

3RD AND 4TH STREET IMPROVEMENTS PLAN
STAKEHOLDER & PUBLIC OUTREACH



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INTRODUCTION

To begin the public outreach process the 3rd and 4th Street Improvements team identified previous and ongoing studies within the study area. Due to the strong linkage between transportation and economic development, as well as the overlapping timeframes of the two studies, the 3rd and 4th Street Improvements team partnered with a companion study being undertaken by the River City Company to examine land use and economic development opportunities in a broader corridor along 3rd and 4th Streets.

The purpose of the study was to optimize the potential for growth and development of businesses, cultural, medical, and educational institutions, as well as mixed-uses along the corridor. The planning and economic analysis was intended to focus on the creation of a

vibrant zone of economic growth defined by an active business community with an emphasis on health, wellness, and education, good neighborhoods, and a strong sense of place.

One of the objectives of both projects was to reach a wide variety of neighborhood residents, property and business owners, community groups, commuters, and other stakeholders with a vested interest in the project area. To accomplish this objective, the two project teams combined public outreach efforts within the combined study corridor to achieve the desired input and involvement of stakeholders. Public and stakeholder outreach and engagement opportunities were implemented to create enthusiasm and build consensus among key stakeholders within the corridor and the broader study area.

Introductory Stakeholder Meetings

Key stakeholders for the project were identified and individual meetings were undertaken in a group or one-on-one setting to introduce the project to these stakeholders. These stakeholders (listed in the box to the right) included major property owners in the corridor and other companies or agencies having an interest in transportation and development.

Stakeholders

- University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (Staff, Faculty, and Students)
- UT Medical Center
- Erlanger Health System
- Siskin Hospital for Physical Rehabilitation
- Health Department
- Chattanooga School for the Arts and Sciences
- River City Company
- The Benwood Foundation
- Lyndhurst Foundation
- Chattanooga Urban Design Studio
- Public Art Chattanooga
- Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency
- Chattanooga Area Regional Transportation Authority (ARTA)
- Chattanooga Bicycle Transit System
- Unum
- The Chattanooga Zoo
- Blood Assurance
- Walk2Campus Properties
- Chattanooga Housing Authority
- Chattanooga City Council
- Hamilton County Commission
- Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce
- The Challenger Center
- The Rowing Center
- Religious Organizations within the study area (First Centenary, First Church of Christ, Scientist, Mizpah Congregation, and First Presbyterian)
- Neighborhood Associations within the study area (Fort Wood Neighborhood, Lindsay Court, Battery Lane Condos, and Waterchase Condos)
- TWH Architects
- Tennessee Department of Transportation



STAKEHOLDER CHARRETTE AND PUBLIC MEETING

As part of the project, a three-day stakeholder charrette was held from Tuesday, September 29 through Thursday, October 1, 2015. Throughout the three days, groups of stakeholders met with members of the planning and urban design team as part of the effort to listen and gather information from those who live, work, and play in the study area.

A total of 62 stakeholder representatives participated in the three-day charrette. At the conclusion of the charrette, a public meeting was held to gather additional input from interested parties. A total of 41 people participated in the public meeting.

Highlights from the charrette included engaging the public and stakeholders in identifying issues, confirming the goals and objectives, and purpose and need for the study area, as well as how the vision for the project connects to broader community goals.

During the charrette process, the project team provided informational handouts, gave a brief introductory presentation, and asked three general questions:

- What are the study area's strengths?
- What are the study area's weaknesses?
- What and where are areas of opportunity?

The team invited discussion with and among the stakeholders, took notes, and provided the group with colored dots to identify their responses to the above three questions (strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities) on aerial maps (Figures 3-1, 3-2 and 3-3).

The stakeholders and public who participated in the individual or group meetings indicated that they liked the general study area and its proximity to the river, downtown, as well as the Chattanooga Zoo. Participants also shared that they often use the Tennessee Riverwalk and its' connection to the Tennessee River, the Hunter Museum of American Art, and the downtown area (shops and restaurants).

A majority of the participants did not like the intersection (fly over) in front of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. They shared that the area is confusing and has little signage to direct people to the university, as well as the Siskin and Erlanger medical district. In addition, emergency vehicles do not have direct access to the medical center.

It was also noted by most of the individuals and groups that parking in the area is an issue. Parking in the general study area (particularly near the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga) has been difficult in recent years due to continued growth and expansion of the university.

In general, participants would like to see more connections (particularly to the Tennessee River), wayfinding signs and more pedestrian-friendly streets.



Figure 3-1. Study Area Strengths



Figure 3-2. Study Area Weaknesses



Figure 3-3. Study Area Opportunities

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DESIGN CHARRETTE AND PUBLIC MEETING

As a result of the input received during the initial stakeholder meetings, as well as the stakeholder charrette and public meeting, the 3rd and 4th Street Improvements team developed three concepts for transportation improvements to transform the 3rd and 4th Street corridor:

- Interconnected Grid Intersection
- Major Intersection
- Roundabout

To gather input on these initial concepts, the project team conducted a three-day design charrette from Tuesday, November 17 through Thursday, November 19, 2015. Throughout the three days, the project team met with stakeholders to present the concepts. A total of 72 stakeholder representatives participated in the charrette process.

Both consultant teams worked cooperatively over the three days to refine designs and test new designs for the potential transportation concepts and land use recommendations in response to stakeholder feedback. At the conclusion of the three-day design charrette the concepts and ideas that were generated and refined throughout the week were presented during a public meeting. A total of 53 people participated in the public meeting.

The design charrette and public meeting provided an opportunity for the stakeholders and public to share their thoughts and provide feedback on the preliminary urban and transportation design concepts for the project.

Overall, participants were very receptive and provided positive feedback to all three conceptual designs as well as the individual design concepts (i.e., one-way to two-way roadway conversion, converting grade separations to at-grade intersections, the removal of 3rd Street and slip ramp to Battery Lane, and extending Palmetto Street to connect with Riverfront Parkway).

While a great deal of feedback was received, there was not a clear choice for a preferred design concept from the public outreach process. However, the stakeholders and public did provide an overwhelming amount of support for the project. All three approaches support the public's desire for a pedestrian-friendly concept that would create more roadway connections and address existing wayfinding issues.

As the overall project moves forward, the 3rd and 4th Street Improvements team will conduct further study on the stakeholder / public feedback of the preliminary design concepts that received the most attention from the stakeholders and public, including:

- The intersection concept at Mabel Street received some comments that the proposed at-grade intersection may not be as pedestrian-friendly as the existing separated overpass.
- The Palmetto extension received comments pertaining to the potential impact to adjacent properties, traffic congestion, as well as safety concerns.
- The four-lane typical section for 4th Street also received comments about pedestrian safety and the potential to divide the study area.

