

Washington Shores Community Planning Day

September 12, 2009: 8:30AM to 12:00 NOON

Hope Church - Sanctuary

Group Summaries and Notes

Introduction by Commissioner Samuel B. Ings:

Commissioner Ings personally welcomed the participants to the Community Planning Day for the Washington Shores neighborhood:

The strategies discussed will be incorporated into a complete long-term vision for Washington Shores, where the collective goals established today provide a critical link to our success. In creating that vision, our City staff assembled today will help facilitate and shape that vision, and our citizens will work together to formulate the direction for the future.

Even though there may be differences expressed today, we all have one goal in mind-- to create a positive plan for the future and to establish Washington Shores as the pre-eminent neighborhood of the City's west side. Your involvement today is the very essence of good government, where ideas and opinions will shape the revitalization of our community for years to come.

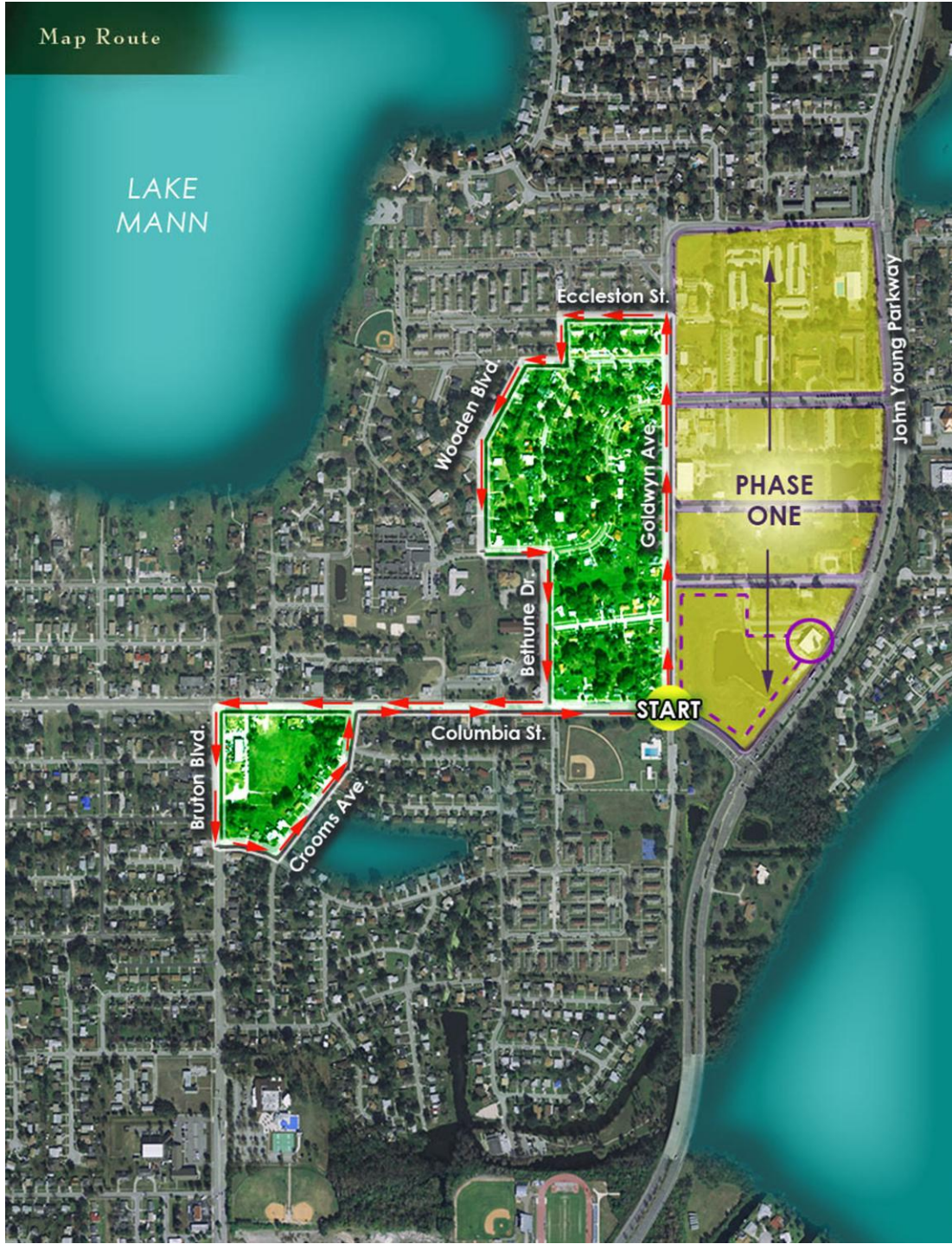
Today, we are focused on five activities designed to give critical feedback to the Vision Task Force and City staff. I hope you will provide constructive feedback on these topics. Your positive input and energy will be critical to our success: Transportation, Urban Design, Housing, Security, and Walkability.

