

West Nashville Community Plan Update: Concept Plan Meeting Summary

Monday, December 8, 2008

St. Ann's Catholic Community

6-8 PM

Anita McCaig of the Metro Planning Department welcomed meeting attendees and introduced Councilwoman Emily Evans, who was the only Councilmember present at that point in the meeting. Councilwoman Evans briefly addressed the attendees and emphasized the importance of the evening's meeting.

Ms. McCaig next gave a brief overview of the West Nashville Community Plan Update process to date, including the Visioning Workshop results (please see separate PowerPoint presentation and Visioning Workshop handout entitled "West Nashville Vision Statement"). She then gave a brief overview of the format of the draft Concept Plan and explained that the rest of the meeting would be spent in small groups at tables reviewing and discussing the draft Concept Plan. Each table will be facilitated by a member of the Planning Department staff.

Questions that were asked before the attendees broke up into small group discussions were:

Will Nashville West Shopping Center be a T4 or T5 Center?

Answer: Probably not. It is more likely to be a T3 Center

Does this designation impact whether the May Town Center bridge will come through in this area?

Answer: No. The bridge/traffic study for May Town Center is being done separate from this process.

Ms. McCaig announced that Katy from Vanderbilt University was present to film the proceedings as part of her graduate research project. This film will not be shared with anyone else. The attendees then began to discuss the Concept Plan in small groups, following which discussions the meeting was adjourned at about 8 PM.

Note: The tables are numbered from right to left as you walk into the room with the furthest table to your right in the first row being Table 1 and the table in the rear left corner being Table 6:

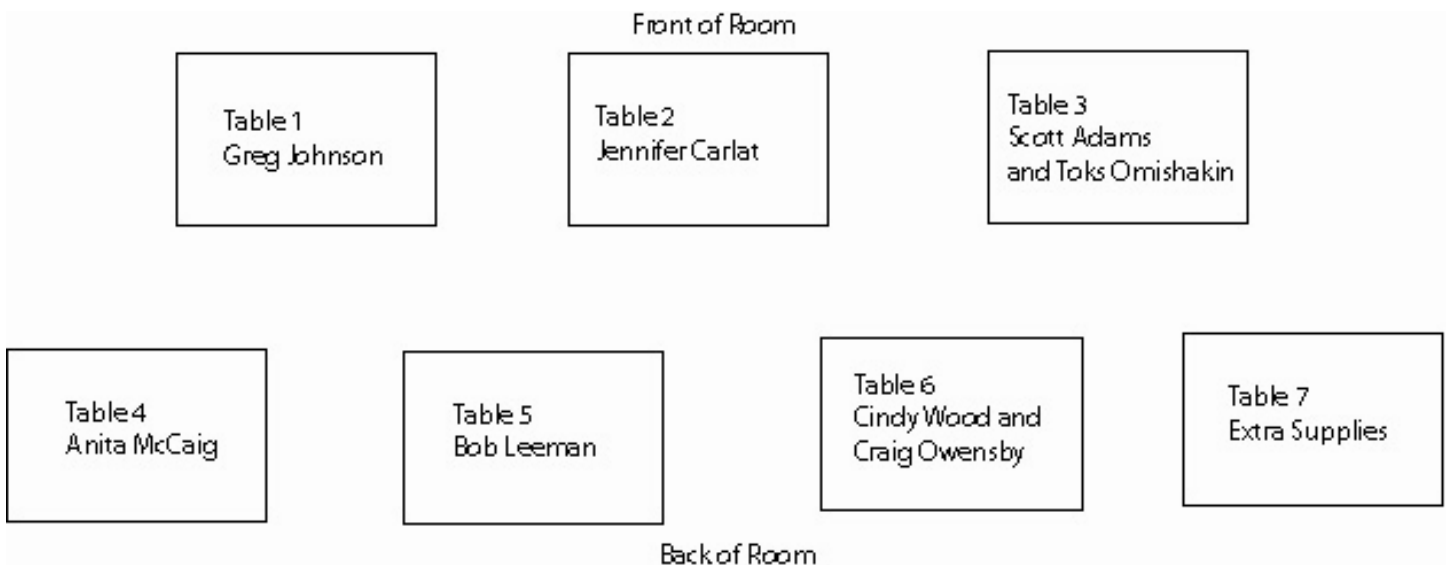


Table 1
Table Facilitator: Greg Johnson

Open Space and Natural Areas

- Access to river should be added/improved at Cockrill Bend Park
- Portion of Cleece's Ferry boat ramp parking should be turned into park
- Vacant lot near Rock Harbor Marina should be used for river access

