

Joint Task Force and Coordinating Committee Meeting, 11/18/15

Rhae: Purpose of meeting, Introductions, Review of Agenda

Today we'll be reviewing the results of the Russell neighborhood survey (Beecher Terrace household survey results were shared in July); Reached our goal of reaching 10% of Russell households, or . The business survey is ongoing and not part of this presentation.

Our presentation also includes information gathered from the Sustainable Design Assessment Team workshop, October's Community Design workshop, Task Force and Coordinating Committee meetings, as well as other resident input and EJP Team input woven in. Full data set is available on website www.lmha1.org

Highlights:

60% of respondents were residents who live in the neighborhood right now. 90% of the resident respondents had lived in Russell over 20 years and are invested in the area. The other 40% survey respondents were people who work, worship or have other affiliations in Russell.

How they said they hear about what's going on: Word of mouth and TV had highest response rate, followed by the Courier Journal newspaper

When asked if they know about the Vision Russell effort, 44% responded yes, so we still have some outreach work to do. Our survey work started before the NOWs were fully on board, so that number would likely be higher now.

When asked "Have you heard about..." Yes responses were:

- Food port? 45%
- Business Incubator (former Jay's) 53%
- KCAAH 85%
- Planned YMCA 62%
- WalMart 89%

Satisfaction with neighborhood services...

- Public transportation rated most highly (52%) very satisfied, and when combined with *somewhat satisfied* (43%) it's overwhelming positive
- Public services: Highest concerns were with safety and policing/law enforcement (15% rated very good and 21% good)- not as highly rated as some of the other public services
- Types of businesses people want to see: Grocery stores was the highest (67%); followed by restaurants and clothing stores. Issues with quality and variety with some of the businesses

We know that the neighborhood has a high unemployment rate. In response to "What is biggest barrier to finding/keeping work":

- Disability and health restrictions were one of the biggest challenges (27%) and consistent with the first Beecher Terrace survey.
- Transportation issues (16%)
- Criminal history (14%) was also an issue on both surveys
- Language barrier is not a major issue in Russell or at Beecher

-Early Childhood Education

- 34% of children 0-4 years old are enrolled in a child care center or other early learning program
- When kids are going to an at home childcare – opportunity for econ dev., working to build high quality centers

-Banking was one of the topics at last People TF meeting

Higher than desired number of families are using check cashing services – research shows that over a lifetime \$40K in fees is spent on average using those kinds of services

-Perceptions of Safety (Russell residents only)

Results were better for the neighborhood than expected – and different than Beecher’s perception – but still room for improvement

-Willingness to participate in community activities – getting engaged in the community (asked a series of questions); A good percentage are willing and many are already participating, but we have more opportunities to get people engaged. Regarding a Russell Neighborhood Association – over 40% said they are *very willing* or *willing* to join, and 31% more were *somewhat* willing.

-Recommend Russell as a “Good Place to Live” – 22% of residents said *definitely* and 48% *probably* would recommend. Non-residents were way less likely to recommend and may have more of a harsh perspective of the neighborhood.

-Change in last 5 years – 34% say neighborhood has gotten *somewhat* or *a lot better* over the last 5 years. Looking into the next 5 years - folks are very hopeful - 60% think it’s going to get better. Non-residents are less optimistic on either question.

SDAT - Sustainable Design Assessment Team, Ben Carlson

Services of the American Institute of Architecture – volunteer professionals are dispatched to neighborhoods around the country. Designers, stakeholders and residents were all involved in the workshop.

LCCC initiative that is very complementary to Vision Russell, incorporating their ideas into the Russell transformation plan

- Shared information between both groups and sharing some of those today for making Muhammad Ali Blvd. an arts and cultural district, extend in into downtown to help bridge 9th Street divide
- Work on development downtown to help integrate Russell and Central Business District
- Picking up on other initiatives that could reinforce Muhammad Ali Blvd. becoming Russell’s “Main Street” (shops, services, child care at ground level to complement residences)
- Try to connect area to the river
- Street improvements all along Muhammad Ali Blvd. (street trees, light posts, wider sidewalks, green space, etc)
- Making Muhammad Ali Blvd. a two-way street
- Doing more programming at KCAAH, may feel more like a public space if the fence wasn’t so prominent
- Build upon the presence of the Café and the Chef Space incubator

Community Design Workshop on October 10th - explored many of the issues above; well attended, over 130 people. Highlights that came from participation: interest in a broad range of housing types including historic homes, other building types that might be taller and modern, especially around 9th and the Foodport. More retail and neighborhood services; programming and activities for all ages. Recreation and athletics, water features – especially for kids, YMCA swimming pool planned but other water features like splash parks; transit enhancements.

