



Norcross Comprehensive Plan Update

Summary of Open House

City of Norcross Community Center

February 6, 2014, 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM

Overview

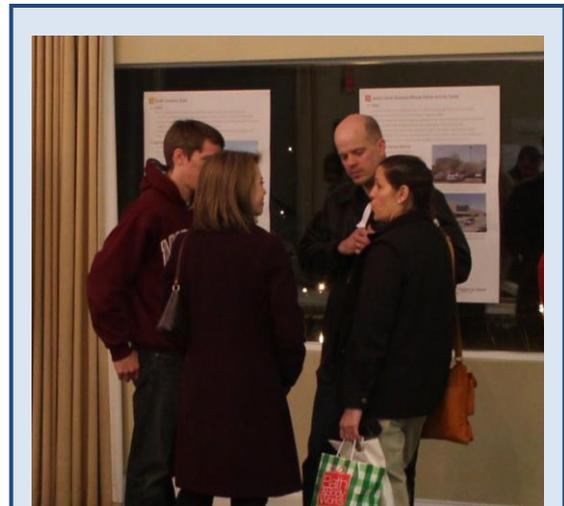
The City of Norcross held an Open House on February 6, 2014 to present key aspects of the draft Comprehensive Plan to the public and collect input prior to the plan's transmittal for regional and state review. The Open House followed a series of three community workshops; each of which focused on unique aspects of the plan. Approximately 45 people attended.

Meeting Format

- 6:30 Sign-in & Open House
- 7:00 Brief Presentation & Questions/Answers
- 7:30 Reconvene Open House
- 8:00 Adjourn

The meeting was informal in nature. Several items were on display throughout the room. Display highlights included the following:

- 1) New Future Development Map and character area descriptions
- 2) Interactive Live-Work map
- 3) Interactive Character Area naming activity
- 4) List of community-based Priority Needs and Opportunities by substantive element of the plan
- 5) List of a key actions from the Short Term Work Program (by substantive element of plan)



Discussion during informal Open House



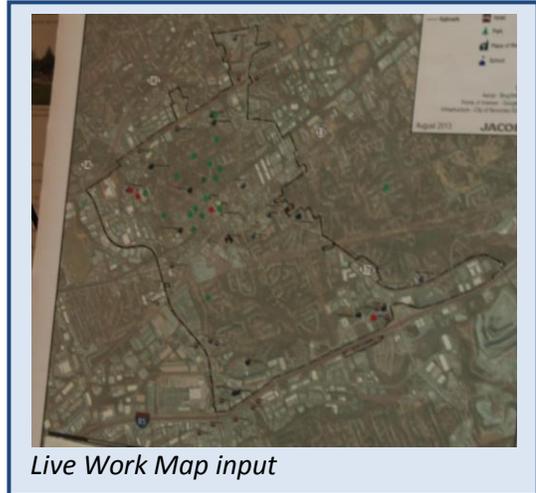
A brief overview presentation was followed by a group questions and answers session

Jim Summerbell, Jacobs's project manager, gave a brief overview presentation of the planning process and draft plan at 7pm. The presentation was followed by question/answer session. Attendees were invited to review the draft plan, which was posted to the City's website and submit comments to the project team. Comment forms were available for written comments.

Notes from this group discussion and other comments collected at the Open House are documented below.

Live Work Map

Upon arrival comment members were asked to place red (work) and green (live) dots on a Norcross location map to indicate where they live and work. The majority of those that participated indicated that they live or work west of Buford Highway, although some attendees indicated that they had an affiliation with the east side of the community.



Live Work Map input

Character Area Naming Activity

Meeting attendees were invited to provide alternative names for the character areas provided in the draft plan. An interactive station was set up to facilitate this activity. Participants provided draft names on post-its and placed on corresponding character area table display. The following input was collected:

Existing Character Area Name	Renaming Ideas
01. Atlantic/Peachtree Industrial Boulevard	<i>Peachtree Industrial Gateway</i>
02. Medlock/Peachtree Industrial Boulevard	<i>University District</i>
04. North Peachtree Street Neighborhoods	<i>Chastain Park</i>
07. Town Center	<i>Historic Norcross (provided twice)</i>
09. Summerour Middle School	<i>East Norcross</i>
11. Jimmy Carter/Brook Hollow Activity Center	<i>OFS</i>
12. Mitchell Street Neighborhoods	<i>Mitchell Road Neighborhoods</i> <i>East Norcross</i>

Questions/Answers

Following an overview presentation, attendees were invited to ask questions and provide comments on the draft plan.