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- Additional greenway could extend along floodplain area extending from Harding Pike to steep slopes area in Southwest of study area
- Vacant parcels in NE area on east part of study area could be used for park areas
- Quarry should be extension of harbor if the quarry ever goes away
- (Table members agreed with all other aspects of open space designations)

Neighborhoods

- Generally, this table was fine with all of the neighborhood evolving areas (with some hesitation around the 70/100 split). They proposed adding one neighborhood evolving area and thought that portions of some neighborhood evolving areas could be mixed-use.
- Keep the existing defined separation between mixed-use area and single-family residential. (this table was skeptical that neighborhood evolving would work surrounding the 70S/100 split...only in areas that are defined by rigid boundaries like the railroad or major streets)
- Allow residential surrounding Rock Harbor Marina
- Area between I-40 and Charlotte on either side of Amercian Road could be neighborhood evolving.
- Robertson Avenue in neighborhood evolving could have Bransford Avenue feel: low-rise mixed-use

Centers

- Center past 70/100 split with antique stores should remain small-scale, similar to existing
- Charlotte Pike/White Bridge Road center is fine as long as it doesn't get larger. This table didn't like the LED signs there and doesn't want to allow more of them outside of the center.
- Murphy Road/46th Avenue Intersection doesn't have enough parking. Can remain a center, but shouldn't intensify
- Small neighborhood center at the intersection of Morrow Road and 60th Avenue North can remain a small center. Table thought that existing uses might be illegal and thought that their relationship with surrounding residential was odd, but still thought it could work.

Corridors

- This table agreed with all of the corridor definitions, both mixed-use and residential.
- Sidewalks needed in commercial areas, especially along Charlotte and White Bridge
- Denser residential along Charlotte Pike within corridor area
- One table member emphatically agreed with mixed use corridor designation for Centennial Boulevard and said that some redevelopment of the industrial area would be great.
- 51st Avenue North seen as viable mixed use corridor.

Districts

- Table agreed with all district designations.

Table 2 Facilitator: Jennifer Carlat

Open Space and Natural Areas

- Unmarked Parks – Please mark Parmer Park. Check if the open space owned by Harding Academy in Belle Meade Links is officially a park. Mark Harding Academy playing fields on Harding Pike. Mark the Community Center at McCabe Park.
- New Parks – The group agreed that West Meade looked underserved by parks, but one community member, who lives in West Meade, noted that their “parks” are in their large lots.

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- Greenways –
 - The group was very interested in a greenway along Harding – could be along the stream on the east side or along the railroad tracks on the west side.
 - The group thought that the area along Harding between the intersection with Belle Meade Boulevard and the intersection with Harding Place could stand to be tidied – this would make an improved scenic drive.
 - The group wanted to see an additional greenway connection through the Lions Head shopping center – more clearly marked.
- Rock Harbor Marina – This was thought to be underutilized, but there weren't any thoughts on how to improve its use.
- Natural Areas – Group was committed to preserving steep slopes. This was determined to be very important.

Neighborhoods

- Maintenance Areas – The group agreed with these areas as marked.
 - Belle Meade Courts requested sidewalks for the neighborhood to make walking to Downtown Belle Meade safe.
- Evolving Areas – The group was generally comfortable with the location of these areas, but was very interested in what type of development would occur and the exact boundaries.
 - The area that seemed most difficult to determine was around the WSMV Channel 4 location, just southwest of White Bridge and Charlotte.
 - The evolving areas around the Hwy 70/100 split prompted conversation about what types of mixed housing and/or density would be advisable. The group was uncertain about different building types (stacked flats, townhouses). Others expressed a desire in seeing additional density, however, to create more walkability and support the commercial in the area. One member offered that 2 – 3 stories could be appropriate for height. The group did note that if density was added, then transportation improvements would be necessary. *See “Centers” for additional comments on this area.*

