

Neighborhood Task Force Meeting Notes – January 12, 2015

- Welcome & Introductions

- Review of Neighborhood Component of Transformation Plan Outline
 - It's impersonal – Should focus more on people / The community coming together

 - The key challenges list is missing the lack of physical connectivity between Russell & the rest of Louisville / Sense of isolation & separation

 - Should be more job-oriented

 - No mention of how people with disabilities will fit into new geography of neighborhood / How the plan responds to their needs
 - Aida Copic: Clarification that the Complete Streets planning will address accessibility issues

 - Changing Russell's image / re-branding the neighborhood needs to be a bigger component – Russell needs to be seen as a place with opportunities
 - Jeff O'Brien: Physical location of Russell offers great benefits – near downtown & the river; in the historic core of the city; complete street grid; historic homes
 - Jeana Dunlap: "Reinforce Neighborhood Identity" (D.b) is one section where more could be added about branding. How Russell residents & larger community see the neighborhood.
 - Sam Watkins: The final SDAT report should be available in time for our next TF meeting, and may help clarify some of our conversation around branding & identity.
 - Kevin Fields: Choose Russell will be publicly rolled out at the end of the month (next 2-3 weeks). How do we make Russell a place people choose ("Choice issue")?
 - Sam Watkins: Right now some people just want to get out of the neighborhood. I've heard that from residents.

 - Live-work / Entrepreneurship
 - Carl Malysz: What about supporting entrepreneurship & live-work infrastructure?
 - Frank McNeil: It's not about live-work space; it's about, "Is there a market?"
 - Jeana Dunlap: We just recently changed the Land Development Code to better support live-work.
 - Theodore Scott: Before we talk about professionals in a live-work setup, Louisville Grows has a mandate to train urban farmers, a CSA model. Not everyone is going to be a professional, but people can grow food. People have to feed themselves, their children, & their neighbors. This gives them immediate access to organic foods.
 - Sam Watkins: People in impoverished communities want jobs, don't understand concept of "entrepreneurship."

- Jeana Dunlap: Fostering entrepreneurship is challenging in Russell’s environment today. Part of branding could be to recruit successful entrepreneurs to the neighborhood by promoting inexpensive housing stock and live-work possibilities.
- The strategies included need to be prioritized
 - Sarah Galloway: This is one of the next steps, which we will be working on between now and July when the draft Transformation Plan is submitted to HUD.
- Sam Watkins:
 - There has been a large influx in institutional housing in the past 5-10 years. What does this mean for Russell?
- Frank McNeil: What is our goal? To address challenges or foster opportunities? We need to re-think patterns of public investment in Russell and in West Louisville, which has been aimed at deficits.
- ???: Questions
 - There’s a rumor going around that a police “superstation” will be built on the redeveloped Beecher site. Is this true?
 - Sarah Galloway: No.
 - Will neighborhood schools be closed as part of this process?
 - Sarah Galloway: We have heard nothing to indicate this will happen.
- Jackie Floyd: People want more activities for their children, mentors, & better educational opportunities. It’s not just about places; you need that adult presence.
- Neighborhood Outreach Workers: Safety is the issue that comes up most often in discussion with residents.
- Kevin Fields: We need a neighborhood with an entirely different economic fabric, sector-based job creation. Could be an identity in this neighborhood around food – Food Port, Chef Space. SDAT recommendations for Ali Blvd. include an arts & culture district to create sector-based jobs. We could do the same with food.
- Carl Malysz: There’s not enough about food in the outline.
- ???: How will this look different from Park DuValle & Liberty Green / NuLu?
 - Sam Watkins: It’s about the whole neighborhood, not just the site.
- Scott Love: A question for the NOWs, How do residents feel about safety?
 - NOWs: They don’t feel safe. Shared several stories about lengths people go to ensure their safety. Discussion of people feeling unsafe at bus stops. Work to encourage block clubs.
 - Sarah Galloway: We’re moving our discussion away from block watches & towards block clubs. It’s a change in perspective.

- Theodore Scott: Are there any LMPD officers living in Russell? Getting more police officers to live in Russell might be one strategy. They also need to be talking to residents, not just in their cars responding to calls.
 - Jackie Floyd: You don't see LMPD officers out of their cars, just speeding by to get to a crime scene. You also have sex offenders living clustered together along Market Street; it's hard for them to live in a lot of places.
 - Sam Watkins: Should we look at zoning changes to prevent sex offenders from living in neighborhood?
 - NOWs: There are more halfway houses now; Healing Place now has a contract with the Department of Corrections.
 - Sam Watkins: The meeting after next we'll start delving into the crime & safety issue and into planning for a related Community Conversation.
 - Kevin Fields: Importance of addressing the current style of policing. Would like to see real community-oriented policing. Right now they come out full force with multiple cars even for small incidents. The power of arrest should be a last resort.
 - Scott Love: We also need to discuss resident responsibilities regarding crime & safety.
- Workforce Development
 - Jackie Floyd: How can anyone live off of an \$8/hour job?
 - Scott Love: We need to talk about living wages.
 - Jeff O'Brien: Mentorship is important. We could partner with businesses in the downtown area. Might be a strategy for attracting Millennials to the neighborhood – volunteering as mentors would provide exposure to the neighborhood.
 - NOW: Millennials tend to move a lot; they don't buy homes.
 - Jeff O'Brien: Millennials often lack capital to purchase homes, but when they do settle down, there is some initial evidence that they are settling closer to downtown than the previous generation, trending towards more urban locations.
 - Kevin Fields: According to the neighborhood survey, health is one of the top barriers to employment. We also need to address mental health. You see more able-bodied men in transitional housing than in jobs. How do we help these people to be employable?
 - Theodore Scott: City could require transitional housing providers to provide workforce training.
 - Jeana Dunlap:
 - I was raised in West Louisville, including some of that time in Russell. Had an internship in high school through a JCPS program, which is no longer offered. That's one reason I'm in field I'm in now.
 - Reynold's Wrap is made in Russell, on 28th Street. I grew up on 26th & never knew that until a few weeks ago. How do we break down barriers between businesses & the community?
 - I'm also on the board of Plato Academy, & want everyone graduating from that program to eventually have their own business. Need mentors.
- Brief Overview of Choice Neighborhoods Action Grant Opportunity

- Wrap Up
 - Next meeting on November 26 (6:00 – 7:30 PM at LCCC’s Old Walnut Street) will be about the SDAT (Sustainable Design Assessment Team) report on West Muhammad Ali Blvd. corridor, then at the following meeting we’ll start planning the Workforce Development and Crime & Safety Community Conversations.
 - Announcements (Sam Watkins)
 - Millionaires Academy: LCCC will be hosting program to teach middle school students entrepreneurship & leadership skills. A local business owner will lead the academy. We’ll be making an announcement soon. It will be open to children from anywhere in Louisville.
 - LCCC is helping Choose Russell get organized, as is the Urban League. This organization will be about branding & giving Russell residents a stake in & ownership of / leadership roles in their neighborhood. Look for an announcement in late January or early February.