

Results from the September 19, 2012 Community Workshop

A Community Workshop was held on Wednesday, September 19, 2012 as part of the Main Street / Central Expressway Corridor Study. The workshop was held at Richardson City Hall from 6:30 p.m. to 9:15 p.m. It was structured to discuss possible redevelopment concepts based on input from the Open House held in July, a Focus Group Workshop and feedback obtained from the online survey and questionnaire. The workshop agenda included presentations, feedback and discussion at specific stations. Approximately 70 people participated.

Participant Background

Keypad polling was used to gain feedback from the entire group of workshop participants. The first segment of polling focused on questions about the participants' background and past involvement with this study. Some of these questions were also asked at the July Open House and through the online input opportunities (the first online survey and questionnaire). As a result, the backgrounds of participants using these various methods for involvement can be compared.

Figure 1 shows that, overall, participants in the Community Workshop have a higher level of direct investment in the corridor than participants in the Open House or in the online dialogue¹. Workshop participants included 19% who identified themselves as residents of the corridor, a larger share than at the Open House (17%) but lower than those who participated in the detailed online survey (24%). Participants who indicated they were an 'owner/representative of a multi-family or commercial property', 'a business owner or tenant' or 'owner of business and property' are considered to have a business or property interest in the corridor. The Community Workshop included higher percentages of people who had a business or property interest in the corridor. 37% of the Community Workshop participants identified themselves in one of these categories, compared to 25% at the Open House and only 0.9% for the online survey.

Figure 1: Participant Background

	Community Workshop	Open House	Online Questionnaire 1	Online Survey 1
I am most involved in the Main Street/Central Corridor as:				
Resident of the corridor	19.4%	16.9%	n/a	23.7%
A resident of Richardson outside the corridor	38.8%	45.4%	n/a	69.2%

¹ Not all background questions were asked in the online survey and questionnaire, and at the Open House. All of these background questions asked in these earlier venues were included in the keypad polling at the Community Workshop.

	Community Workshop	Open House	Online Questionnaire 1	Online Survey 1
Owner/rep. of a multi-family or commercial property (not business owner)	6.0%	8.5%	n/a	0.3%
A business employee	0.0%	2.3%	n/a	1.0%
A business owner or tenant (not property owner)	10.5%	3.1%	n/a	0.0%
Owner of business & property	20.9%	23.1%	n/a	0.6%
An interested person not described above	4.5%	0.8%	n/a	5.2%
I am most interested in issues related to:				
Arts & Culture	1.5%	4.4%	n/a	9.7%
Business & the Economy	39.4%	26.7%	n/a	16.7%
Development & Construction	24.2%	21.5%	n/a	18.7%
Education	3.0%	0.0%	n/a	2.0%
The Environment	0.0%	3.7%	n/a	1.7%
Health & Healthy Communities	1.5%	3.7%	n/a	2.7%
Government Services	0.0%	0.7%	n/a	0.0%
Neighborhood Quality of Life	30.3%	37.0%	n/a	48.7%
My age group is:				
17 or younger	0.0%	n/a	0.0%	0.0%
18 to 20	0.0%	n/a	0.0%	0.0%
21 to 29	1.5%	n/a	7.2%	6.9%
30 to 39	13.0%	n/a	22.7%	27.5%
40 to 49	14.5%	n/a	18.6%	21.3%
50 to 59	18.8%	n/a	20.6%	20.3%
60 to 69	33.3%	n/a	20.6%	18.6%
70 to 79	11.6%	n/a	8.2%	5.2%
80 or older	7.3%	n/a	2.1%	0.3%
I have lived in Richardson for:				
More than 20 years	47.0%	n/a	40.6%	42.7%
11 to 20 years	13.6%	n/a	21.9%	18.4%
6 to 10 years	0.0%	n/a	11.5%	14.0%
2 to 5 years	19.7%	n/a	19.8%	17.1%
I moved here this year	3.0%	n/a	4.2%	4.4%
I don't live in Richardson	16.7%	n/a	2.1%	3.4%
I have worked in Richardson for:				
More than 20 years	26.6%	n/a	10.4%	10.9%
11 to 20 years	7.8%	n/a	4.2%	5.6%
6 to 10 years	9.4%	n/a	4.2%	8.1%
2 to 5 years	4.7%	n/a	6.3%	7.7%