Record of Group Comments (C), Question (Q), and Responses (R)

C: A long term priority of the City is facilitating an environment conducive to supporting light rail near I-85.

Q: What is light rail like?

R: A brief description was provided. Light rail is less intense and expense then heavy rail

D: The Gwinnett Village Community Improvement District (CID) has invested \$0.5 million in studying light rail for the corridor, but light rail is at least 10-15 years away, depending on funding availability.

Q: Is the Comprehensive Plan Update mandatory and who funded it?

R: Yes, it is required by the state of Georgia and was funded by the City of Norcross.

Q: The population is 48 percent Hispanic. How involved was the Hispanic community in development the plan?

R: Representatives from the Hispanic community were included on the Steering Committee. Additionally, about half of workshop attendees represented this subgroup of the community.

Q: What is the economic development strategy for Buford Highway?

R: The strategy is largely influenced by the Jimmy Carter Boulevard/Buford Highway Redevelopment Plan and the City's existing overlay district for the corridor.

Q: What will happen with the Plan if QuikTrip locates at Holcomb Bridge Road and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, a major gateway to the city? Is something being incorporated in the Comprehensive Plan Update to better regulate this area of the city in the future?

R: The current development proposal at this location is not consistent with the City's vision for the area, which is laid out in the City's existing Future Development Map and 2030 Comprehensive Plan. The proposal is being reviewed and will be acted on by the City's Planning and Zoning Board and Mayor/City Council. The Comprehensive Plan Update makes recommendation to add an overlay district to main city corridors to control for desired development and design and address items like this in the future.

C: There is nothing to protect the City's historic properties from demolition in the current City code.

R: Although the Architectural Review Board has been very active in influencing design within the historic area under the guidance of local regulations, there is not a formal historic district. The Plan recommendations include a recommendation to implement a Preservation Review Board and local historic district. *A comment was made that historic district boundaries are laid out in the Town Center Livable Centers Initiative.*

Q: Do LCIs fall under the umbrella of this study?

R: Yes, all LCIs and recent studies have been reviewed as a part of the planning effort. The planning team has done its best to include recommendations of those plans.

Q: Were changes in the City's housing stock as a result of annexation reviewed as a part of the planning effort?

R: Yes, when data was available, a comparison of the recently annexed area and the City's pre-annexation area is made. Community members can find detailed technical data in the appendices, including that for housing.

Q: How is density addressed in the plan?

A: The Future Development Map encourages higher density areas at strategic nodes of the city that are envisioned as community activity hubs, such as Jimmy Carter Boulevard and Buford Highway. These recommendations are consistent with previous LCI and other studies completed by the City. Lower density areas are also preserved in the plan, including several of the City's existing single family neighborhoods.

Other Comments Collect

The following comments were collected during one-on-one discussion between attendees and planning staff or via comment forms available to all attendees.

- The C-2 zoning is too broad. The zoning covers every type of business from a flower shop to a tattoo parlor. This designation should be segmented in order to better control the designations of the Comp Plan.
- The City needs to improve its public notification efforts as they relate to rezoning. Most jurisdictions like Gwinnett County send out letters to adjacent property owners, but Norcross only does it if the rezoning is city initiated.
- Thank you for showing the Comprehensive Plan. We are enthusiastic about the continuation of Historic Norcross and its connection to the areas surrounding. Where vision meets action and a time line, we are interested.
- Regarding Future Development Map/Character Areas – Excellent; building the Norcross brand.
- Regarding Housing Priorities and Actions – Residential neighborhoods need to be completed.
- Along major transit corridors (namely Buford Highway), the City’s code of ordinances should require or encourage site design that places parking in rear of building. Doing so provides a more conducive environment for transit and walking and also meets regional goals.
- It was noted that activity hubs did not seem to address school zones within the city. The plan should consider these areas as opportunities for activity centers as well.
- Local shuttle service could provide an opportunity to connect different areas of the city and should be further explored by the City.
- The Plan should provide recommendations for enabling children to bike in the downtown area.
- In the past, the City’s code enforcement efforts have been too-heavy handed in some of its residential enforcement. The City should be careful that it is not overly negative in its enforcement of the code.