Centers

- Hwy 70/100 Split Center – Some group members proposed a roundabout as a suggested solution for the Hwy 70/100 split, with art in the center. Some members of the group noted that Post Road had already been “compromised” by commercial, so it could be a site for additional commercial or mixed use. Overall, the group agreed that the area would be ideal to redevelop as a more pedestrian-friendly center.
- Nashville West / Hillwood Plaza – One group member noted that Nashville West had been a great addition to the community. No comments on improvements to it.
- White Bridge Road / Charlotte – The group proposed improved landscaping for redevelopment in this center. One community member proposed grade separation for White Bridge Road and Charlotte. Staff requested that the group consider, however, the impact this would have on walkability.
- Lion's Head – No comments on improvements here, except to better connect the greenway *behind* the center with White Bridge Rd. One community member proposed grade separation for White Bridge Road at Harding (this is just outside the West Nashville Community). *Note: Grade separation was considered for this intersection during planning for the area which created the Harding Town Center Urban Design Overlay (UDO). Grade separation was not chosen as a viable option due to cost and the impact it would have in reducing walkability in the area.*
- Charlotte Avenue / Richland Park – The group agreed that improvements were needed at this center, especially since the Park is currently under used. The only specific given was that Alabama remains a good site for commercial uses.

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- Murphy Road / 46th Avenue – The group really liked this center and wanted it to stay “as is.” Some members of the group did raise concerns about spill over parking into the neighborhood. One group member wondered if the landscape business behind Goldies should be considered to be part of the center.

Corridors

- Charlotte East of White Bridge – The group agreed that improvements were needed, citing barbed wire fences and too many used car lots as eye sores along the corridor. One group member noted that with redevelopment within I440 on Charlotte that change was coming.
- Charlotte Across from Nashville West – One group member noted that if mixed housing was proposed across from Nashville West that it should only go one lot deep. Another group member proposed that no change occur along the corridor.
- 51st Avenue – A group member who lived in the area suggested that 51st Ave. develop as a connection between the neighborhoods, versus a separation. This could be accomplished by making it more walkable, including adding crosswalks. This group member also asked that the plan be conscientious about the *extent* of the mixed use/commercial along this corridor – that it not encroach further into the neighborhoods.
- Corridors, General Appearance – There was a request that power lines be buried along main corridors and that billboards be curtailed along the corridors. They were thought to be especially bad at the Hwy 70/100 split.
- Corridors, Transportation – The group requested that bikeways be considered along Harding Pike and White Bridge Pike.

Districts

- Cockrill Bend –
 - A group member asked that staff take a fresh look at the Bruce Hardwood plant, which has closed and could be considered for redevelopment.
 - A group member asked that staff look into the status on the Cleeces Ferry site – will that re-open as some public use?

Table 3
Facilitators: Scott Adams and Toks Omishakin

General Comments

- Vaughn’s Gap Rd. NEEDS to be added to overall Concept Plan map
- Westside Athletic Club is in wrong sub-area – the neighborhood is more related to West Nashville than Bellevue, which is the current sub-area it’s in

Neighborhoods

- Neighborhood Evolving (NE) area east of White Bridge Rd., at northern end near Charlotte Pk., needs to be sensitive to Richland Creek and planned greenway there,
- NE area in Belle Meade Highland east of 70/100 Center; citizen asked what staff reasoning was for putting policy there, citizen okay with Residential Corridor along Tenn. 100, but NOT NE in their neighborhood

Centers

- Citizen concern with term “vertical mixed-use”; is there a cap on height, etc. for this? *Note: This will be discussed in more detail at the next meeting, with height recommendations.*

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Corridors

- Residential:
 - The Residential Corridor policy on White Bridge Rd. should extend south to the Lion's Head shopping center area (Citizen asked why staff had not placed policy over all of White Bridge Rd. between the two Centers)
- Mixed Use:
 - Existing commercial zoning on Harding Pk. north of Harding Pl. needs proper color-coding on maps
 - Need for better transition on NE property just west of above mentioned property(s)

Districts

- Industrial area along Centennial Blvd., if declines/move away, needs to be reclaimed as natural open space, in light of significant floodplain presence and minimal redevelopment potential