Emerging Strategies

--Neighborhood and Housing

Focus on leverage, synergy, visibility – lots of great individual efforts going on but often those investments don't improve a larger area; look at starting to cluster the improvements to further the impact and start to change the perceptions. Can open up more opportunities and make things self-sustaining.

Some of the bigger initiatives underway (incomplete list, but starting to see synergy happening here): Beecher, Chef Space, Cedar Street Housing, FoodPort, KCAAH, LCCC, New Directions, St. Peters Church

Looked at the vacant lots in Russell – tried to look for patterns where they may be clustered and potential for housing redevelopment. Looking at broad zones – greater opportunity for impact 3,800 housing units in neighborhood today; Opportunities throughout the neighborhood to add up to 800 to 1,500 net new plus units that could go on the Beecher Terrace site (potentially between 900 to 1,300 on the site), which offers the largest redevelopment opportunity.

Rhae: Map shows opportunities for great collaboration between LMHA and private and non-profit partners. To get to more vibrant neighborhood that has enough rooftops to support retail, we must talk about housing mix – still have lots of work to do in this area.

Questions:

- How many of the workshop participants were Beecher residents? Response – majority.
- Residents asked for swimming pool. Response – Central High School has a pool for resident use.
- Concern about Beecher residents perceptions about coming back to the site or neighborhood. Didn't ask question about returning to Beecher on the neighborhood survey, but we did ask on Beecher Terrace. There will be a future meeting just for Beecher Terrace residents regarding continued residency.
- Question about residents who have moved multiple times already, and to distressed properties. Look at a strategy to have them move just once.

--Housing strategies for Russell owners

Access to programs to help maintain or fix up your property

Protection from tax increases

Supports for transitioning from renting to homeownership

New construction can offer new housing types that are accessible, and that reinforce the street block pattern

Emphasis on benefits to long time residents, reaping rewards of future economic upswings

Showed photos of building types at the design workshop

Beecher – large site offers a lot of flexibility. Important location, very visible, can make connections to Central Business District, vacant lots on the other side of 9th that can tie Russell to downtown.

Concerns about safety. Beecher will be affordable, but needs to look and feel like market rate housing – including shared spaces and amenities.

Thinking about the replacement housing program

Need to replace all 768 units – some on-site and some off-site, either in Russell or in neighborhoods of opportunities. When we talk about Beecher replacement units – guided by Federal rules - those sites have to meet certain conditions (i.e., can't be in distressed communities, have to be thriving, can't be impacted – e.g. high concentrations of minorities or low income households)

On-site at Beecher; site will be mixed-income and mixed-use;

Miniversity campus is currently there, could expand upon services (i.e. shopping, etc). Could expand other services that are available on-site.

Opportunities to have many partners developing new replacement housing.

Retail and services - Many established businesses in Russell, 2,500 people employed; however only a small number of Russell residents. Increase the number of businesses to create more jobs. Invite new businesses to develop Community Benefits Agreements. As far as locations – Muhammad Ali could be a concentrated area for services and businesses, but not the only area.

Open spaces and recreations -

Improve quality and programming in existing parks; add new park areas

Improve street corners with artwork, etc.

Look beyond the neighborhood – Waterfront Park Phase 4 and connect the neighborhood to it

School facilities that can be used more

Old Walnut Street Park – how can we improve it and make it more accessible?

Transportation – good bus service, recent TIGER grant funds awarded for improved bus services.

TARC needs input on locations to put some bus shelters – list of high use ones.

Better cross walks to make the neighborhood more walkable – work with city to break them down to scale to make them more pedestrian friend. 9th could become residential and more of a center of the neighborhood instead of an edge between neighborhoods.

To summarize, map to show layered investments in the larger site:

-Street corridors that can link them together

-Additional additional housing opportunities

-Traditional and other centers of retail

-Transit/Bus improvements

-Green space opportunities, trees in addition to improvements to existing parks

Rhae - People/Education TFs emerging strategies

People TF have landed on four main ideas:

- 1) Neighborhood networking – systems issues, supporting both TF efforts; Still more work to be done here but some ideas include a central communications system. Creating new venues for networking – formal/informal. Location of services is important. What can we duplicate or create a system to get to services outside the neighborhood.

