



Norcross Comprehensive Plan Update Summary of the Character Area Workshop

City of Norcross Community Center
September 26, 2013, 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM

Overview

The City of Norcross held the second of three workshops to support the update of its Comprehensive Plan on September 26, 2013. The meeting was held at the Norcross Community Center from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm. Approximately 40 people attended, not including City staff and consultants facilitating the meeting.

Meeting Agenda

- 6:30 Welcome & Introductions
- 6:40 Character Area Framework Presentation
- 6:50 Stations – Identification of Character Area Attributes
- 7:35 Small Groups – Character Area Refinement
- 8:15 Reconvene/Ideas Sharing
- 8:30 Adjourn

The meeting included three distinct segments:

- 1) Welcome and a brief overview presentation of the role of character areas in the Comprehensive Plan and City's regular activities;
- 2) A round-the-room input activity in which attendees were asked to comment on the draft vision statements and needs of the 13 character areas; and
- 3) A small group discussion whereby each group identified and ranked top priorities for character areas that required further discussion.



Station activity



Small group discussion

A brief description of each of these parts of the meeting are summarized on pages 2 through 4 and followed by comprehensive documentation of input received.

Welcome & Character Area Framework Discussion

Chris McCrary, the City's Community Development Director, welcomed attendees to the meeting and turned the floor over to Jim Summerbell, project manager with Jacobs, who gave a brief summary of the meeting goals and activities completed to date in the planning process. Attendees were welcomed in both English and Spanish.

Mr. Summerbell then gave a summary presentation of the Future Development Map, why it matters, and how the draft version being discussed today was developed. The draft map was built from the City's existing Future Development Map then modified to incorporate the area annexed into the city in early 2012 as well as recent LCI planning efforts and direction provided by the Steering Committee.

Attributes of each character area were highlighted along with the dominating characteristics of the 13 areas:

- Five are primarily residential.
- Three are primarily employment centers.
- Two are corridor-oriented and primarily commercial.
- Three are activity center and mixed-use focused.

The presentation ended with a discussion of the goals for the next two interactive activities. Directions were provided in both English and Spanish.

Stations – Identification of Character Area Attributes

Attendees were given 40 minutes to provide input at 13 stations; one station dedicated to each character area. At each of these stations, participants were asked to review the character area description and vision on display and then, on a corresponding, communal comment board, indicate three things:

1) Whether they did or did not agree with the vision statement.

2) What is missing from the area that is needed to achieve the area vision. *The following list of options was provided, and attendees were also given the option of writing down and posting additional items, if something else not listed is needed.*

- More or better sidewalks
- Better local transit access
- Better regional transit access
- Increased landscaping
- Code enforcement
- More stores
- Bike trail
- More housing options
- Better connectivity between destinations

Your Mission
Provide input on each of the 13 character areas

1. Start at the station that corresponds with the number on your agenda.
2. You will have 3 minutes on average at each station to:
 - Review character area description & vision for future.
 - Provide feedback on the **comment board** using your supplies.
 - Provide additional actions/strategies on your comment form.
3. Rotate to next station when directed by announcement.
4. 7:30 Break, then join small group discussions on targeted character areas

YOUR SUPPLIES

- ★ 48 silver stars - enough to put roughly 3-4 stars on each board.
- 4 red dots - put on the boards that require more discussion
- Small post-its - to post other needs required but not listed
- Large post-its (at table) - provide a different name for character area

Imagine Our Future

Instructions provided for station activity.

- Park space
- Increased police presence
- Dining options
- More jobs
- Design standards
- Youth facilities
- Senior facilities
- Family facilities
- Better signage

3) Whether the character area should be called something else. *Attendees had access to yellow post-its to provide an alternative name for the area if they thought it would be better called something else.*

Participants were also given a comment form to provide input on key actions or steps needed to achieve each area vision and any other comments they had. Forms were also provided around the room to allow attendees to offer an alternate vision then that provided for each character area.

Results

A tabulation of input received is provided at the end of this summary. Based on input received, people generally agreed with the visions provided for the different character areas. Across all character areas, the missing needs that received the most votes (70 or more) included the following: increased landscaping, more or better sidewalks, code enforcement, design standards, and increased police presence. A handful of people provided other potential names for character areas as indicated below.

Draft Character Area Name	Different Name Proposed by Attendee
Atlantic/FIB	Stripling Hills
Town Center	Norcross Town Center
Langford Industrial	Norcross or Buford Industrial
Mitchell Street	Mitchell Road Parkway

(Mark this character area wherever more discussion (Place a red star here if this should be a lot of times discussed in more detail.)

