

Client Meeting

PROJECT: Edgewood TOD
118-19

SUBJECT: 11819 Edgewood TOD - Stakeholder
Forum

DATE: 5/22/2019

TIME: 11:00 AM

INVITEES: Nick Addamo, Cecily Bedwell (Design Collective, Inc.), Karen Holt (Harford County), Rick Nau (Kimley Horn), MacKenzie Twardus (Design Collective)

ATTENDEES: Cecily Bedwell (Design Collective, Inc.), Karen Holt (Harford County), Jenny King (Harford County - Dept. of Planning and Zoning), Rick Nau (Kimley Horn), MacKenzie Twardus (Design Collective)

CC:

COMMENTS:

MEETING MINUTES

Edgewood TOD - Stakeholder Forum

Overview: Stakeholders, identified as key business and community leaders or influencers, were invited to participate in an Edgewood Area Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Stakeholder Forum on Wednesday, May 22 @ 10:00AM. Feedback from this session will be used in developing a TOD path forward. Design Collective is the lead, urban design/planning consultant for this third leg of our Joint Land Use Study and are joined by Kimley Horn focusing on the transportation scope. The study is made possible through Harford County Office of Community & Economic Development with federal funding from the Office of Economic Adjustment. The Edgewood community is adjacent to Aberdeen Proving Ground - South, a world-class research and development center for chemical, biological and medical sector. This study focuses on how to maximize support for the military mission through revitalization and enhancement of transit-oriented design and multi-modal components desirable in attracting a highly-skilled workforce and accessible amenities while integrating urban development elements. The results of this study are intended to aid in attracting public-private investment toward a walkable, bikeable community that provides diverse housing stock for a civilian workforce as well as seniors who desire to age in place.

Karen Holt of the Harford County Office of Community & Economic Development and Cecily Bedwell of Design Collective welcomed stakeholders and gave an overview of the project purpose, scope, and schedule. Participants introduced themselves and then broke up into two table groups to discuss the general character of the Edgewood Area, issues and concerns, and specific questions related to Land Use and Transportation. Cecily Bedwell and MacKenzie Twardus of Design Collective facilitated the discussions at each table; Rick Nau of Kimley Horn participated at each table, focusing on transportation issues.

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The following are Summary Notes from the Stakeholder Forum table discussions:

Key Takeaways:

- Promotion/Branding: Need to change perception and put in place positive community promotion (can the county help with this effort? Communications Office?); "Welcome to Edgewood - Home of ..."; need to coordinate gateway messaging
- Need for community members to be on the forefront, as "champions within the community"
- Need for neighborhood-serving retail and office, including restaurants (lunch and dinner), but also basic needs such as laundry, doctors, services, etc.
- Invest in Washington Court property - needs direct access, preferably from MD 24 - there is interest in having mixed-used in this parcel - residential and commercial uses
- US 40 shopping center improvement - will be directly related to the MARC Train and MD 755 improvements, if the businesses along MD 755 improve it will lead to more traffic to US 40
- Need for bike and pedestrian improvements - this includes safety improvements such as crosswalks, sidewalks, and adequate lighting
- Need bus route connectivity
- Need housing incentives and business incentives
- Recommendation to think BIG - look at other stations, such as Dorsey Station, stations in NJ and Virginia

What is your investment in this community?

- To bring value to the neighborhood - to find opportunity in the community, improvements to the community will improve the real estate - there is lots of opportunity further east, along the water, etc.
- Representative of HCC - investment is to bring education closer to home - many residents are currently traveling far to reach HCC, would like to bring more of those courses to this area
- Longtime businesses with over 30 years of investment and stake in the community; willing to be champions to promote the positives of Edgewood
- It was noted that an area bank has over \$71M in local deposits; there is a lot of business taking place in Edgewood
- Community Development noted that Edgewood is a Priority Funding Area; has money from HUD to invest in Edgewood; latest project funded was repaving of senior center parking lot; discussed funding community Christmas/Holiday Tree; would like to fund other projects
- Boys & Girls Club is committed to providing programs and service in a safe environment for kids 6-18 years old; have served 3 generations of many area families; challenge in getting kids to/from schools; walkability challenged by lack of lighting

Community character, issues, concerns:

- Many longtime residents and businesses (1960-1980s); very proud of community
- Concern for what will happen when seniors move/age out; need senior housing options in Edgewood to allow residents to remain in community

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- Great setting with parks, natural open space, and water, but difficult access
- Good paying jobs in area auto service and industry; one business owner noted 150 employees, 135 of which earned \$65K head-of-household salaries; need to train more/future employees in trades; starting their own training program(s) ahead of HCC coming to the community
- Reputation and promotion concerns; many negative news reports (disproportionate) and not enough promotion of the positives; noted a "\$10K Murder Reward" billboard at Edgewood arrival point - had to call police dept. to have it removed. One business owner has started a "Good Things Happening in Edgewood" Facebook page to promote the community; more of this proactive action and promotion is needed
- Need for residents to take responsibility and ownership of their homes and their community
- There is a lack of "activity-based" uses in the community - these uses have left/been removed; there is no longer a movie theater, bowling alley, etc. Nowhere for the residents to gather; however, there are events at Flying Point Park, such as fishing and boating competitions, but no MD participation; participants are from VA and PA
- The only sit-down (dinner service) restaurant left is Giovanni's
- Ames and Mars left/went out of business, leaving vacancies
- The community has stagnated somewhat
- Being unincorporated has a negative effect on the community; not as competitive as Aberdeen or Havre de Grace
- There seems to be a disconnect (need for more information sharing) between the Edgewood community and the county, e.g., one business owner at the table was not aware of available incentives, although participants were asking for more incentives