	Community Workshop	Open House	Online Questionnaire 1	Online Survey 1
I started working here this year	3.1%	n/a	2.1%	1.1%
I'm in the work force but I don't work in Richardson	28.1%	n/a	44.8%	45.4%
I am retired, a student, or otherwise not in the work force	20.3%	n/a	28.1%	21.1%

Participants at the Community Workshop were more interested in 'Business & the Economy' and 'Development & Construction' than participants at the Open House or those who participated in the online survey. Almost 64% of Community Workshop participants selected one of these options as the topic that had the greatest interest to them, compared to 48% at the Open House and 35% in the online survey. All three groups had a strong degree of interest in 'Neighborhood Quality of Life', with almost half (49%) of survey participants selecting this topic and large shares (37% at the Open House and 30% at the Community Workshop) of workshop participants making this selection.

Community Workshop participants are older than those who participated through the online survey and questionnaire. More than half (52%) of Community Workshop participants were 60 or older. Only 31% of those who completed the online questionnaire and 24% of those who completed the online survey were in this age group. In contrast, 34% of participants in the online survey and 30% of participants in the online questionnaire were age 39 and under. Only 14% of Community Workshop participants were in this age group.

Despite these differences in age, most participants in the workshop, questionnaire and survey had a substantial residential tenure in Richardson. Over 60% of participants in all three groups had lived in Richardson for 11 years or more. All these participants have a stake in the future of this corridor because of their long-term choice to live in this community. Between 20 and 25% of participants have moved to Richardson in the past 5 years. This level of involvement is also positive for the study, since it reflects the perspective of people who have made a decision to locate to Richardson much more recently, at a time when the character of this Corridor was much more like its current condition. A significantly larger share of Community Workshop participants have worked in Richardson for 11 or more years (34%, compared to 15% for the online questionnaire and 17% for the online survey).

A final question about participant background asked Community Workshop participants whether they had been involved in this study before the workshop. A large majority (67.2%) had attended earlier meetings for the study. An additional 22.4% indicated that they had reviewed materials online but that this was their first meeting. Only 10.4% said that this workshop was their first involvement with the study.

These questions about participant background indicate that participants throughout the study have had a significant investment and stake in the Richardson generally and in this corridor. Meeting participants tend to include a larger share of those whose interest is property or development-related; online participants tend to include a larger share who are younger and more interested in quality of life. By

examining the feedback received through all these tools, the Main Street / Central Expressway Corridor Study can consider the ideas and input from these diverse stakeholders, all of whom have a role to play in the future success of this corridor.

Feedback on Preliminary Concepts

The ideas about this Corridor's future that were discussed at the Community Workshop were created through work by the staff and consultant team and by the work of a smaller group of stakeholders. This group of about 30 individuals participated in an all-day Focus Group Workshop on Saturday, September 15, 2012. These Focus Group participants were invited to represent and reflect the diverse interests of Richardson and the Corridor – residents, property owners, businesses and other interests. The preliminary results of this more intensive session formed the foundation for discussion at the shorter evening Community Workshop.

General Discussion

At the Community Workshop, Focus Group participants and consultant team members presented a summary of the Focus Group Workshop's results relating to six topics – Urban Design, Mobility, Activities & Uses, Residential Choices, People Places and Identity. They also presented preliminary concepts for three Focus Areas, parts of the corridor that had been identified because they have special opportunities or challenges. After these presentations, all Community Workshop participants were involved in a general discussion about the ideas that had been presented. This wide-ranging discussion included many comments that supported the preliminary concepts as well as others that challenged them.