**02 Future Development Area:
Medlock/Peachtree Industrial Boulevard**

Do you agree with the vision for this character area? (please place one star by yes or no)

YES

NO

What is missing in this area that's needed? Place a star by items you think are needed. Please keep in mind that each character area should have different needs based on its vision for the future.

- More or better sidewalks
- Better local transit access
- Better regional transit access
- Increased landscaping
- Code enforcement
- More stores
- Bike trail
- More housing options
- Better connectivity between destinations
- Park space
- Increased police presence
- Dining options
- More jobs
- Design standards
- Youth facilities
- Senior facilities
- Family facilities
- Better signage

Other Is something else missing? If Yes, please write that on a small post-it and place here, in the right. You are also invited to provide this input on your comment form.

Should this character area be called something else? If you answered yes, tell us on a yellow post-it what you think it should be called. Post it here!

Example of comment board provided for feedback on each character area.



Small Groups – Character Area Refinement

As people went around to the various stations, they were asked to put a red dot on four character area boards, of their choice, that they felt warranted further discussion. The areas that received the highest number of votes are all on the south side of Buford Highway:

- Mitchell Street Neighborhoods
- Beaver Ruin/Indian Trail Activity Center
- Summerour Middle School
- Jimmy Carter Boulevard/Brook Hollow Activity Center



After the station activity, attendees were split into three groups. In each of the groups, the four character areas above were discussed over the course of 40 minutes. For each of the four areas, the facilitator:

- Asked each group member what he/she believes is the top priority for the future of that character area. A scribe wrote down each item on a flipchart.
- Then, for each priority proposed, asked for a vote, by a show of hands, of those that supported this item being a top priority. Votes were tallied to identify the top priorities.

The voting results of each group are provided on pages 5 and 6. Top priorities heard across the three groups included the following:

- **Jimmy Carter Blvd/Brook Hollow Activity Center** – traffic, corridor improvements that address car/truck/pedestrian interaction, gateway signage, redevelopment, and increased police presence.
- **Mitchell Street Neighborhoods** – home ownership, better sense of community, increased police presence, landscaping, lighting, improved quality of life, and code enforcement.
- **Beaver Ruin/Indian Trail Activity Center** – design standards, better transit access (bus stops are poorly located), pedestrian safety, increased police presence, jobs/businesses, an international activity center, and eradication of long-stay hotels.
- **Summerour Middle School** – Lighting, code enforcement, landscaping, connectivity to school and rec area, park/educational/recreational center, coordination with Board of Education for development plans, and use of power line ROW to develop multi-use trail

Reconvene/Ideas Sharing and Adjourn

At the end of the meeting, attendees reconvened to share the top priorities identified in each group. Jim Summerbell provided final commends, reminding everyone of next steps, including the upcoming community survey to be released in mid-October and last workshop to support the planning process on November 21. Chris McCrary thanked all for attending. The meeting adjourned just after 8:30 pm.

Small Group Voting Results

Group 1 Summary

Group 1 participants see the southern or I-85 portion of Norcross as a major gateway to the city that plays a major role in shaping public perception of city. Common concerns among the discussion of character areas were the need for better design standards, connectivity, transit access, and improved sense of community. Community improvements are needed in this area to help improve the city's image in attracting business and the creative class.

Top Priorities by Character Area and Number of Votes (if in clear majority)

11. Jimmy Carter Blvd/Brook Hollow Activity Center

- Traffic and corridor improvements -10
- Freight mobility and interference with auto and pedestrian traffic -8
- Better restaurants -7
- Gateway/better design standards (Overlay needed) -7
- Gateway at Norcross-Tucker Road -5
- Better signals and striping
- Safety Transit

12. Mitchell Street Neighborhoods

- Home Ownership -11
- Better sense of community -9
- Increased police presence -7
- Code enforcement -6
- Connectivity, need better sidewalks and trails (Canopy Walk) -5
- Street design and landscape standards -5
- Parks (need Dog Park)
- Animal Control – pet enforcement
- Grocery store
- Art Community
- Parking

13. Beaver Ruin/Indian Trail Activity Center

- Design standards -9
- Better transit access (bus stops are poorly located) -7
- Pedestrian safety -5
- Better lighting
- Tourism

Group 2 Summary

Top Priorities by Character Area and Number of Votes

9. Summerour Middle School

- Lighting -12
- Code enforcement -12
- Youth center -12
- Landscaping -12
- Traffic lights -10
- Family center -7

