

3. CONSENSUS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

A. NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN PROGRAM (Results of the Design "Charette" -- 5/22/96)

The following is a compilation of the ideas and issues identified, by the 4 design roundtable groups comprised of Westcott area residents and merchants with guidance from the Architect and Landscape Architect preparing this study. The issues and ideas from this session articulate the program goals of the eventual Business District Plan.

B. RESIDENT SURVEY RESULTS

The findings of the resident survey effort are summarized here and contribute to the project Program Goals. The demography of survey respondents is also included.

C. MERCHANT INTERVIEW RESULTS

The findings of the merchant interview efforts are summarized here and also contribute to the project Program Goals. Merchant participation is noted and should not be considered comprehensive. Merchant views are also included in the Program Goals of this plan.

D. PROGRAM GOALS

WENA/WESTCOTT ST. BUSINESS DISTRICT PLAN - CJA #3-96069.00
(Second Public Meeting; 5/22/96)

GROUP 1 "Charette" - Bob Haley, Architect (CJA)

- Collect parking off street to encourage business use.
- Demand City code enforcement in area.
- Parking and yard trash laws must be enforced by Police and Code Enforcement Officials, to improve existing business district condition.
- Enforce alternate side parking on Harvard at nighttime (due to bar parking).
- Designate truck-loading zones.
- Add bike racks in area.
- Get rid of parking meters.
- Improve lighting in Koko's parking lot extension and exit.
- Designate and enforce loading zone regulations at "Sabastino's" and similar "quick pick-up" areas.
- Try flashing stop light at Harvard and Westcott at certain hours (and enforce).
- Investigate alternative ways to control truck traffic.
- Control/regulate truck delivery hours (7-11 a.m.) and locations.
- Improve image, "Beautify" area, add visual interest.
- Improving business area quality fosters better neighborhood recognition/reputation.
- One-way street would be safer.
- Westcott Street is a thoroughfare and plan should "accept it."
- Control traffic by street management (speed/crosswalks, loading zones, etc.)
- Consider 2-stop sign scheme. (no speed bumps)
- 20 mph speed zone at Business District (2-3 blocks).
- Business District should look more like a residential neighborhood.
- Slow down traffic.

- Full Group Consensus
- Partial Group Consensus

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GROUP 2 "Charette" - Carl Jahn, Landscape Architect (CJA)

- Avoid creating "Exclusive" district. Encourages diversity of businesses and character.
- Connect Koko's parking to Harvard Place - eliminate red house on Harvard; create municipal lot.
- Provide service to Koko and Boom Babies, liquor store, etc. from parking lot.
- Include a drug store, post office and copy center.
- Consolidate Parking - Green space.
- Provide service at rear of all businesses.
- Need pull-over for bus stop, out of way of traffic lane.
- Provide 1/2-hour meters for quick food stops and pick-ups.
- Provide easement behind Dorian's for electrical service and pedestrian traffic.
- More trees.
- Provide bike racks and bike R.O.W.
- Short-term parking 1 hour in limited area.
- Service drop-off 15 min. only at certain times of the day.
- Do not make Dell St. one-way due to existing bus routes.
- Too much graffiti and vandalism.
- Use of Levy School to serve community needs. Increase green education (ESF) and area landscape maintenance.
- Grounds & Drains - a volunteer force or hired-person to pick-up and also clear drains, and in winter clear fire hydrants.
- Trees are poorly shaped, stunted, prevent problems with wires - maintain aesthetic shape.
- Fountain at South Beech & Westcott.
- Provide drive-thru service for new bank.
- Reduce number of stop signs.
- Gas leaks at valves (Niagara Mohawk unable to resolve).
- Extend Business District on side streets (Dell & Howard) -- future.
- Demolish building on Dell Street - create municipal lot to connect to "Big M" parking lot.
- Catch basins at South Beech get plugged and cause flooding in the area. Contact City DPW.

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GROUP 3 "Charette" - Tom Anderson, Architect (CJA)

- Combing parking lots.
- Apply for Economic Development Zone Classification.
- Adoption of common areas for landscaping by individuals and community groups.
- Look at other examples - models and their successes. We need more information (search group).
- Bike path and trees from Business District to Barry Park.
- Improvement of sidewalks in entire area.
- No pedestrian mall on Westcott.
- Hiring an artist as a consultant - Discuss with school personnel.
- Add movie sign above marquee.
- Need more options at Beech & Westcott.
- One-way between Dell and Beech. One-way on Beech from Dell to Westcott diagonal parking.
- Tree planting - using larger amounts of younger hardier trees.
- Pedestrian mall on lower Harvard from Koko's outlet to Westcott. Kiosk on mall.
- Change zoning to eliminate Dorian's (parking lot).
- Westcott "Gate."

● Full Group Consensus

Partial Group Consensus

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GROUP 4 "Charette" - Mark McIntyre, Landscape Architect. and Tom Stack, Architect (CJA)

- Remove light at Harvard and Westcott.
- Install lights at Dell and Westcott, S. Beech and Westcott.
- Covered bike racks at Dell and Westcott, S. Beach and Westcott with meeting space in front, kiosks, etc.
- Cobblestone crosswalks at all intersections.
- Gates at each end of Westcott (look at Madison Street entrance to Thornden Park).
- Benches and tables for sidewalk cafes and conversation.
- Need more businesses that extend the Westcott block (i.e. Agora).
- Pedestrian controlled lights.
- Pedestrian walk from Big M parking lot to Westcott.
- Make Harvard one-way going east, close Harvard to traffic just past Koko's parking exit.
- Create open children's area, obtain "What's it" shop and incorporate knoll.
- Limit size of delivery trucks that deliver in the area.
- Do not slow traffic too much; will send to adjacent residential areas.
- Possible signage consistency for merchants (i.e. "Agora member of the Westcott Business District."
- Remove hibiscus and Dorian's to rebuild to fit context (2-story merchant below; tenant above). Closer to Westcott provide parking behind.
- Change street surface on Westcott from Harvard to Victoria.

