

**Edgewater Drive Vision Task Force
Meeting Minutes, April 17, 2008**

A meeting of the Edgewater Drive Vision Task Force was held on Thursday, April 17, 2008 at approximately 7:00 p.m. at the **Edgewater High School Media Center**.

Task Force Members Present

Claramargaret Groover

Bob Carr

Eric Apen

Tom Cook

Karen Shimpf

Greg Bryla

Jim Pruett

Phyllis Tuell

Mary Dees

Task Force Members Absent

Bob Ward

Eric Houston

Staff Present

Jason Burton, Chief Planner, City of Orlando

Jon Ippel, Planner, City of Orlando

Pauline Eaton, Main Street Coordinator

Introductions/Preamble

The Chair read the preamble and purpose of the meeting, introduced the staff, and stated that after learning over the past few months, that the Task Force needs to solidify their own opinions on each of the major topics that have been studied. The Chair handed out blank pieces of paper, and had the members write down their own vision for each of the subject areas, which was followed by the discussion below; each Task Force member was asked to share what they wrote with the group.

Developing an Independent Vision

Greg Bryla: The first word that comes to mind is Quality. The higher the quality, the more people take care of place. The Drive has the bones in place to become a great urban space, keeping multi-modal connections in mind. Select finishes of durable materials that are timeless; get street furniture that is of high quality. Be tactile in your selection and go for the best bang for the buck. Also, likes an eclectic mix of material to create "place".

Tom Cook: Take opportunities to widen the sidewalk at all times. Eliminate non-essentials (extra signage, etc.). Concentrate on the placement of more trees on the corridor.

Karen Schimpf: Echoes some of the things already said, but also likes potted plants and hanging containers that have color (flowers, plants).

Phyllis Tuell: Better lighting needed to encourage pedestrian activity. Street crossings need special concentration in order to create a true shopping district.

Bob Carr: A day in Downtown College Park could frame his vision of what Edgewater Drive should be. Everything from starting with a relaxing morning in Albert Park, to window shopping at Bijou, and picking up something for the house at Ace Hardware would mark his day. Create an organized, efficient, yet low stress environment. Create everything easily accessible to pedestrian by clustering multiple uses within walking distance. Bob would finish his day on the Drive at one of the many dining opportunities that have begun to flourish here over the past few years – BBQ, Alfonsos, Jax, and maybe even picking something up at ABC.

Chair Groover asked about Bus Stops and Transit. What do they look like? How are they placed (every block, every other block, strategically outside the center?). Is there future Lymmo in the area – are there natural gas or electric buses in the area?

Bob Carr responded that over the next 10 years, life will change significantly than it is today. Things are changing more quickly than people realize with their lifestyle and the increase in energy prices. Claramargaret Groover added that she just installed a shower in her office so that she can bike to work more often. Bob Ward added that folks are getting more worked up over the price of gas. In the future, things will have to be more organized to be pedestrian friendly. If the street is organized to give preference to cars first, a pedestrian friendly street won't work.

Phyllis Tuell: In New York and even places like Atlanta, things are centered around the shopping experience at street level, which creates a better pedestrian environment. Amenities like bus stops are organized to keep people out of the elements. They are well lit and welcoming places to be waiting for the bus. The streets themselves are well lit with “globe” style street lighting for pedestrians. Getting a better circulator that serves the community would be a good goal in order to get customers back and forth in their shopping experience. There are several activities that are spread out all over the Drive.

Greg Bryla: Many folks can complain about transit investments (it's a homeless shelter on wheels), and many citizens say it's a waste of money. However, the idea is to create an option and the choice is up to the individual to take advantage of transit infrastructure. Lymmo is a good example of positive investment in the community; where transit actually becomes an economic development tool. One of the ideas of having the Lymmo line is to retain Downtown eminence as the region's most viable business cluster.

Jim Pruett: Buses should pull off to the curb ultimately to make the transition from bus to sidewalk palpable for pedestrians, and not interfere with traffic.

General Discussion on Transportation Issues

The Task Force discussed having safe access points to the 6-block Core Area for transit. It may be advantageous to have a larger stop in front of Albert Park or in front of the Methodist Church. The more convenient the stops, the more people will utilize transit. As the Task Force revisits the issue, there is a definite need to figure out where the bus stops should be.

Bike Lanes were discussed next – do we still see the need for the “suicide” lane? Obviously the bike lanes cannot be utilized by youngsters - traffic needs to be calmed. However, the pedestrian experience has to be improved first in order for the area to become successful from a pedestrian experience. Bike lanes have to be wide enough so that you don’t get a “door prize”.

Medians could be a good option for the area. Features of Mizner Park in Boca Raton could be put to work in this area. Small pocket parks and surprise green spaces can add to the character – these areas can become an oasis in the City.

Other issues include mandating parking in the rear of buildings, exploring reverse-angle parking on the Drive (the example of Augusta, Georgia came up where angled parking was tried on their main street, but doesn’t seem to work well since there is not enough room). Should on-street parking be more regulated with time restrictions or even meters? The Task Force came to the conclusion that we should defer to the business owners of the area as we consider a consistent time-regulation up and down the corridor. Employee parking on-street all day seems to be a problem now, as was construction parking on the street during the construction of the Wellesley.