Many of the workshop participants shared comments and ideas about the future of the Corridor. There are clearly differing opinions about the role of 'historic' buildings and character in downtown – some people want to build on this while others want to see something new. Several comments emphasized the challenge of parking in or near downtown. Other comments supported the ideas of adding pedestrian amenities to this area. A key question was: "what will get people out of their cars in downtown?" Some downtown property owners shared the challenges they have faced and expressed their interest in future investment.

A number of comments supported the idea of developing iconic buildings and new venues as part of this Corridor. People agreed they "want to see something different". One person noted that having an iconic building will make it easier for people to be able to work in Richardson, and that uses such as music venues or art galleries might "attract higher end spenders". Participants generally agreed that the DART stations adjacent to the Corridor are valuable and need to be part of the area's future vitality.

All the notes taken during the general discussion are found in the Appendix.

Keypad Polling

After this general discussion, keypad polling was used to obtain a general sense of participants' reaction to the concepts at this preliminary stage of development. It was emphasized that these responses were intended to convey a general response to the concepts which, at this stage, are still quite broad. The responses below should be understood in this way – as general responses to preliminary concepts.

Feedback on Concepts

Figure 2 presents the result of keypad polling questions that asked participants about the preliminary concepts presented at the workshop. Overall, these responses show a strong level of support for the concepts at this stage in their development. Over 63% of participants indicated that the overall direction of the Framework Plan reflected their ideas about the most successful future for this Corridor (responses of 'agree' or 'strongly agree'). Only 8% of participants disagreed with this statement, and no one strongly disagreed with it. There is still a large segment of the participants (about 20%) whose response is neutral. As these concepts are refined, they will need to provide additional details and rationale to gain the support of these 'neutral' participants, who at this point seem undecided about these ideas.

Almost 87% of respondents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statement that 'these concepts will enhance the value of properties in this Corridor. None of the participants 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' with this statement. High percentages of respondents also agreed with statements about the urban design features and appeal to pedestrians and cyclists of these concepts. The lowest level of support – at 56% still a majority of participants – was for the proposed Gateways. These gateway designs will need further attention to build support from stakeholders.

A second set of keypad polling questions asked participants to consider their own personal choices in terms of the Corridor described by these preliminary concepts. The highest response (71%) was from those who 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they would want to spend time in a place like this. Roughly two thirds of the participants indicated they would want to work, own a business or own property in an area like this. The lowest level of personal interest was for living in a place like this. Even on this measure, a majority of respondents indicated that they 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed'. Almost a quarter (23%) of participants 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' with this statement. This is likely a reflection of the large number of long-term Richardson residents who participated and who likely prefer neighborhoods such as the ones where they live now.

In general, these responses are very positive for the study. Success of this Corridor's revitalization depends more on the larger numbers of people who will buy property and businesses, work here and shop, dine and otherwise take advantage of the activities that are envisioned for the future. So the high level of support reflected by the stakeholders suggests the study is on the right track. Clearly, though, these are responses to preliminary concepts. Further dialogue will be needed as the study's detailed recommendations are developed.