Open Space / Parks:

- Generally, the area is well served with the amount of open space and facilities, including Edgewater Recreation & community Center, Edgewood Park and Cunion Field, Flying Point Park, etc., however, there are some issues in the parks, including homelessness, vandalism, littering (grocery carts left in parks)
- Need better access and more people using the parks to have more eyes on the open spaces; how can access from APG be improved?
- Need better signage and promotion
- Trails need lighting, call boxes, better access
- New park planned off Nuttal Ave.; will include trails
- There is a dog park, but it is need of and has been flagged for improvements
- Investigate mobile programming to bring more activities to Edgewood

Traffic/Transit Discussions:

General:

- Where are people traveling to/from in this community? Library, EpiCenter, commercial uses at the intersection of Rt 755 and Hanson Road
- Many residents of Edgewater Park are transit dependent and they have very few places for services or amenities that can be reached within walking distance

Pedestrian:

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- Need for crosswalks, sidewalks, and pathways off the roadway
- As noted above by Boys & Girls Club: challenge in getting kids to/from schools; walkability challenged by lack of lighting
- Many residents walk down Willoughby Beach Road - an area particularly mentioned for improvements, support for the transit stations
- There were several mentions of need for lighting - within neighborhoods but also along MD 755
- Intersections noted very dangerous to pedestrians:
 - MD 755 & Hanson Road - residents cross street on either side of intersection, not at the light, causing accidents, and maybe fatalities? traveling to/from retail uses
 - MD 24 and Hanson Road
 - MD 24 and MD 755 - major pedestrian safety issues

Bicycle:

- There is a need to extend infrastructure; currently, the bike lanes along MD 755 end at Hanson Road, which truncates the connectivity and safety

Bus:

- Need for bus stop facility improvements
- Edgewood has the highest transit-served population in Harford County
- Harford Transit pursued service to APG, but due to the closed base rule, no buses are allowed access to APG. Monterey CA Presidio Shuttle was noted as a precedent where the shuttle starts and terminates on base and has been operating for approx. 8 years.
- Bus turn-around was not accommodated in the MARC station parking lot; presents an issue, with buses dropping off passengers away from the Station (on Trimble Rd?)

MARC Train Station:

- Station completed around 2010; parking expanded; bank building torn down; approx. \$800K spent to improve the station area
- Group members expressed that they use the MARC Station for travel to DC, on weekends
- Noted most residents leave Edgewood (approx. 250/day); the train does not bring workers to Edgewood
- The old restaurant is being leased by a church - not a use that benefits/activates the station area
- There was a concern for the long-term viability of having a MARC Station in Edgewood

New Development Discussion:

- At MARC Station, interest in apartment style residential - something "affordable" for entry level APG employees which was mentioned to be avg \$48K salary; the residential development will need to be supported by basic amenities in order to be attractive
- The group mentioned a mixed-use housing development in Forest Hill with a similar program that seemed successful and may be a good precedent
- Washington Court: group desires residential and possibly mixed-use. There is interest in a programmed park at this location - possibly an open air theater. The

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group was very hopeful about the possibilities and supportive of redevelopment on this parcel, as it is currently underutilized and not being maintained

- What are your thoughts about the current new development along Trimble Road? Some felt the housing style and type is a good change, they like the townhouses and the modern feel, however the location is not well suited. There are no amenities nearby for that community, nowhere to walk or bike
- One group member felt that a good way to attract people to live here is to offer high-end housing and high-end amenities. This is something that Bel Air does not offer and therefore it would keep APG employees and residents in the same area. However, it was noted that market demand and the developer willingness to come in and invest in the community and in a project is really what is going to spur development. There was a debate about whether residential or commercial development should be the priority - it appears there are several different level of income that need to be addressed for any use.
- Additional lunch options are needed for APG personnel, to compete with Bel Air (see "pick card" note below)
- When asked about residential development for aging in place, some group members did not feel this was necessary or needed in this community, however, others felt that the current housing stock would not allow longtime residents to age in place and new senior living choices are needed.

APG

- The group mentioned the EUL - Enhanced Use Lease potential and how that would improve the station area
- The Rt 755 gate is currently closed for renovations - there may be an increase in traffic in the future due to increase in APG's workforce - i.e., 400+ National Guard workers due this summer. It is not likely this gate will ever be permanently closed.
- The increase in workers at APG will increase the need for housing
- Currently APG has a program called "pick card" where employees can go to local restaurants instead of the on-campus dining options, however, they are using it to go to Bel Air, not to local places, since the choices are greater in Bel Air
- There is a concern for APG workers when they leave for lunch; they have only 30 minutes for lunch and they often lose their parking spaces when they leave

END OF NOTES

The above is the author's interpretation of the items discussed. Any corrections or discrepancies should be brought to the author's attention within seven days, or the minutes will stand as written.