11. Jimmy Carter Blvd/Brook Hollow Activity Center

- Increased police presence -10
- Redevelopment -10
- Limit hotels/motels (revitalize or redevelop into something else) -7
- Traffic calming along Brook Hollow -7

12. Mitchell Street Neighborhoods

- Landscaping -11
- Lighting -11
- Increased police presence -11
- Code enforcement -10

13. Beaver Ruin/Indian Trail Activity Center

- Increased police presence -11
- Jobs/businesses -11
- International center (stores, food (like the forum), and park or other community facility) -11
- Publix, Kroger, Wal-Mart, etc. -11
- Lighting -10

Group 3 Summary

Top Priorities by Character Area and Number of Votes

9. Summerour Middle School

- Connectivity to school and rec areas -8
- Park/Educational/Recreational Center -7
- Coordinate with Board of Education for development plans -7
- Use power line ROW to develop multi-use trail -7
- Redevelop Apartment complexes -5
- Arts and Cultural Center (old high school theater?) -0
- Infill along Price St -3

11. Jimmy Carter Blvd/Brook Hollow Activity Center

- OFS site and adjoining areas need a plan -8
- Connectivity between residential and OFS/commercial -8
- Gateway signage for community -8
- Restore "Historic Norcross" signs -8
- Off-freeway visual impact for visitors -8
- Variety of housing to support OFS and supporting businesses -1
- Gwinnett Village CID integration (signage) -6

12. Mitchell Street Neighborhoods

- Improved quality of life -9
- Code enforcement -9
- Landscaping in power line corridor -8
- Better transportation (foot and vehicular) -7
 - Connection to community
- Update existing housing stock -7
- Parks and sidewalks – "welcome mat to neighbors" -6
- More street lighting -4
- Better housing options -3

13. Beaver Ruin/Indian Trail Activity Center

- Eradicate long-stay hotels -7
- Safety for employees (people at large) -7
- Police patrols -7
- Preserve existing business environment (ex. CarMax) -5
- Code enforcement -5
- Recruit new businesses -4
- More office space -4
- Utilize access to I-85

Documentation of Written or Posted Comments

Feedback on Character Areas from Station Activity

Future Development Areas Station Activity Feedback														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Total Votes
	Atlantic/PIB	Medlock /PIB	Norcross HS	North Peachtree	Hopewell Woods	Buford/JCB	Town Center	Langford Industrial	Summerour MS	South Cemetery	JCB/Brook Hollow	Mitchell St	Beaver Ruin/Indian Trail	
Needs More Discussion Votes														
Yes	0	2	1	2	2	3	3	1	8	1	7	15	11	
Do You Agree with the Vision?														
Yes	5	6	3	4	3	2	4	5	3	2	4	6	2	
No	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	
What is Missing?														
More or better sidewalks	6	4	2	6	10	6	2	4	11	5	3	8	7	74
Better local transit access	3	2	3	2	5	4	3	4	9	0	2	9	5	51
Better regional transit access	1	0	0	0	3	5	5	1	2	0	9	4	5	35
Increased landscaping	3	4	5	0	5	8	5	12	8	9	5	10	6	80
Code enforcement	0	7	0	2	0	10	0	3	9	8	6	22	4	71
More stores	1	1	3	1	1	1	10	1	0	2	3	3	6	33
Bike trail	3	1	3	5	6	3	5	2	5	4	3	7	3	50
More housing options	1	1	1	1	5	5	4	2	3	0	1	3	2	29
Better connectivity between destinations	3	4	2	5	4	4	7	4	4	4	1	4	2	48
Park space	2	1	0	1	2	4	1	0	12	2	2	14	7	48
Increased police presence	1	9	1	2	2	6	1	5	5	6	13	15	8	74
Dining options	0	1	2	0	0	1	3	1	0	1	2	1	4	16
More jobs	6	3	0	0	0	1	3	2	2	1	2	3	8	31
Design standards	6	9	1	1	4	6	6	6	6	5	5	8	10	73
Youth facilities	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	4	7	4	2	6	6	38
Senior facilities	1	1	0	7	3	2	5	1	2	3	2	4	4	35
Family facilities	4	3	4	3	3	2	5	2	4	1	2	7	6	46
Better signage	3	6	2	1	0	5	5	4	2	2	2	4	4	40
Other:														
Extended Stay _____?		2												2
Education Improvements		1												1
Intersection improvements: Langford/N. Peachtree		2												2
Landmark Structure (not memorable)		1												1