Figure 2: Feedback on General Concepts

Statement about Anticipated Results	'Strongly agree' or 'Agree'	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	'Disagree' or 'Strongly disagree'	I'm not sure
The overall direction of this Framework Plan reflects my ideas about the most successful future for the Corridor.	63.5%	12.7%	50.8%	19.1%	7.9%	0.0%	7.9%	9.5%
These concepts will enhance the value of properties in this Corridor.	85.7%	38.1%	47.6%	9.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%
These proposed Gateways will give people a welcome that reflects Richardson's character.	56.2%	15.6%	40.6%	20.3%	9.4%	0.0%	9.4%	14.1%
These urban design features will create a desirable and lively identity for this Corridor.	65.6%	14.8%	50.8%	21.3%	6.6%	0.0%	6.6%	6.6%
These concepts will make this Corridor more appealing for people walking or on bikes.	70.0%	23.3%	46.7%	16.7%	3.3%	0.0%	3.3%	10.0%
Statement about Personal Choices	'Strongly agree' or 'Agree'	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	'Disagree' or 'Strongly disagree'	I'm not sure
I would want to spend time in a place like the one these concepts describe.	71.0%	25.8%	45.2%	17.7%	1.6%	0.0%	1.6%	9.7%
I would want to work or own a business in a place like the one these concepts describe.	66.1%	25.8%	40.3%	27.4%	3.2%	0.0%	3.2%	3.2%
I would want to live in a place like the one these concepts describe.	50.8%	14.8%	36.1%	16.4%	18.0%	4.9%	23.0%	9.8%
I would want to own property (residential or commercial) in a place like the one these concepts describe.	65.1%	27.0%	38.1%	27.0%	4.8%	0.0%	4.8%	3.2%

Compatibility of Development Types

A third set of keypad polling questions presented participants with images of eight development types, which had been discussed during the evening's presentations. The questions asked participants how compatible these development types were with the future of the Corridor. The responses to these questions are shown in Figure 3.² A very strong majority of participants believe that Mixed-Use development is compatible with this Corridor's future – almost 86% expressed this opinion. Over 60% of respondents saw a variety of other development types as compatible here as well. Residential – Townhome, Shopfront, Live – Work, Mixed – Residential and Commercial all rated highly.

Figure 3: Response to Possible Future Development Types

How compatible is this development type with the future of this Corridor?	Very or somewhat compatible	Neutral	Not very compatible	I'm not sure
Mixed – Use	85.7%	1.8%	12.5%	0.0%
Residential – Townhome	75.4%	4.9%	16.4%	3.3%
Shopfront	67.8%	15.3%	13.6%	3.4%
Live – Work	63.8%	15.5%	17.2%	3.5%
Mixed Residential	63.2%	10.5%	19.3%	7.0%
Commercial	60.7%	18.0%	19.7%	1.6%
Residential – Cottage	50.0%	5.0%	41.7%	3.3%
Light Industrial	23.0%	16.4%	59.0%	1.6%

Participants were evenly divided about whether the Residential – Cottage development type was compatible here. This type – a small single family detached unit on a small lot – received almost as much response that it was not compatible as that it was compatible. Only one development type, Light Industrial, was seen as incompatible by a large share of participants. Almost 60% felt this development type was not compatible with the future of this area.

The feedback on these development types provides a good indication that stakeholders are interested in a range of development types here, including a number that are not commonly found in this Corridor or in Richardson today.

Focus Areas

The final set of keypad polling slides related to the three Focus Areas within the Main Street – Central Expressway Corridor. For each of these Focus Areas, the presentation at the Community Workshop included discussion of the ideas developed for that area during the workshop on Saturday. All of these

² The keypad slides for these questions offered six choices, including 'very compatible', 'somewhat compatible', 'neutral', 'not very compatible' and 'I'm not sure'. The sixth choice should have been 'very incompatible'. A typographical error on the slides instead showed that choice as a second option of 'very compatible'. Participants were asked to disregard this repeated option and, in fact, none of them selected it. In view of this set of choices, the analysis of these questions simply compares the 'compatible' choices with the 'not compatible' choice.

ideas were fairly broad and the general discussion that followed the presentation included questions about the general concepts and the specific ideas developed so far. As a result, this keypad polling again provides general feedback on these ideas, which are still in an early stage of development.