- 2) Good health – Most are insured and have a medical home, but still a large number of folks who use ER. High rates of chronic diseases, improve access to healthy foods. LMHA has a policy that all new units coming on line are green and smoke-free
- 3) Financial stability/literacy
- 4) Economic Development and Employment (work readiness and job opportunities)

Education - Emerging Strategies

Ensure our kids are able to succeed

Build on the four pillars of the existing Cradle to Career system

- 1) Early care and education/kindergarten readiness
 - We know that there are 19 registered child care centers in Russell
 - Access is good, quality can be improved however
- 2) K-12 Success
 - Russell children attend a lot of different schools
 - Roosevelt/Perry is our focus school
- 3) High School to Post Secondary transition
- 4) 21st Century Workforce - making sure that people are successful in their jobs and careers

We need to be able to implement what we include in our Transformation Plan; things to consider...

- Period of time – big neighborhood with big challenges
- What do we focus on first – short, medium, and long term initiatives and strategies
- How do we finance this – potential funding sources - opportunities for partnerships and leveraging, build on existing initiatives
- Needs to be flexibility and adaptable – strategies will evolve over time
- Know that the market isn't very strong right now to attract market-rate homeownership and renters, but we think it will increase as we build momentum
- Ultimately the Russell Transformation Plan will get adopted and become the Neighborhood Plan

Maintenance responsibilities (parks etc.)

Active programming

Design for safety: lighting, visibility, walkable streets, “eyes on the street”

Public/private partnerships

Discussions...

James Elliot – Voice of Louisville – Economic Development Committee

Has seen the decline in the Russell neighborhood over 45 years – local resident business ownership “Business to a community is like blood to the body”; who owns the businesses determines how the blood flows.

Have seen great investment in West Louisville but decline in business ownership by West Louisville residents

Need to emphasize the importance of employing West Louisville residents

Will this plan include opportunities for West Louisville resident businesses?

A lot of criminal activity in area is because of unemployment

Response: Scott Love - Ton of resources that are available to businesses, including capital.

Is there any way to attract better paying businesses and jobs in Russell? Some residents leave the area to be closer to jobs elsewhere. *Response:* Neighborhood TF - One of the big questions is how we attract new businesses to the area, what kind of businesses does the neighborhood want, and how can we

help ensure that they pay living wages. Business survey underway. **Neighborhood TF meeting on 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month.**

Concerns about moving – suggest that we look at ways to provide peace of mind during the relocation process - provide assistance and support for seniors and those with other challenges. Is there some way to talk with Beecher residents that have moved multiple times?

(Recommendation: Have Cheryl look at the data)

Crime and Safety – Major Andrea Brown

Abandoned properties become havens for drug use, prostitution.

Occupy/Address the properties to cut down illegal activity.

Number of halfway and boarding houses, some managed better than others

Violent crime in Russell – 1st in city with shootings linked to drug activity

Linked to education and lack of employment opportunities

Implementing walking patrols, increasing the visibility of officers

Walking at least three times a week in Russell and everyday in Beecher

Horse patrol more visible in the neighborhood – crime deterrent. Making drug runs on horseback

Police on horse are less intimidating

Working with Bishop Lines to start an initiative coming spring

Walking to help build stronger relationship with residents

Coffee with a cop – occurs at several shops throughout the neighborhood

Built partnerships with several local businesses who are providing free coffee **(Newsletter?)**

Always out in the community trying to partner with the schools and the churches

If we partner together we can make the neighborhood stronger and better

Swimming pool at Central HS: **(Put in the newsletter) – interview Principal Green**

Partner with the school for expanded access to the pool

Was out of service for many years, money put into it

There is a person who coordinates the pools at Central and Shawnee - District 1 is the only one in the City with two pools. Water aerobics held there in the morning

City View has a splash park – unofficially open to everyone

Awareness or lack of awareness issues and/or restricted use

Workshop coming up on January 30th

Community Conversation (CC) on Education, Saturday Dec. 12, 11am-1:30pm

Presentation, Cradle to Career, Breakout sessions, Lunch

JCPS clothing assistance program also that day “Take what you can tote”

Providing transportation from Central Stadium

Advertising the CC on Education on the board at Roosevelt/Perry