

## **Neighborhood Task Force Meeting Notes – September 22, 2015**

- Intro and Welcome by Scott Love
- Update on SDAT design charrette for the vision for Muhammad Ali. Final report should be completed sometime in October or November. Some central themes in the preliminary presentation were to create better connectivity between Muhammad Ali and the Central Business District, creating a corridor that ultimately would connect to Bardstown Road. Making Muhammad Ali an arts and cultural destination was another central concept. SDAT team suggested starting at 6<sup>th</sup> Street with the Old Mammoth Life Building and going all the way to 32<sup>nd</sup> to the FoodPort, with a major hub along the way at the Kentucky Center for African American Heritage. Suggested having six to eight major magnet designations along the way.
- Question about whether Muhammad Ali will become a two-way street. Need to address this further with our planning efforts. One focus of the CNI transformation plan will be traffic and transit, and there is discussion underway about changing some one-way streets into two-way streets.
- Update on the joint task force “community conversation” bus and walking tour of Russell. Was held in conjunction with Kentucky Center for African American Heritage’s (KCAAH) African Heritage Festival on September 10<sup>th</sup>. Approximately 45 people attended, and about 2/3rds were Russell residents. The Neighborhood TF helped plan a tour route through the neighborhood. Distributed single-use cameras for a PhotoVoice activity and folks documented what they saw as Russell assets and challenges during the tour. Photos will be displayed at the Community Design Workshop on Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>. Very positive event, with a lot of stories shared about the past. Also increased awareness of activities in the area, as people don’t always traverse their entire neighborhood.
- Structure of the Neighborhood TF - splitting into 1) Economic Development and 2) Aspirational Development sub-task forces. Tonight topics and questions are around economic development.
- First question - how can we attract the right types of jobs to Russell? What are the right jobs?
  - Construction workforce to help with physical revitalization of the neighborhood.
  - Creating more housing will help bring more businesses - “retail follows rooftops”.

- Point made that there are the rooftops in Russell, it's the second largest neighborhood in West Louisville – but households don't have much disposable income so difficult to attract businesses.

- Look at other types of businesses - more local, small, independent, and storefront type businesses – and not so many manufacturers, large-scale warehouseers who historically have not employed many people from the neighborhood.

- Revive some of the old businesses that were formally in Russell, and give these business and job opportunities to people in the neighborhood.

- The City's Economic Development Department is working right now with GLEBA, who is under contract to help with independent business creation in West Louisville. Have held some public meetings, established a steering committee, and have created a mentorship program which is matching start-up businesses with a mentor business. Sweet Peaches was the first mentee in the program - they matched the owner with Heine Bros. The City's Economic Development Department is also linking them with a network of partners - SCORE and SBA expertise, and additional training and loan programs.

- There are 2,500 existing jobs in Russell right now – one of the next steps is surveying businesses on what their plans are and kind of supports they might need. There are also microbusinesses in Russell that might not be officially on the business rosters.

- Look at putting businesses back into the many corner commercial structures throughout the neighborhood.

- Comment that many of Russell's businesses are not employing people from the neighborhoods. Take the talent that we have, and put them to work in the neighborhood.

- Suggestion that we have more discussion on this topic in the People TF. Why aren't businesses hiring from Russell? What are the skill sets they need, so people can get prepared for these jobs if they don't currently have those skills.

- Tried to get at this question in #6 on the business survey. "How could this initiative assist you with obtaining a greater percentage of your workforce from the surrounding neighborhood?" Please make suggestions for edits or additions to the survey.

- Will businesses be receiving incentives to hire from the neighborhood? This group is charged with making recommendations for the Transformation Plan - should this be a recommendation in the plan?