For each of the three Focus Areas, one question asked whether the future concept that had been presented reflected the participant's own ideas about the area's future. A second question addressed one of the particular ideas suggested for each focus area. The responses to these questions are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Feedback on Focus Area Concepts

Focus Area Feedback	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I'm not sure
The future concept for Focus Area A reflects my ideas about the most successful future for this area.	11.9%	42.4%	22.0%	11.9%	5.1%	6.8%
An iconic building at Spring Valley and Central (in Focus Area A) would create a desirable new gateway into Richardson.	32.3%	30.7%	21.0%	6.5%	8.1%	1.6%
The future concept for Focus Area B reflects my ideas about the most successful future for this area.	23.3%	50.0%	16.7%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%
New shops, restaurants and other uses should infill the underutilized areas at and near the Richardson Heights Shopping Center (in Focus Area B).	69.2%	26.2%	3.1%	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%
The future concept for Focus Area C reflects my ideas about the most successful future for this area.	17.7%	45.2%	16.1%	12.9%	3.2%	4.8%
New activities and developments in this area (Focus Area C) should make it more inviting to pedestrians.	67.2%	25.0%	3.1%	3.1%	1.6%	0.0%

For each area, there was stronger support for the specific idea than for the general future concept. Strongest support came for the ideas about infill of underutilized areas at and near the Richardson Heights Shopping Center – 95% of participants 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with this approach. Similarly strong support (92%) was shown for the statement that Focus Area C ideas would make the area more inviting for pedestrians. The idea that an iconic building at Spring Valley and Central would create a desirable gateway garnered the lowest level of support of the three ideas, but it still was supported by almost 63% of participants.

A majority of participants supported the future concepts for all three Focus Areas. Among the three Focus Areas, the future concept for Focus Area B received the greatest degree of support (73% who either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed') and the lowest level of disapproval (10% who either 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed'). The future concept for Focus Area C was supported by 62% of participants; 16% of participants disagreed with it. This is probably a reflection of differing views about Richardson's

downtown. Some participants favor a future that builds on its traditional or 'historic' character, while others believe the future should 'start from scratch'. The details for this Focus Area must address the market opportunities reflected in these two viewpoints. The same share of participants (16%) disagreed with Focus Area A's future concept. There is less support for it, however – just over half the participants (54%) supported it. This area's concept received the highest share of 'neutral' responses. Clearly, the concepts for Focus Area A need additional detail and explanation in order for them to be highly persuasive.

Comments at Specific Stations

Following the keypad polling, participants were invited to visit six stations at which they could discuss these concepts in greater detail. Stations focused on three topics and three geographic areas:

- Mobility
- Destinations for People
- Identity and Design
- Focus Area A
- Focus Area B
- Focus Area C

The comments received during these discussions will be used as the study team refines these concepts to create a final set of recommendations for this area.

Appendix: Notes from Group Discussion

DISCUSSION / QUESTIONS:

Group
Discussion
09.19.12

- Don't limit development w/ zoning that restricts too much (2 story zoning...)
- Challenge concept of "keeping old town"
- Need to attract people from outside & provide options to bring people in... Want to see something different
- How can we utilize creek/water in ~~the~~ Downtown
- What will get people out of their cars in Downtown?
- Imaginative solution for crossing under 75 is needed
- Trolley/shuttle along Beltline / Main St
- Can we have a centralized parking garage?
- Fabric of Downtown is not entirely "historic".. (location, yes each bldg, no)
- Parking in Downtown is a challenge... vital component to future of Downtown
- Most other downtown's have a "civic anchor"

DISCUSSION... (PG 2)

- Greenville Ave has potential ... can be a distinct area [Don't look solely @ Downtown]
- ^{Yes!} ^{Who} Should consider opportunity for a parking garage
- Uses: music venue (Nokia 7500 seats); high rise office/residential; townhouses; concern over ^{near Spring Valley St} condo/apt product (?);
- Iconic Buildings will support Working in Richardson
- Attract higher end \$ spenders (Central Mkt, etc)
- Arts galleries; live-work
- Support DART stations (they are a jewel)
- Add more businesses: support ^{& add} workers + shoppers
- Look @ underground parking
- Support "old" and "new"... there may be a place for both
- New homebuyers want places to walk to... need those walkable destinations in the corridor
- Take care of main streets & "perimeter"; neighborhoods can maintain themselves