

Conyers Activity Center Investment Policy Study

an Atlanta Regional Commission Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Study

PUBLIC KICK-OFF MEETING SUMMARY

February 19, 2009
Conyers City Council Chambers
6:30-8:00pm

ATTENDANCE 42 participants signed in

AGENDA

Opening and Introductions

Project Overview

- What is a Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) study?
- What is the need and goals of this study?
- What does it mean for me and for my community?
- How can I be involved?

SWOT Analysis of Study Area

Attendees will be asked questions to include:

- a) **S**trengths of the study area
 - b) **W**eaknesses of the study area;
 - c) **O**pportunities (list some opportunities to make the area better that should be taken advantage of—especially “low-hanging fruit”);
 - d) **T**hreats;
- Share your vision of what you would like the area to be known for in the future.*

Closing and Next Steps

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

Group 1: Facilitated by Charlotte Weber

STRENGTHS

- Library – Internet, beautiful grounds
 - Creek – Green street towards Shady Grove Church – need to clean, but it is an asset
 - Churches
 - JP Carr Complex
 - Sr. Center
 - DFCS
 - Mental Health
 - Gym
 - Older homes – big and small (some need enhancements)
 - Good school system
 - School owned properties within the study area
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- Near the Railroad
- Civic properties
- Tree canopy
- Restaurants close by on West Avenue and Olde Town
- Olde Town post office
- Open space opportunities
- Road system
- I-20
- Close proximity to healthcare

WEAKNESSES

- Parking – lack of
- Transportation – lack of public transportation
 - Island Effect
- Unsightly housing
- Pedestrian and bike hazards
- West Avenue is hard to navigate
- Absentee owners
- Railroad Intersections
- Pedestrian crossing of railroad
- Sidewalks (lack of in some places, lack of maintenance, safety, connections)
- Narrow Streets
- Poor security lighting
- ADA accessibility
- If you don't live there, why go there?

OPPORTUNITIES

- Commuter Rail
- Connect new sidewalks on West Avenue to JP Carr Complex
- Crosswalk from West Avenue to JP Carr over Dogwood Drive
- Parks
- Solar security lighting
- Small transit or shuttle system
- Apply for JARC (Job Access and Reverse Commute) grants¹

¹ The Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program was established to address the unique transportation challenges faced by welfare recipients and low-income persons seeking to obtain and maintain employment. Many new entry-level jobs are located in suburban areas, and low-income individuals have difficulty accessing these jobs from their inner city, urban, or rural neighborhoods. In addition, many entry level-jobs require working late at night or on weekends when conventional transit services are either reduced or non-existent. Finally, many employment related-trips are complex and involve multiple destinations including reaching childcare facilities or other services.

The JARC program funds transportation projects designed to help low-income individuals access to employment and related activities where existing transit is either unavailable, inappropriate, or insufficient. The JARC program also funds reverse commute transit services available to the general public.

- New Freedom Grant²
- Brownfield Redevelopment
- Multi-use trail or path
- Sidewalks wide enough for 3 wheel bike (one participant said not on Green Street)
- Attract people to come
 - Entertainment
 - New businesses
 - Internet café
 - Gaming business
 - Children's recreation areas both new and enhancement of existing
 - Pool

THREATS

- Codes
 - Existing land use
 - Rethinking how they are used
 - Height limitations
 - Historic District vs non historic district and what it means
- High Crime Areas
- People resistant to change (NIMBYs)
- False information
- Lack of communication
- Relocation (loss of house ownership, costs, perceptions)
- Increase of property tax
- Overcrowding of schools due to population increase
- Inability to attract what you want to attract
- Infrastructure improvements not keeping up with possible density/population increase

VISION FOR THE STUDY AREA.

- Clean
- Transit available
- Tax level maintained
- Save
- Accessible
- Tourism
- Police and fire
- Specialty stores
- Non-chain restaurants
- Lifetime community for all ages

² The New Freedom formula grant program aims to provide additional tools to overcome existing barriers facing Americans with disabilities seeking integration into the work force and full participation in society. Lack of adequate transportation is a primary barrier to work for individuals with disabilities. The 2000 Census showed that only 60 percent of people between the ages of 16 and 64 with disabilities are employed. The New Freedom formula grant program seeks to reduce barriers to transportation services and expand the transportation mobility options available to people with disabilities beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

- Healthy community while maintaining diversity
- Local jobs with higher pay
- Art gallery and studios
- Tie into traditional Olde Town Conyers
- Education opportunities for adults and seniors
- Improve diversity and understandings about diversity.

Group 2: Facilitated by Jonathan Webster

VISION FOR THE STUDY AREA.

- Mixed-use development (vertical, residential above shops and offices)
- Green Street appropriate for mixed-use development
- More restaurants and entertainment
- More community gathering places
- Art galleries
- Parks, the area currently has none.
- Bike paths
- Improved sidewalks along Oakland Street, Scott Street, and Green Street.
- The area should be well-lit at night.
- Easy access and connectivity to Olde Town Conyers
- Conyers signage needs to be well-lit

STRENGTHS

- Churches in the study area
- Stable community, community services
- Access to Interstate
- Employment options
- Small-town feel
- Involved and concerned community

WEAKNESSES

- Parking Shortage in Olde Town
- Lack of connections from Olde Town
- Sound from I-20 will become an issue
- Traffic on Parker Bridge Road into Oakland Avenue
- Narrow Streets, little ROW on either side
- Drainage issue on church property

OPPORTUNITIES

- Churches in the study area
- Potential Commuter Rail
- Vacant lots
- For sale commercial space
- Public Wi-Fi in Olde Town Area

THREATS

- Not including all stakeholders in the planning process
- Miscommunication and misinformation about the study purpose
- Highway access and subsequent crime
- Litter, lack of upkeep, trash
- Drainage and Flooding on Harden Road
- Speed of Traffic on Bryant Road
- Vacant Homes and Businesses
- Lack of Employment