Transportation

- Create, extend bike lanes on:
 - 51st Avenue North (south of Charlotte Pk.) to McCabe Park, then north to Centennial Blvd.
 - Nebraska Ave. to Acklen Park Dr., especially over bridge OR create striped shoulder for multi-uses (bikes, on-street parking, trash can placement, etc.)
 - 46th Avenue North into the Nations
 - Percy Warner Blvd
 - Page Road
- 37th Ave. is a crucial connection between Sylvan Heights and Sylvan Park, yet is DANGEROUS from a sight-distance and physical space issue, if not speeding; the railroad underpass is too narrow for safe passage of two passing vehicles and a pedestrian or bicyclist (Planning staff to do site visit, assess options for improvement)
- Question about Richland Creek Greenway extension north of Charlotte Pk., over or under? Staff: preference is UNDER, yet cost may prove otherwise
- Questions about MTA; future plans to reinstate 46th Ave./Murphy Rd. service? Planning staff will check with MTA about considering BusLink, their neighborhood-scale circulator service, to better serve Sylvan Park, The Nations
- Tenn. 100 / U.S. 70 is unsafe, confusing – needs redesigning
- Tenn. 100 / Vaughn's Gap Rd. intersection NEEDS traffic signal for dual-purpose:
 - Safe crossing for bike/ped. heading to Warner Park
 - Signal-controlled, safer ingress/egress for drivers on Vaughn's Gap onto Tenn. 100
 - Citizen complained that TDOT has issued safety report, etc. on intersection, yet MPW says intersection does not warrant signal, due to low traffic volumes from Vaughn's Gap Rd.; citizen also noted that through-traffic on Tenn. 100 has increased with development in Bellevue, etc.,

Table 4
Table Facilitator: Bob Leeman

Open Space and Natural Areas

- Street trees/ streetscape improvements needed along Charlotte Pike
- Plan needs to show West Meade Elementary School near Carnavon Parkway.
- Need community open space at Davidson Road and Harding Pike.
- Conservation area along Hillwood Boulevard needs to have the same special policy as the area to the south
- Need to show the Brookmeade School at the southern end of the study area along Charlotte Pike. What will the future use be if it is not a school?
- Need to consider a new park north of Centennial Boulevard east of 51st Avenue along the River.
- Pocket parks needed in West Meade area.

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Neighborhoods

- Area at Sedberry needs to be something other than RS40. Small cluster of townhomes may be appropriate since this area is separated from the rest of the RS40 area. Would be okay to rezone for multi-family at about 6 to 9 units per acre.
- Keep the West Meade residential areas as Neighborhood Maintenance.

Centers

- Need better cross-access between the Target store on White Bridge and the other commercial uses in the surrounding shopping center. A road behind or through the development is needed since it is difficult to get out onto White Bridge Pike. Need better connectivity and less driveway cuts with more coordinated access points.
- Need to consider outdoor dining at Lion's Head Village; need more restaurants with outdoor dining.
- Multi-story uses would be appropriate at Lion's Head Shopping Center with appropriate traffic impact study to control the traffic with increased intensity.
- If any major part of Lion's Head Shopping Center redevelops, it needs to be done as a true Lifestyle Center, not like the Nashville West Shopping Center. It should be a mixed-use center.
- 46th and Murphy Road should remain one-story, but it should be made more pedestrian friendly with additional sidewalks at the commercial center.
- Charlotte Avenue at Richland Park needs to have a unified concept. It needs to address having unified "roof lines", parking behind buildings, street trees, local shops (not chain stores), consistent streetscape elements with a minimum number of driveway cuts. Buildings should have a maximum height of no more than 3 stories.

Corridors

- Need an appropriate transition across the Charlotte Pike from the Nashville West Shopping Center; could be mixed use with two stories or it could be very small scale commercial no more than one story.
- Needs more density around Charlotte Avenue at Richland Park to sustain a more intense center along Charlotte.

Transportation

- Need to talk to TDOT about improving the Highway 100/Highway 70 split. It is a very dangerous intersection that needs to be looked at.
- Multiple people at this table were adamant that Hillwood Boulevard should not be straightened out. It needs to remain the way it is.

Miscellaneous

- Need to show Belle Meade Methodist Church. *Note: Houses of faith are not included in the Concept Plan.*

Table 5
Table Facilitator: Anita McCaig

Open Space & Natural Areas

- West Meade – No public parks but also there isn't really available land for that. People walk up and down the Jocelyn Branch area, so it functions as a greenway along there. Preserve old stone walls.
 - Heard that sidewalks are in the works for Davidson and Brook Hollow which would help people easily walk through the neighborhood or to the greenway.
- Need a greenway connection from the existing Greenway spur (close to McCabe Park) to White Bridge Road.