We need to plan now for the challenges that lie ahead regarding transportation, security, housing, design and the pedestrian experience that will create a "sense of place" to build upon our history for generations to come. We can set the stage to create a focus for this neighborhood that will enable us to take our place as one of Orlando's great urban places. We appreciate your insight and commitment to Washington Shores' future.

Introduction by Chief Planner Jason Burton:

Mr. Burton explained the day's format as follows: Attendees will be broken up into five subject groups based on the number on their nametag. In the event that anyone has special comments relating to multiple subjects, they are encouraged to participate in multiple groups. An hour and a half will be allotted to discuss the issues and propose solutions in each area. Following the group discussions, we will all convene to "report out" our findings. We prefer that the citizens actively participate in reporting these findings. Staff will be taking copious notes during the report out session and carefully listening to the conclusions garnered.

Map Route



Group Summaries:

Group 1-Walkabout (see route map on pg. 2)

The neighborhood needs better branding or a logo. The current acorns on the “Welcome to Washington Shores” signs do not represent the community. The residential area appears to be very stable, well-maintained and surrounded by lush trees though the Lake Mann homes. Some of the commercial areas have unscreened dumpsters, some of which are clearly in the Right-of-Way.

The businesses along Goldwyn Ave. could benefit from additional landscaping, lighting and signage, and parking appears to be lacking. The bars on the windows might foster a negative perception and prevent potential patrons from knowing whether the use is operating or open for business. Façade improvements would provide a more welcoming feel. Inefficient vehicular connectivity between parking areas creates multiple, large curb-cuts, which are unbecoming to pedestrians. Crosswalks at the intersections of Goldwyn Ave. and Orange Center Blvd., as well as Goldwyn Ave. and Eccelston St., need to be reevaluated in terms of design (the street is very wide and automobiles often speed). Also critical to the area’s success is adequate and well-maintenance signage and lighting.

The Columbia corridor seems like the perfect spot to create a small business incubator for the neighborhood to help get small professional businesses started. This incubator could help fill up the vacant parcels around the shopping plaza or fill the existing vacant rental office space. These businesses might all work together to help provide public restrooms for the park users and transit bus drivers. Currently people relieve themselves behind the shopping center, and the smell is noticeable. The sidewalks in this area should also be widened to enhance walkability and to accommodate the existing protruding utility poles.

People like the Christmas decorations on the street lights. It makes them feel more connected to downtown. Murals were also a topic of choice. Some people like them; others don't but there are several buildings on Goldwyn where the space is available, and they could improve the aesthetics. The idea of an open air market area might also be beneficial. There is a merchant that sells a good variety of fruit on the corner across from Popeye’s, as well as a couple of BBQ trucks and some other temporary retailers that could be grouped together and become more of an “al fresco” destination.

Group 2- Design

There is a desire to see mixed-use and office/retail space to the south of Columbia St. at Bruton Blvd with low to mid-rise multi-family serving as a buffer to the existing single family homes. The current Murchison Terrace property could become an extension of Hankins Park with more green, area open space, and upgraded park facilities.

To the north of Columbia St., the agreed that commercial/office space with more multi-family units and townhomes serving as a transition to Washington Shores Elementary School and the existing single family homes in the neighborhood to the north. Row houses could be built fronting onto the school

open space. The density of this housing buffer would decrease as it went from the neighborhood center perimeter towards the residential neighborhood. The block between Ola Dr. and Drew Ave. would be ideal for a vocational facility that provides hands-on training. The block between Goldwyn Ave. and Bethune Dr. could house a relocated bus terminal, civic uses, and other uses of more intensity to bridge between the two activity centers.

