

Western Station Area Planning

Community Leader Group Meeting

November 16, 2023

Technical difficulties required a switch in meeting platform from Zoom to Microsoft Teams at the beginning of the meeting. Participants were notified of this change via email.

Sarah Shaughnessy (Raleigh Planning & Development) welcomed the group and shared that the purpose for the meeting was to review the format and content for the upcoming public open houses on December 4 and December 5.

Chris Hall (Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill) stated that the events will be drop-in style, with a series of boards on easels and tabletop exercises designed to inform and get feedback from residents on connectivity, desired amenities, key issues, and overall vision for the Western BRT corridor.

Chris presented a draft of the boards, which include:

- Introduction to Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Station Area Planning
- 10% Transit Route and Neighborhood Context
- Stronger Mobility across Station Areas
- Development Diversity
- Active Streets and Public Spaces
- Equity – Housing, Jobs, and Services
- Sustainable Landscapes
- What would you like to see more of in the corridor?
- Additional maps of each segment of the Western BRT Corridor (4 total)
- Map of Future Land Use designations and the TOD overlay district
- Questions to consider
- Tabletop exercise: tell us about the corridor (satellite maps)
- What else do we need to know? (write ideas on post-it notes)
- Project timeline – key steps in the process

Following the review of the draft content, the group discussed.

- There are very different uses along the corridor already. At what point in this process are you trying to tease out what and where?
 - The goal at this stage is to get input on what the community values, what should stay, and long-term, what can and should change. The next round of open houses will focus on choosing between different alternatives for station area plans.
- Will you be tracking the feedback you get based on location? I expect it will vary by neighborhood.
 - Yes, we will be tracking this.
- It might be helpful to have a board showing existing affordable housing and how that housing will be preserved. We should also emphasize that transit can reduce transportation costs for residents.
- The open houses will be held at Dix Park Chapel on Monday, 12/04 and Powell Drive Park on Tuesday, 12/05 with a pop-up event at Method Road Community Center on Saturday, 12/02

- The locations are good. It would be helpful to also attend community meetings that are already happening along the corridor. The Boylan Heights Neighborhood Association meets monthly; community leaders will connect staff with that group.
- Have we engaged current transit riders? The 300 and 305 currently provide service along Western Blvd.
 - Staff will work with our Community Connectors to engage 300 and 305 riders.
 - The 11 and 11L may also be good to ride to talk to people.
- What information can Community Leaders share?
 - Staff will share the flyer for the open houses again following this meeting. Staff can also prepare informational handouts for Connectors to distribute. The boards reviewed at this meeting are still in progress and will be revised before the open houses.
- Are the images on the boards good at communicating the ideas we intent to convey want for the dot exercise? What about on other boards?
 - Image is powerful. Perhaps there is a way to boost community buy -in if people could see the possibilities of BRT by seeing realistic representations of what the BRT system would look like in Raleigh, opposed to being general with representations from other cities
 - Would be good to have pictures of Raleigh, where possible
 - Not all examples of potential transit-oriented development exist in Raleigh yet, so many pictures are pulled from other cities. It can also be easier for viewers to generalize and provide thematic feedback if the image is of somewhere else.
 - Could we include a bus in the “Shopping Options” picture?
 - A person riding a bike would also be nice to include, maybe in the trails picture.
- It would be helpful to have a definitions sheet or glossary of terms. Equity, for example, can be hard to define.
 - The project team can work on this. Equity, and other terms, would be defined based on previous work, such as the Equitable Development Around Transit (EDAT) Guidebook.
 - Defining terms could be an open-ended question for participants.
- The white font on the dot exercise board is hard to read.
 - SOM will adjust the colors to improve readability.
- On the development diversity boards, all of the development pictured has a similar aesthetic. Could we include some diversity in the design?
 - Yes, SOM will switch out some of these images.
- Can we add a bus or roadway to the sustainability slide?
 - The project team will brainstorm. Station Area Planning does not include the design of the roadway. It does include the surrounding neighborhoods. We don’t want to be misleading with the images we show.
- The satellite map for the tabletop exercises can be hard to read. Is there a reason that style of map was chosen?
 - It can be easy to locate oneself on an aerial map. We will provide both aerial/satellite and conventional/stylized maps so that people attending have options.
- It would be helpful to incorporate accessibility into slides since that topic came up at the Community Leader Orientation.
- On the Sustainable Landscapes slide, the landscaping has a lot of grass, brings to mind monocultures and native/invasive species.
 - Staff can work with the Office of Sustainability and Stormwater Departments to develop some talking points on current landscaping requirements for development.

Jannat Nain (Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill) shared the Community Engagement consultants for this project, P3, have reached out to community members to provide additional feedback. Please be on the lookout for chances to provide feedback and let us know if you are interested in participating in an informational interview.

The meeting concluded.