

Route 2 and 102 Stakeholder Visioning Process
Meeting 2
September 6, 2012 6:00-9:00 pm
Beechwood Senior Center, 44 Beach Street North Kingstown, RI

Meeting Summary

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be in late September (date to be determined) from 6:00-9:00pm at Wickford Middle School.

Meeting Participants: See Appendix A.

Next Steps:

- Jon Reiner – Let people know when the RIDOT roundabout meeting is scheduled
- Peter Flinker – Develop renderings of some different approaches for future visions
- Project Team – Create a map showing the final study area
- Members – Tell Ona about any alternates by 9/14
- Members – Review the Compact Village District Ordinance (on the project website and in your initial packet of materials)
- Landowners in the study area (and other members if you have them) – Send Jon your proposals and designs for your site & the area

Welcome and Introductions

Ona Ferguson, facilitator from the Consensus Building Institute facilitation team welcomed everyone to the meeting and led Stakeholder Group (SHG) introductions. Jeff Zucchi's alternate, Tom Kolling, sat in for Jeff. All materials from this meeting, including presentations, can be found within 10 days of the meeting at <http://www.northkingstown.org/visioning-process-routes-2-and-102>. The SHG approved the draft summary of SHG Meeting 1 with a few typo corrections and the addition of a point about membership in the summary section "Other."

Finalize Operating Procedures, Decision Rule & Geographic Scope

Group Agreement Reached:

- Members approved the Operating Procedures, including Decision Rule.
- Members decided on the geographic study area and area of influence.
- Members generally agreed that the residential area between the study area and Rt 4 should remain residential.

Members approved Operating Procedures as revised by the facilitator after the first meeting, with a few changes:

- Voting members who are absent may designate a SHG colleague to represent them.
- Interest groups are not required to have an alternate.
- All alternates are required to make all meetings and stay up to date on SHG discussions.

Members agreed that the threshold for broad agreement in regards to the decision rule will be 8 out of 11 with at least 2 votes of support each from the business/development and rural/residential groups.

The final report will record where broad agreement was met and where it was not and why. This threshold of agreement will indicate clearly to the Town Council those topics that were widely agreed upon.

Members also finalized the geographic scope of the study area, building on the discussion at meeting 1. They discussed multiple options for what should be inside the study area or inside the area of influence. Jon Reiner tested with the group several times possible agreement of everyone that the area between the study area and Rt 4 along the road should remain residential going forward. No one disagreed. The formal study area will be the parcels currently zoned commercial at the intersection including the Corner Tavern, the Bald Hill Garden Center, Oatley's restaurant, the Schartner Bald Hill Nursery, plus the Rolling Greens application area. The area of influence members want to be sure to also pay attention to includes a half mile radius from the intersection, encompassing all adjacent parcels, extending to include all the parcels along route 102 to route 4. Members will continue to consider broader areas likely to be impacted by what happens at this intersection as well. People briefly discussed that land conserved with deed restriction is fairly permanently protected from development, whereas land that is not zoned commercial could in the future have that zoning changed to allow commercial development. Jon noted that having language in the comprehensive plan from this group indicating what you want to see will likely shape development for the next couple decades, which is the planning horizon of the comprehensive plan.

Physical Suitability and Site Constraints

Peter Flinker, Project Team member from Dodson and Associates, presented the physical limitations of the site and adjacent area. He showed maps of the study area without delineations of property boundaries, considering it all as a unified area. He depicted wetlands, streams, and soils, and briefly discussed that wetlands are protected by state law. These different maps all indicated moisture in the same general places, and Peter noted that it can be difficult to develop in areas with high water tables and especially moist soils. Members observed that there are almost no physical constraints on the study area itself, and noted that there are wetlands and streams in the surrounding areas. A member asked if water is a limiting site constraint, and Peter said that water will be discussed at a future meeting. A member of the public pointed out an area of wetlands, and Peter noted that general maps such as the ones he was showing get made more accurate and specific by surveyors and in development plans.

Current Buildout Capacity

Peter presented maps showing what the study area could look like if built out 100% under current zoning regulations. The maps showed commercial offices, pharmacies, banks and residential developments, with required parking spaces. Peter noted that in reality, if landowners sought to build at this scale, what was shown would likely be a bit more limited due to the planning process and other regulations, but that the character of the development would remain. He described buildout like this as a legal tool to show what could be constructed legally and physically (in terms of scale and type of use) according to today's rules. Members didn't discuss these images much, as they noted that such buildout is unlikely at this time.

Key Interests a Vision Should Strive to Meet

In order to identify the interests (key hopes/desires/needs) that the final vision should meet, Ona presented the group with a list of interests she had heard articulated by participants about this area over time. Members added to the list of interests to make it complete. The following list is the group's full list of (sometimes contradictory) interests that they hope the final vision will achieve, grouped by category:

Character

- Rural/suburban
- Effective transition zone from commercial (Rt. 4) to rural (Exeter)
- Experience as calm, peaceful, nice neighborhood
- Recreational areas to build sense of community
- Small-scale, appropriate commercial, including agricultural businesses
- Appropriate type of development for neighborhood
- Thoughtful village/ more dense (vs. sprawl or strip-mall) commercial
- Good architecture design
- Contained commercial area (not filling in from Rt. 4 to intersection)
- Mixed use (some small commercial, some homes, some agricultural)
- Enhance sense of community for existing residential neighborhoods

