neighborhoods, supporting small businesses during the transition, create spaces for communities to gather, protecting environment/preserving tree canopy

City staff presented an overview of the existing housing conditions research and findings completed by the consultant working on the Western Station Area Planning project.

- Housing costs on average take up to 22-27% of a household income
- Transportation costs on average take up to 18-20% of a household income
- Fewer homes are available for homes at lower and upper income levels
- Along the Western corridor, renters make up the majority occupants
- Owner occupied rates increase further west as you move towards Cary
- Associated with higher income levels being concentrated towards the western part of the route, moving towards Cary
- Different types of affordable housing: legally restricted vs. naturally occurring
- Along the Western corridor, most of the housing that exists is naturally occurring, especially when compared to the southern route
- Western corridor has a higher number of multi-family units when compared to the southern route
- Trends show that the vacancy rate has steadily decreased in Raleigh / Wake County while rent has steadily increased, especially for multi-family units
- Similarly, the vacancy rate for housing/for sale is also low/decreasing

The Community Leader Group provided focused feedback on this information and the way it was presented.

- Data is nice to see but doesn't tell the whole story about the BRT
- Specific case studies about where housing could be added → show how a neighborhood could change / alter if the route or stops were to be put in place
- Be more direct with how adding to the housing supply can help with affordability even if it isn't legally restricted
- Connect more to specifically what things will look like with the BRT → relaying the data back to the BRT as often as possible

- Put the actual dollar value of 30-60% AMI on the slide with the “big squeeze” commentary
- Define “HH” on the next slide with Existing Residential Base (map of income hotspot map) and include percentages to help connect the two points
- Percentage values with the Housing Composition slide (horizontal bar charts) for classification of rental inventory → would help show number of unites in each category as a % of total housing in that area
- Include a base rate line for what is considered a “ideal” vacancy rate on rental housing / for sale housing vacancy rate slides

City staff gave an overview of affordable housing feedback received from open houses, stakeholder meetings, and 1:1 interviews with residential housing developers including market rate and affordable housing developers.

- Biggest interest in preserving and growing deeply affordable housing
- Strategies that exist
 - Providing capital for developing areas
 - Acquisition and preservation of NOAH isn’t feasible for a variety of reasons
 - Shortfall of capital to meet demand
 - Increase access to patient (long-term) capital
 - Citizen advisory committee for housing development
- Stakeholder feedback session themes
 - Create additional legally restricted housing
 - Promoting homeownership
 - Support existing renters
 - Preserve NOAH

The Community Leader Group provided focused feedback on this information and the way it was presented.

- Question on if rent control is feasible / possible
- TOD Affordable Housing Priorities slide: strategies / themes listed sometimes protect landlords more than tenants → something to consider
- Affordable Housing Small Group Discussion | Strategy Feedback slide
 - Question on what bullet #4 / #3 mean, why they aren’t feasible
 - Some of the bullets can include additional info or rewording to make the points clearer after first reading
- Clarification on recommendation for increasing acceptance of affordable housing vouchers is meant as a tool to support existing renters. Hopefully there will be additional strategies for this section.

City staff presented emerging themes in business stabilization strategies.

- Protecting existing small businesses
- Grow authentic Raleigh
- Create vibrant places

The Community Leader Group provided focused feedback on this information and the way it was presented.

- Commercial Strategy Priorities slide
 - Add in map of where small businesses are actually located / what areas are we trying to preserve
 - Provide more explanation for pop-up commercial businesses
 - Look at Downtown Raleigh Alliance for strategies on how to preserve and diversify small/local businesses

The discussion was opened for General Discussion and Feedback from the Community Leader Group.

- Where will the presentation (they are being shown) go
 - It will be added to and edited for the third round of engagement
- Lack of housing / affordable housing slides are “grim” → seems like two sides of things: not only is there the affordability of housing but also how will the BRT help with gaining access to jobs / increasing wealth to help with affordability → need more connections back to how the BRT is a solution to things
- Return to the graphics from the beginning and show how the goal of the BRT is to reduce spending on transportation (slide with how much people spend on transportation)
- Later slides will have info on recommendations and solutions.
- Data for ridership trends for buses may be helpful in showing why BRT is important

City Staff discussed next steps for Western station area planning.

- Discussion of next steps in the process → pausing community engagement and resuming in early September of 2024
- Looking for ideas on how to keep people engaged in the meantime
 - Doing small scale engagement with civic groups
- How to keep groups engaged over the summer

Adjournment.