Group 3-Security

Impressions of the commercial area are seen as improving but still in need of work. Loitering has largely ceased, except for a few individuals who linger until the very end of each day and after events such as the car show. The illegal conversion of residential homes into commercial uses creates a Code Enforcement issue.

Lighting is considered adequate in some areas but can get blocked by overgrown trees or by being “put-out” by kids. A light audit is available to OUC customers, and shatterproof fixtures could be installed as a low cost and effective intervention to vandalism. In addition to lighting, abandoned homes in the area also attract crime. If not abandoned, some homes are being rented to occupants who have no vested interest in maintaining the home or the neighborhood.

The possibility of expanding the IRIS camera system to the area has been discussed. It could be used to monitor those “hanging out” in the community, as well as provide general security for the neighborhood as a whole. Officers discussed how the system works, the costs involved, and grant monies used to initiate it. In addition, the officers brought up that there was a mobile surveillance camera that is occasionally utilized in Washington Shores. Concerns over racial profiling and resident’s ability to report crimes anonymously were also discussed in order to increase the awareness of citizens in attendance.

Noise complaints were expressed about the cricket matches played in the Burton Blvd. and Columbia St. area. Officers indicated that the City’s noise ordinance does not permit loud noise after 10 p.m. and that any issues should be reported. It also appears that heavy garbage trucks, when heading out to the transfer station, via John Young Parkway create a lot of noise. In regards to Hankins Park, complaints were mentioned about kids hanging out and discouraging other residents from using the park.

Group 4-Transportation

Residents feel safer driving than walking in the community due to traffic concerns. Suggested improvements include the addition of speed bumps and appropriate pedestrian signage. There are no flashing “school zone” signs on Columbia Ave., nor do all the intersections have crosswalks or wheelchair ramps, which makes it difficult for residents to cross the street. Some suggested mid-block crossing or pedestrian overpass on Columbia Ave.

As far as bicycle-related issues are concerned, the residents desire bicycle lanes to prevent cyclists from riding on the sidewalk. They also expressed a desire for a bicycle path connection from John Young Parkway's bicycle lanes to other destinations in the city. This could be complimented by a bicycle trail near the Smith Center site, with bicycle racks at the SuperStop as well as in the neighborhood parks.

Traffic concerns included using of Goldwyn Ave. and Wilts St. as a cut-through route, speeding on residential streets, and extending Bunche St. for better connectivity. Other concerns with Bunche St. include a lack of a sidewalk and the need for speed bumps to prevent speeding. There is also a desire to increase the speed on John Young Parkway. Since Washington Shores is the only segment of that roadway that is limited to 35 mph, it becomes a speed trap. Residents also had issues with parking on John Young Pkwy. and Columbia St., as well as over-parking at businesses.

There is a desire for public transportation service during non-traditional hours (from 2 a.m. to 6 a.m.) and improved pedestrian access to LYNX bus stops. Bus stops also need better maintenance (including graffiti removal) and panic buttons in the case of an emergency. There is a desire for more transit pull-off bays and greater spacing between stops. Opportunities for improvement include improved lighting at the SuperStop and the positioning of stops at traffic lights. Both of these improvements could address safety concerns.

Additional miscellaneous concerns from the residents include drainage issues (two feet of water when it rains) on Bethune Dr. and Columbia St., pedestrian access or shuttles to the Citrus Bowl for events, and a request for a park & ride lot. There is also an issue with stray dogs and Orange County's animal control policies, which assess a fee/ownership of the animal to the complainant. The group suggested that the formal policy from Orange County Animal Control is distributed at the next neighborhood meeting.

Group 5-Housing

Residents expressed a need for additional senior housing options, possibly a facility within the community that will allow seniors access to neighbors and friends without isolation from community. They desire a senior center that provides exercise machines, planned activities, computer classes, healthcare, and language classes, and the community is willing to support an afterschool/mentoring program for the youth.