Economics / \$ / Taxes

- Positive or neutral impact on taxes
 - Limit added school demand
 - Limit added costs of providing infrastructure (water, sewer, fire, roads)
- Supportive of other Town- or Region-wide investments, not detracting from them
- Economic viability for land owners
- Positive or neutral impact on residential land and property values
- Viable businesses, not empty storefronts
- Good design to improve value of development

Water

- Adequate supply and storage (quantity) for today and the future
 - Human use, including adequate volume and pressure for fire emergency
 - Ecosystem well-being
 - No undue impact on water supply for NK Town-wide
- High quality – provide effective wastewater management/treatment, prevent damage from nitrate loading
- Protect the watershed and aquifer
- Appropriate management of flooding and stormwater
- Appropriate municipal capacity to provide water and water flow

Traffic / Transportation

- Not too congested, able to get onto and off side roads, traffic calming

- Safe movement of people & vehicles
- Bike connector routes, bike friendly
- Pedestrian connector routes, pedestrian friendly
- Appropriate traffic management between here and Rt 4 (and further)
- Move high volume of traffic through area safely
- Reduction of through traffic
- Coordination with RI DOT, State, MBTA transportation initiatives
- Address summer traffic

Other

- Other environmental issues
 - Protective of sensitive resources like slopes, wetlands
 - Protect some open space, build upon protected open space
- Broad community issues and goals
 - Positive or neutral impact on
 - Other areas in North Kingstown, including Post Road
 - Exeter
 - Supports community goals of (e.g. the bond to protect open space)
 - North Kingstown
 - Exeter
- Approvable by Statewide Planning
- Makes sensible growth possible, fair decision process
- Evidence-based, uses numbers when possible
- Provide public recreational opportunities, e.g. Golf course

While discussing the list of interests, members shared some related thoughts. Someone noted the importance of exploring the relationship between the newly opened Wickford Junction train station and the study area. Someone noted that it is possible to safely moving traffic through the intersection while doing traffic calming, and someone highlighted the challenge of slowing traffic while trying to move vehicles through efficiently. People mentioned that traffic in the summertime is exceedingly heavy in the study area because of people going to the beach.

Suggestions for What to Develop for Meeting 3

Members brainstormed ideas for visual aides they would like to see for the study area at the next SHG meeting. The Project Team was asked to find or create, ideally showing some street-view images:

- Case studies, photographs and and examples of efforts to guide growth as intended from this region (e.g. South County Commons mixed use development) and from elsewhere.
- Renderings or images of
 - Destination type development, with small businesses and a character appropriate to the study area, with recreational opportunities and pedestrian connectors.
 - Small-scale commercial development with management of through traffic.
 - The proposals by and ideas of the current property owners for their sites.
 - A way to visualize the area as a gateway to Exeter and as a gateway to South County.
 - Likely development patterns or approaches (not theoretical ones that are unlikely here).

- Transfer of development rights (TDR) to preserve Exeter land, e.g. Morris Farm.
- Images that help the group look at site-based decisions in context, and not individually
- Fiscal impacts of the current buildout scenario: school impacts, infrastructure and taxes.
- Program elements to consider: Small scale agricultural commercial uses appropriate to this area (e.g. farmers markets), Residential, Recreational, Open space, Traffic management / roadways.

Public Comment

The facilitator reminded the public that they are welcome to contact those on the SHG who represent them or their interests, noting that the SHG contact list is now public. Chet Matteson, owner of the Corner Tavern, indicated that he understands the need to create places that are pleasing to the eye, said he wants to manage a great restaurant, and asked that his parcel not be down zoned to residential, but kept as general business.

Other

The RIDOT public meeting is scheduled on October 1st either at 6 or 7pm. It will discuss the DOT's intention for a round a bout at the study area intersection.

Stakeholder Group Business

Upcoming Events – The next SHG meeting, scheduled for September 24, conflicts with a Town Council Meeting. Ona will test different dates that week and select the date that works the best for everyone. She will also start to work on scheduling the public workshops. Ona will start working with resident representatives soon to plan the resident focus group.

Research Project - Ona said that MIT graduate student Rob Goodspeed is interested in conducting research during the public workshops about how visual tools help the community visioning process. He will present his proposal at the next SHG meeting, for members to decide whether it is workable.

The meeting adjourned at 8:43 pm.

APPENDIX A: Meeting Participants

Stakeholder Group Member & Alternates Present

Alternates are noted with an asterix

Michael Baker
Ahren Cohen
Frank Digregorio
Paul Dion
Mark Hawkins
Thomas Kolling* (for Jeff Zucchi)
Kevin Maloney
John Nosatch
Vaughn Oatley
Colin O’Sullivan
Martha Pugh
John A. Patterson
Jonathan Reiner
Rit Schartner
David Schweid

Members absent

Meg Kerr
Jeff Zucchi

Project Team & NK Planning Dept. Staff

Ona Ferguson
Peter Flinker
Becky Lamond
Jared Weaver

Also in Attendance (this list is incomplete)

Jerry Duffy
Jim Ganung
Sue Licardi
Albert Lyons
Ron Mann
Chet Matteson
Alice O’Sullivan
Jack Revans
David Samson
Marie Samson
Rich Schartner (Jr)
Skip [Last Name?]