Increase surface parking is undesirable, but there is a need for increased wayfinding signs to existing parking lots and garages. If parking is central and convenient, there will not be as many perceived parking problems as there are today.

Transit was discussed; many people advocate for it but will not utilize it as long as they can afford not to have to utilize the bus. The impact of curb cuts on the pedestrian experience is tantamount; must minimize curb cuts or do away with them altogether. Sign clutter is another problem.

Urban Form Issues

Karen Schimpf: There is an obvious pattern with the core center of College Park, with mini-cores on either end.

Bob Carr: There are definite “Gateways” at both ends of the Drive, with a Central Core, and intervening mixed-use areas between.

General Discussion on Urban Form

Trees create a visual barrier that creates a sense of place. We must not lose sight of being water conscious. Jim Pruett suggested looking at a rotary “traffic circle” at the north end of Edgewater at Par. Will the volume of traffic allow for such a configuration? Karen Schimpf was cautious about a roundabout at the gates of a high school; however, there could be an option of an entry way treatment by paving the intersection with another material than asphalt (there is a good example of the Robinson/Crystal Lake intersection near the Executive Airport). The texture and color of the concrete lets the driver know that they are entering a special area – provides a visual and textural cue to where you are coming and going.

Public Comment.

Paul Davis expressed his concerns of the utilization of on-street parking. There are spots of time-restricted parking on the Drive; many employees will utilize the parking on-street to park there all day. The parking is the lifeblood of many businesses on a traditional corridor like Edgewater Drive. The area is oriented to being a point-of-sale for customers, but is not a traditional “shopping street”, where customers park and visit several businesses. There used to be parking restrictions on Edgewater Drive between Princeton and Smith streets, but they were removed during the construction of the Wellesley. When are they coming back? Considering the economic impact of a couple of on-street parking spaced at his building actually nets up to \$600K/year.

Eliminating left turns at Vassar, similarly to what has been done in several cities, could be a good thing. Many of the businesses along Edgewater would be agreeable to time-restricted parking, especially in the Core Area. Parking limitation signs would be adequate, so long as the parking time restrictions are enforced (parking meters are probably unnecessary at this point).

Jim Kersey. Edgewater Drive was mostly designed at a time when the car was king. We have to retrofit it such that the pedestrian is king. Look at the problem from a phased perspective – plan for what we are going to fix today, then what are the next two steps and so on. Consider that a small passenger bus that could serve the corridor could be a possibility, run independently of LYNX (perhaps by the Downtown Partnership). This could serve as a mini-trolley for the district. Bus stops in the past were not placed with any rhyme or reason. There needs to be a rhythm developed for the bus stops.

Chair Groover asked that Mr. Kersey bring the Downtown College Park Partnership Vision presentation to a future meeting. This is another perspective that could stimulate the vision of the Task Force.

Presentation & Adjournment

Mr. Burton presented “photo-shopped” visions of the future with additional landscaping, medians, sidewalks and buildings consistent with the vision developed over the past few months. Following the presentation, Chair Groover adjourned the meeting, noting that the next meeting will be followed by a mixer for the Downtown College Park Partnership on May 8th.

Collective Responses on Brainstorming paper.

Pedestrian

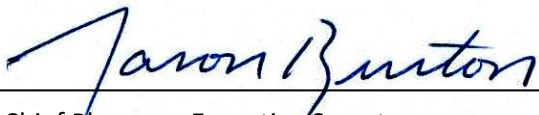
- Quality – high quality, interesting, not low-grade furnishing. Piece of community pride. Higher the quality, the pavements are higher quality. Well thought out, eclectic, put the structure (the “bones”) to it. The system is the important.
- Widen sidewalks
- Trees
- Canopy – tree or awning
- Consistent – uniformity of setbacks, streetscape, parking
- Potted plants and color
- Crosswalks lights
- Organic, yet low-stress - easy access within a short walk but entertaining

Transportation

- Multi-modal transportation with clean technologies
- Mixed-use centers, so that more things are accessible in one place
- Give the pedestrian a compelling reason why they want to be there, and the distance becomes less important from point x to y
- Regular and frequent interval timed buses, that are more attractive at stops. Which requires a critical mass of people to make
- Have options to transport
- Have bus-off lanes but weighed with ability to pull back into traffic. Need to have coordinated and comprehensive solution to where stops are located. However, more convenient the location the more likely people use it
- Bicycles – focus on getting the pedestrian area first. Bike lanes also give greater buffer between moving and parked vehicles
- Plazas, wide sidewalks, covered sidewalks
- Pocket parks that exist now – improve them, and look for other areas to expand parks
- Reverse angle parkings
- Metered parking or timed limit – enforcement issues a concern. Employee issues with on-street.
- Need consistent and uncluttered signage and way-finding

Centers/Segments along Edgewater Drive

- 3 natural segments
- Main core, 2 edge nodes and connections between, gateways features at Par/Edgewater – village sense
- Decorative street pavements and streetscape at main intersections



Chief Planner – Executive Secretary