Concerns were raised regarding the sharp increase in rental properties in the area. Discussions contributed to crime and the neglect of vacant single family housing to the increase in non-homesteaded property. There is a desire to rehabilitate existing housing as well as the multifamily developments along Orange Center Blvd. Residents want to maintain property values as well as the historic cultural influences of the neighborhood.

There was an interest in maintaining several generations within a single home site. A suggested item thoroughly discussed, and agreed to by all, would be small accessory dwellings that could potentially be allowed in the neighborhood – such as ECHO (Elderly Cottage Housing Opportunity) housing. This would provide the flexibility for the older demographic of the neighborhood to invite their family to stay with

them in these accessory units to stabilize the housing base, without detrimental impacts to the character of the neighborhood. Either generation could live in the detached accessory unit allowing the next generation to stabilize the neighborhood and begin the cultural re-investment in the area.

Conclusion

The Washington Shores Vision Task Force, which met on a regular basis prior to this community planning day, shall continue to meet to consider and in greater depth the concepts raised at this meeting. Today’s process focused around getting valued input from the community at large. The information gathered will be researched by staff for future discussion and planning with the Task Force, producing a final working document to guide future development and policies.

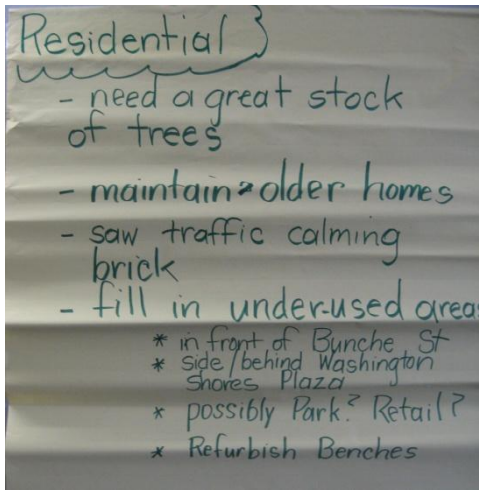
List of Registered Attendees	
1. Melody Hills	2. Vera Jackson
3. Philippe Dubic	4. James S. Williams
5. Corey McKnight	6. Mary Maxwell
7. Michelle Greenwood	8. Darryl Braunskill Sr.
9. Nancy Paulin	10. Arthur Carter
11. Johnny Jackson	12. Aubrey Jackson
13. Michael Arrington	14. Lawrence Morton
15. Mylika Morton	16. Ada Sims
17. Frank Mitchell	18. Lawanda Charlton
19. Gary Smith	20. Ezzie Thomas
21. Allen Wiggins	22. Connie Jones
23. David Jones	24. Virginia Wilson
25. Chief Wilson	26. Charles Rowe
27. Anthony Carter	28. Deborah Wiggins
29. Thelma Montgomery	30. Mary Hamilton
31. Rosalyn White	32. Dennis Cox
33. Mike Bynum	34. Samuel Israel
35. Gwen Phillips	36. Joe Phillips
37. Joann Xavier	38. Dorothy Coke
39. Audrey Griffin	40. Fazenda Ingals
41. Alexander Smith	42. Ann Lockett
43. Epsie McCleese	44. Mirlande jean-Baptiste
45. Anthony Sheppard	

List of City Staff

1. Commissioner Samuel B. Ings	2. Frank Billingsley
3. Jason Burton	4. Cynthia Wilson
5. Michaëlle Petion	6. Elisabeth Holler
7. Jenny Wheelock	8. Mary-Stewart Droege
9. Colandra Jones	10. Jennifer Moreau
11. Jim Burnett	12. Paulette Edwards
13. Leila Allen	14. FJ Flynn
15. Tamaya Huff	16. Cristina Cruz
17. Charles Brown	18. Ofc. Kevlon Kirkpatrick
19. Susan Harris	20. Vivian Bryant (Housing Authority)
21. Lt. Darryl Brownskill	22. Ellis Henry (Housing Authority)
23. Gaile Plowden (Housing Authority)	24. Laura Minns (Lynx)
25. Jeffery Reine (Lynx)	

Example Pictures from Report-Out Session

Group 1- Walkabout



Group 4- Transportation



Group 2-Urban Design



Group 3-Security