- Suggestion to put a permanent farmers' market like the former Hay Market or Finley Market in Cincinnati at the corner of 18<sup>th</sup> and Market.
- Comment on inventorying the skills and talents of people in the neighborhood. Survey that's been done among the PH families and also a neighborhood survey underway. Kentuckiana Works has been mapping the job growth areas in the community.
- Tie into #3 in the economic development breakout questions – “Where are potential nodes of retail activity: corner stores, existing commercial structures? What might be appropriate or desirable in those locations?”
- Potential nodes of activity
  - 18<sup>th</sup> and Market Street
  - 18<sup>th</sup> starting at Muhammad Ali traveling north to Main Street
  - One asset that can be capitalized upon is the 15,000 square feet at Old Walnut Street (LCCC) and 1,900 of it is a small business incubator, 3,200 is shovel ready for a business
  - All of Market from 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> on the North side (a lot of vacant lots) – prime areas for retail with housing above. Historically a strong corridor, also on the border of Portland, and would benefit from the activity underway in that neighborhood.
- Many of the Russell's former businesses consisted of owners living over their businesses. Having live/work buildings and opportunities is key to getting businesses back in the neighborhood.
- Broadway is another important node and prime business connector
- 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> on Muhammad Ali is also key to reconnecting Russell to Downtown.
- #2 of the Economic Development discussion questions - How can we support existing businesses who want to stay and grow?
  - Sending a survey to existing businesses - have seven questions on the survey instrument right now, but might want to expand it to 10 or so.
  - Outreach effort to attract outside businesses that may or may not currently be in West Louisville or even Louisville. How do we market Russell to get them to invest here?
  - Maybe we have a survey of existing businesses, and another survey or market effort for businesses that are outside the community? Find out who they are, where they are and what it would take for them to invest in Russell.

- Build relationship with Metacyte—a for-profit subsidiary of the U of L Foundation; health and life science incubator - puts on the Idea Festival.

- Suggested additions to the survey

Types of jobs and compensation range?

What skills and training are needed for these positions?

Does your company have any other divisions or subsidiaries elsewhere, and what would it take to attract them to the Russell neighborhood.

Why are you currently in Russell and are you happy here?

- 2,500 jobs in Russell (per Census data), only 100 held by Russell residents. Health care, manufacturing and wholesale are the largest employers in the neighborhood. (EJP will provide clarification on exactly what this data reflects.)

- How many of the vacant buildings in Russell are viable business locations?

- What is the appetite for the existing business to stay and for attracting new ones with higher wages?

- City's Economic Development handouts on some of the resources and businesses incentives that are currently available. Small business eco system

- Average per household income for Jefferson County is \$46K  
For Russell it is \$13K - a deterrent to attracting retail businesses.

- Businesses in West Louisville say they have difficulty finding a credible workforce and that they are afraid. Have to factor all that in when trying to attract new "customers". So when we talk about economic development, we need to be holistic, and creative.

- Rhae mentioned EJP's handout with available land (some large parcels and some small) for potential redevelopment in Russell and who owns them.
- Transportation question - key for economic development. Hold question for discussion at next meeting.
- One of Russell new resources that ties in directly with this planning process is the Plato Academy historic restoration training program at KCAAH - could help supply workers for the housing related jobs.
- Potential recommendation for transformation plan - hold a business fair and bring in resource providers that can help entrepreneurs launch businesses – talk about the incentives available, potential locations, provide TA with things such

as how to do a business plan. Bring in the small business resource group to help early stage and start up businesses.

- Oct. 13th is the next Neighborhood Task Force meeting – which is a general task force meeting. Homework is to work on the economic development questions and the business survey questions over the next couple weeks and email suggestions/edits to Scott Love at [Scott.Love@louisvilleky.gov](mailto:Scott.Love@louisvilleky.gov)
- Would like your input on aspirational development – things that would be magical and transformational to the neighborhood.
  - We've been hearing about historic tax credits, Wi-fi
  - Other suggestions
    - Soccer stadium around Main or Market or anywhere in the neighborhood it would create a gateway to the West. Would be an anchor like Sluggerfield is on the east side of Downtown.
    - Open spaces and activities for all generations
    - A Haymarket, year round farmers' market
    - Quinn Performing Arts Center – converting the Quinn Chapel into a performing arts incubator
    - LCCC has raised \$700,000 for a performing arts theatre – will be starting construction in 2016
    - Doing something with the former DAV site (has been purchased by ACE Hardware to use as a warehouse)
    - Boxing gym – Kentucky is the 4<sup>th</sup> most active state in the country in putting on boxing shows
- Need to create a destination – something that would draw folks that wouldn't normally come to the neighborhood for here, would come entertainment, arts, etc. Suggestions on how to do that:
  - Create unique, multi-culture entertainment venues down Market Street.
  - Tie into opportunities with our new immigrant population.
  - Hold a major event tied into the Kentucky Derby Festival in the neighborhood.
- Next steps – will send out Neighborhood Task Force meeting agenda for Oct. 13th
- Other TF meetings are in the Calendar of Events (see [www.VisionRussell.com](http://www.VisionRussell.com))– welcome to attend – lots of overlapping work in the task forces
- Please encourage your friends and neighbors to attend.
- Please come to the community design workshop on Saturday, Oct. 10<sup>th</sup> community design workshop at the Baxter Community Center from 10 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.