Neighborhoods

- Maintenance Areas - Liked these areas.
- Evolving Areas – Concern expressed about the evolving areas having apartment complexes that would cause crime. Others at the table disagreed, saying that there needed to be different housing types so people could stay in the community all their lives. One person used himself as an example, saying he was born in West Meade, grew up there, moved away and came back to find the housing prices very high and had to buy a small house in order to live there. Some housing choice would be nice.

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- West Meade – Needs a community gathering spot. Perhaps a coffee shop or restaurant at Davidson / Brook Hollow.

Centers

- Reuse historic buildings for other uses – like Cohn School has done. Would like to see the historic church on Charlotte turned into something that serves the community – events, shows, community artists. Also reuse the old state prison building and kitchen surplus building on Charlotte.
- More entertainment options.
- Nashville West / Hillwood Plaza – Challenge with introducing other uses is that they don't have an alley to act like a buffer between other uses and residential, like they do in Sylvan Park.
- White Bridge Road / Charlotte – This is the center of traffic in the community – 'where the retail goes to die'. Feel that it's a hopeless intersection that should have its main focus on moving traffic. Push uses further back from the intersection so as not to impede traffic flow as right now everything is 'crammed into the intersection'. Terrible curb cut that sticks out and makes it very dangerous for people getting off the bus and trying to walk. This curb is also dangerous for drivers.
- Lion's Head – People like this center. While there aren't a lot of traffic problems, the lack of a traffic light at the entrance to the Target does impede traffic flow. The sidewalks could also be wider in the area between Harding and the Shopping Center. Wish the theater could come back to this area.
- Charlotte Avenue / Richland Park – So many options on Charlotte. The streetscape needs to be improved as the buildings look neglected. Folks remember when it was the 'Pike' and people walked up and down the street and the shops were well kept up. It was very walkable. Now it needs a buffer between the sidewalk and the street for people to feel comfortable walking. One person suggested offices along Charlotte to break up the retail pattern. Another mentioned the north side of Charlotte might be good for a more intense mixture of housing types since it has a natural beginning and end point. Focus should be on 'mom & pop' businesses that are a different mix than the ones that are currently there. Suggested a pedestrian bridge across Charlotte. Questioned whether a center turn lane or transit would even fit since the street is so narrow. Perhaps transit, such as a streetcar, could run behind Charlotte in the alley. Perhaps bikeways could be located there as well, since it is so dangerous to ride along Charlotte. Ms. Winners used to be Department Store. Richland Park has lots of history. Create an edge and nothing goes past this edge (meaning don't intrude into the residential area). How does the trend of businesses and retail moving to suburban areas further out influence how you revitalize an older urban corridor?
- Hwy 70 Hwy 100 – 'Death Central'. 'Plan for the area after you fix the traffic problem.' Folks like the shops and the character of the area and said it has a lot of potential, but the street pattern is just confusing and overshadows everything else.
- Murphy Road / 46th Avenue – People love the business mix and the look of area but you can't cross the street. Needs sidewalks but has a lot of potential. Perhaps use Sloan/Cherokee for pedestrian/bikeway. Need better connection to the greenway. If you use the street through the golf course to walk on, the golfers get mad and it's dangerous with the speed they drive golfcarts through there.
- Morrow Road / 60th Avenue N – Not many people go up here. There is a bar-b-que place and a barber shop. This is just a neglected area as is the Nations Neighborhood. This area 'needs character'. One person mentioned that there is a 5-acre lot that a school is trying to acquire.
- Hwy 100 / Railroad Tracks – Don't think commercial needs to be in this area. Would like to see it totally gone in 30 years. Instead focus commercial up at the split center area.

Corridors

- More entertainment options.
- Participants understood the pressure on land (that has houses) to turn into something else. Liked the concept of a mixture of housing types but are concerned that several of these areas don't have alleys so there is no logical beginning and end points to contain mixed housing once it began.
- Focus commercial at the centers.
- Charlotte – Needs to be 4-lanes all the way. Along Charlotte, there are numerous vacant stores. You could put a large amount of the area's businesses into a small area if it was well designed.
- 51st Avenue – Keep 51st without fast food and high intensity commercial.
- Charlotte Pike / Hillwood Plaza Area – leave apartments as they are established. Traffic lights are staggered here and there is too much parking lot area.

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Districts

- *Cockrill Bend* – Doesn't feel like a safe area. There seems to be a lack of food services in the area to serve all the workers for lunch. Maybe it would be good to get some food places into the mix.
- *Nashville State* – differing opinions – Some like the College where it is, integrated into the neighborhood. Another felt that it is a terrible use of that land and would like to see a mixed use development, as currently it is mostly parking since it was built when nothing else was around it.