3B. RESIDENT SURVEY RESULTS

Resident perception study:

The study was conducted in an objective manner. There was no requirement of the residents to fill out the survey, and all surveys were returned voluntarily and anonymously to the Orange Consulting Group.

The response rate as noted above was excellent for a survey of this kind. The area is to be commended for the care and compassion that they showed in returning the survey.

The following section will be a brief listing of the major conclusions that the Orange Consulting Group has come to regarding the perceptions of the area residents.

Positives:

1. The residents responded to question # 5, stating that the positive elements that aide in the decision to shop on Westcott Street were CONVENIENCE, SENSE OF COMMUNITY, ENTERTAINMENT, AND SELECTION OF GOODS AND SERVICES.
2. 52% of the respondents commented that they WALK when they frequent the Westcott Business District.
3. 74% of the respondents commented that they do visit the area for social / entertainment reasons. (#9)
4. The demographic age ranges of the respondents were 84% above the age of 30, 69% of these being HOME OWNERS VS. RENTERS (Questions # 16 and # 19).

Negatives: (areas the residents saw as needing improvement):

The following items were selected due to the nature of the answers. If the overwhelming responses were in the poor or adequate range they are presented here to enlighten the readers to the major problems the residents see in the area. The supporting survey results follow in sequence.

1. 62% answered the *selection of goods and services* were poor to adequate.
2. 79% responded the *parking accommodations* were either poor or adequate.
3. 78% responded the *safety of the area* was poor to adequate.
4. 79% responded to the issue of *crime control* was poor to adequate.
5. 86% responded the *general cleanliness* was poor (51%) to adequate (35%).
6. 63% responded *cleanliness of businesses* were poor (23%) to adequate (40%).
7. 62% responded the *street lighting* was poor to adequate.
8. 74% responded the *conditions of the sidewalks* were poor (34%) to adequate (40%).
9. 81% responded the *landscaping of the area* was poor (52%) to adequate (29%).
10. 85% responded the overall appearance was poor (40%) to adequate (45%).

Conclusions:

The preceding answers indicate to us that the residents see problems with the appearance and safety of the area. The residents seem to have a problem with the landscaping and lighting of the area. The respondents feel that the area is convenient, with a diversified selection of goods and services. They for the most part walk or drive to the area, however it appears that the residents perceive the area as having a shortage of available parking. They further indicated that they utilize the Westcott Business area throughout the day with the afternoons receiving the heaviest use. This is consistent with the parking and traffic flow studies that were done.

The majority stated that if they do not shop for food on Westcott street they shop at Peter's or Wegmans. The results to the shopping that related to the Big M may now be obsolete due to its recent closing.

3C. MERCHANT INTERVIEW RESULTS

Trends

I. Positives

- 56% of the merchants rate the area as a "good" place to do business.
- 80% of the merchant belong to the business association.
- 61% of the merchants rate the variety of products and services as "good/very good"
- 89% of the merchants rate the hours of operation as "good/very good".

***Observations**

The merchants survey was somewhat biased in terms of the questions and the method of data gathering. The merchants answered potentially embarrassing questions about the cleanliness of the businesses, the physical appearance of the store fronts, their sales and their expenses. These questions were all very sensitive and are subject to considerable bias.

Compounding the bias created by the sensitive nature of the questioning was the method of data collection. The survey used a one-on-one interview technique which made merchants more apprehensive about answering sensitive questions about their businesses in front of a complete stranger.

Finally, many merchants asked detailed questions about the funding for the project. Merchants were clearly concerned that they were going to have to contribute to the Renaissance Plan.

The effect of the above mentioned biases are difficult to measure directly. However, empirically we noted that merchants were careful in answering questions which could cause their business to be viewed negatively or could cause their business to contribute funds to the Renaissance Plan.

II. Areas for Improvement

- 56% of the merchants rate the area as a shopping district as "poor/adequate"
- 72% of the merchants rate the parking as "poor"
- 79% of the merchants rate the area cleanliness as "poor/adequate"
- 45% of the merchants rate the store fronts as "poor/adequate"
- 67% of the merchants rate the lighting as "poor/adequate"
- 44% of the merchants rate the sidewalk as "poor"
- 89% of the merchants rate the landscaping as "poor/adequate"
 - 56% of the merchants rate landscaping as "poor"
- 50% of the merchants rate the physical appearance as "poor/adequate"****

****70% of merchants report that the area's physical appearance plays a part in the consumers decision to shop in the area.

3D. PROGRAM GOALS

- Improve the viability of the Business District.
- Provide a better shopping perception.
- Provide the sense of a single shopping district.
- Provide free customer parking in common lots off Westcott Street, with easy access to businesses and services.
- Improve street traffic condition.
- Provide for short-term parking on Westcott Street for "take-out" food business.
- Improve pedestrian environment.
- Improve safety and cleanliness year-round.
- Provide street and sidewalk lighting for pedestrians.
- Maintain Westcott Street as a through street.
- Add creativity and visual excitement to the Business District.
- Provide adequate locations and screening for trash removal.
- Improve landscaping and green spaces.
- Provide a better place for community gatherings like the annual "Westcott Street Cultural Fair"