Future Development Areas Station Activity Feedback														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Total Votes
	Atlantic/PIB	Medlock /PIB	Norcross HS	North Peachtree	Hopewell Woods	Buford/JCB	Town Center	Langford Industrial	Summerour MS	South Cemetery	JCB/Brook Hollow	Mitchell St	Beaver Ruin/Indian Trail	
Traffic Management during School in/out			1											1
Remove the Motels			1											1
Curbs				1										1
Sidewalk across RR on Holcomb Bridge					2									2
Craft Beer							1							1
Better Buford Hwy cross connections							1							1
Dog Park							1							1
Grocery Store							1			2	1		2	6
Liquor Store							1							1
Landscaping along RR							1							1
More Parking							1							1
Connect to Downtown								1						1
Entrepreneurial/small business hub								1						1
Street Lighting									1			2		3
Powerline Recreation Trail (Dirt Bikes, etc.)									1					1
Bus Stops are Dangerous									1					1
Utilize Cemetery as Park/History site										1				1
Build walls around power station (similar to downtown Atlanta)										1				1
Garbage												1		1
Should this character area be called something else?	Stripling Hills						Norcross Town Center	Norcross or Buford Industrial				Mitchell Road Parkway		

Additional Comments Provided on Character Area Comment Form

01 - Atlantic/Peachtree Industrial Boulevard

What three key actions or steps do you think are needed to achieve the vision for this area? (if any)

- Commercial stores

Other Thoughts or Comments - None

02 - Medlock/ Peachtree Industrial Boulevard

What three key actions or steps do you think are needed to achieve the vision for this area? (if any)

- Increased police presence
- Commercial stores and restaurants
- Street cleaning

Other Thoughts or Comments - None

03 - Norcross High School

What three key actions or steps do you think are needed to achieve the vision for this area? (if any)

- Wal-Mart
- Lights

Other Thoughts or Comments - None

04 - North Peachtree Street Neighborhoods

What three key actions or steps do you think are needed to achieve the vision for this area? (if any)

None

Other Thoughts or Comments - None

05 - Hopewell Woods

What three key actions or steps do you think are needed to achieve the vision for this area? (if any)

None

Other Thoughts or Comments - None

06 - Buford Highway/Jimmy Carter Blvd Activity Center

What three key actions or steps do you think are needed to achieve the vision for this area? (if any)

- Landscaping

Other Thoughts or Comments - None

07 - Town Center

What three key actions or steps do you think are needed to achieve the vision for this area? (if any)

None

Other Thoughts or Comments - None

08 - Langford Road Industrial Center

What three key actions or steps do you think are needed to achieve the vision for this area? (if any)

- More jobs
- Lights
- Entryway
- Sidewalk

Other Thoughts or Comments - None

09 - Summerour Middle School

What three key actions or steps do you think are needed to achieve the vision for this area? (if any)

- Lights
- Code enforcement
- Youth center
- Landscaping
- Lighting
- Code enforcement

Other Thoughts or Comments - None

10 - South Cemetery Street

What three key actions or steps do you think are needed to achieve the vision for this area? (if any)

None

Other Thoughts or Comments - None

11 - Jimmy Carter/Brook Hollow Activity Center

What three key actions or steps do you think are needed to achieve the vision for this area? (if any)

- Police enforcement
- Street bones
- Lights
- Police presence

Other Thoughts or Comments - None

12 - Mitchell Street Neighborhoods

What three key actions or steps do you think are needed to achieve the vision for this area? (if any)

- Stoplights and lights on the street
- Cleaner
- Move recycling center
- Wal-Mart
- Lights
- Cleaning the streets
- Police presence
- Code enforcement
- Lights
- More lighting
- Landscaping

Other Thoughts or Comments

- (Need) grocery stores

Character Area Vision Edits Provided*

Character Area Name: North Peachtree Street Neighborhoods

What would you change about the vision for this area?

1. Connect Cochran Drive and Valley Road
2. Sidewalk in NHills Oak Cove and Oak Terrace

**Please note that only one "Character Area Vision Edits" form was returned.*

13 - Beaver Ruin/Indian Trail Activity Center

What three key actions or steps do you think are needed to achieve the vision for this area? (if any)

- International shopping center
- Lights
- Sidewalks
- Wal-Mart
- Police presence
- Lights to make the city well-lit
- Street lights attached to power line poles
- International center
- Police presence
- More businesses
- International center (food store, Kroger)
- Cleaning the streets

Other Thoughts or Comments

- We need Wal-Mart, Kroger, and Publix.