Table 6
Table Facilitators: Craig Owensby and Cindy Wood

Open Space & Natural Areas

- More pocket parks needed
- Develop "James Park" using Richland Creek floodplain around intersection area of 54th Avenue North and Charlotte Pike.
- Include an urban produce market in Richland Park
- Develop open space and greenway connections to the north of the present greenway along Richland Creek
- Establish wild bird corridors, especially along creeks
- Preserve the Dominican Campus open space and mature trees, which although they are just outside the study area have an impact on the West Nashville Community due to their proximity and visibility from the community
- Explore allowing public access to the Cockrill Bend Park (adjacent to Cumberland River)

Neighborhoods

- Call for green development in all the neighborhood evolving and conservation areas, especially in the more steeply sloped areas
- Utilize innovative pervious paving that includes green areas for parking areas
- Avoid negative impacts on the creeks and other water bodies
- The section of Highway 100 that is against the railroad tracks between Harris Teeter and the antiques shops is very constrained and development here will need to be small scale.
- What would make a street no longer "worthy of consideration" for historic status?

Centers

- Call for green development in all the centers
- Utilize innovative pervious paving that includes green areas for parking areas
- Avoid negative impacts on the creeks and other water bodies
- None of the arterial streets are crossable by pedestrians and this is a major issue that needs to be addressed for all the centers
- A grocery store is needed somewhere within the Robertson-Urbandale-Nations (Historic West Nashville) area
- A grocery store is needed east of White Bridge Road along Charlotte Pike/Avenue.
- Greenery (significantly enhanced landscaping that also serves environmental protection/remediation goals) should be called for as part of commercial development
- Landscaping maintenance requirements need to be strengthened
- Develop rain gardens in commercial areas
- The stores in the Highway 70S/100 center have been observed to change hands frequently, indicating problems that need to be identified and addressed
- Because of physical factors, the Highway 70S/100 center is not suited for large-scale retail, but rather for smaller-scale stores and consumer service establishments
- Establish a mobility terminal and business center at the intersection of White Bridge Road and Charlotte Pike
- The portion of Charlotte-White Bridge center that extends down 54th Avenue North should be a transition area, not a center
- "Commercial center" status "lets polluters be grandfathered in" – we should "reclaim all of the buffer zones" to help clean up creek contamination

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Corridors

- All:
 - Call for green development along all of the corridors
 - Utilize innovative pervious paving that includes green areas for parking areas
 - Avoid negative impacts on the creeks and other water bodies
 - None of the arterial streets are crossable by pedestrians and this is a major issue that needs to be addressed for all the corridors
- Residential:
 - The area across from Nashville West should remain residential
 - It is doubtful that the land use pattern needs to change on the south sides of Old Charlotte Pike and Charlotte Pike Circle because they area protected by tree buffers that should be maintained
 - The are along White Bridge Road that is identified as a residential corridor should remain residential
- Mixed Use:
 - A grocery store is needed east of White Bridge Road along Charlotte Pike/Avenue.
 - Greenery (significantly enhanced landscaping that also serves environmental protection/remediation goals) should be called for as part of commercial development
 - Landscaping maintenance requirements need to be strengthened
 - Develop rain gardens in commercial areas

Districts

- Call for green development
- Utilize innovative pervious paving that includes green areas for parking areas
- Avoid negative impacts on the creeks and other water bodies

Transportation

- Uncover the trolley tracks and put them back into service
- Expand and improve the mass transit system
- Provide more park and ride lots
- Put transportation improvements in place before development
- Provide some form of rail transit
- Provide lanes for express buses on major streets
- A parallel street to Charlotte Pike is needed near White Bridge Road – O'Brien Avenue had been serving this purpose to some degree, but it is undersized and overdeveloped to do so effectively at this time
- No further development should be permitted along the three-lane sections of Charlotte Pike until they are widened
- The traffic bottleneck at I-40 and Charlotte needs to be addressed
- The traffic bottleneck at and near Harding Road and White Bridge Road needs to be addressed
- None of the arterial streets are crossable by pedestrians and this is a major issue that needs to be addressed
- More transportation investments should be required of developers
- New development across from Nashville West will have significant traffic effects on the adjacent Hillwood and West Meade neighborhoods and this needs to be addressed