

# South Knoll Area Neighborhood Plan

## Neighborhood Resource Team Discussion Notes

### Meeting # 5 – April 2, 2013

#### Pre-meeting comments

- Drove home down Glade/Haines...no parked cars on the street. This is what it used to be. At the end of the meeting, we came to the conclusion of preventing parking from 7a-7p. Where is that? *(If parking removal is wanted for safety/character, Councilwoman Brick said that it is something that could be suggested.)*
- General safety/crime is an issue with on-street parking.
- How can I get parking removed on MY street? *(If the vast majority were in agreement, it is something that could be brought before Council on its own. That would be a parking removal for character reasons.)*

**NRT Recommendation – Neighborhood Plan should set the stage so that streets or areas could bring requests forward to Council to remove parking for character reasons on specific streets.**

- Get residents better organized. Directly relates to issue of parking.

**NRT Recommendation – the Neighborhood Plan should include a better description of where we would like parking removed, block-by-block in South Knoll.**

#### Handouts:

- NRT Mtg #4 notes
- Why do Neighborhood Planning
- Organization of Neighborhood Plan
- Plan elements (chapters)
- Goal worksheet
- Goals cheat sheet
- Draft strategies

**Updates Since last meeting** – everything on the web

**Where we are in the process** – plan development

#### VISIONING

A couple of questions to begin the discussion.

-What about the character of South Knoll do you want to protect?

- Want to keep it family-friendly.
- Single-family residential with “real” families living in them.
- Green neighborhood with mature trees and many houses have small plots of forests as part of their yard. Over-arching concern of student renters, in past few years, students have not

maintained trees, so many have died and many lots full of dead trees – wooded areas in jeopardy.

- Maintained yards.
- Southside lost. Better come up with ideas that have more teeth. South Knoll area's homes are from 1960 on. The turnover is getting to the point that the property values are not going to be worth it and they will be torn down to build 2-story homes with parking pads in the front.
- Ambiance of maintaining trees
- Maintenance of property.
- South Knoll and A&M Consol are keys of neighborhood. Worried that families are leaving and students won't be going to school.
- Only neighborhood that you can walk to elementary, middle school, high school, and college.
- Walking is key. Can get everywhere. Don't have a lot of sidewalks and walking in streets, which should be ok, but getting to the point that it isn't because of people driving too fast through the neighborhood.
- Architecture within neighborhood – eclectic, varied – not full of “stock” houses.
- Get more value for money because of the size of the houses and sizes of bedrooms and lots.
- Large lots.
- Is it feasible to put an overlay that would limit the type of structures that can be built on a lot? Teardowns rebuilt as 4/4 with parking areas – is this something the City could put in place to limit? *(Some things that could be limited as a character overlay option – picking and choosing things that create character in your area and restricting. We're not getting into the inside of the house.)*

**NRT Recommendation – beyond what the parking task force recommended (50% of front yard green) should be a sliding scale related to the size of lot/frontage to ensure that some percentage of the front yard is grass. With larger lots in the neighborhood, 50% may be TOO MUCH pavement.**

- Is there a way to require homes to be brick? *(Most likely not. Would limit affordability.)*

-What type of change in character do you desire? (may be a collection of descriptive words)

- Less on-street parking.
- Back to Single-family – real families
- 80% green yard
- Family-oriented living
- Maintain/promote single-family, but how much do we have to maintain? Re-establish families.
- Encourage new, young families to move in to neighborhood. When older couples move out, we want young couples or middle-aged couples to move in.
- Doesn't look like the demographic is going to change. If students are going to stay, what can we do to change it? Code Enforcement?
- Some streets are all rental properties. If we propose change, how do we grandfather the properties? We can't assume everything is going to be the way we want it, so we need to deal with what we have and what won't change.

-What amenities are families looking for?

- Aren't wanting to go to South Knoll School because of perception that it's not a good school.
- SK Elementary looks old so families didn't want kids to go there.
- Children can walk to school.
- Good elementary schools.
- Proximity to schools.
- Sidewalks
- Corner of Hondo/SW Pkwy is student rentals. Some way that families could be clued in to buy that house? (Neighbors can encourage buying. City can't promote one buyer over another.)
- What makes it family-friendly isn't that different than renter-friendly. (sidewalks, bike lanes, etc.)
- Parks and trails
- Safe bicycle facilities
- Community pool
- Encourage schools to allow for children to play on playgrounds after hours.

**NRT Recommendation: need to retain access to CSISD facilities after school hours to use as neighborhood park amenity. promote and maintain**

- Plans to renovate arboretum? So many branches down that you can't walk through it. (Plans for a trail...)

**NRT Recommendation: The arboretum needs to be cleaned up.**

- Can we have a discussion about improvements of the parks? If we reach out to residents, there could be some suggestions about how to enhance them. *(We can, but not sure how to engage the public at this point when we've asked that question. Each park will have its own master plan at some point.)*
- Need organized and connected neighborhood - Block captains.
- Block groups end up bringing neighbors together. National Night Out? Block parties?

**NRT Recommendation – promote neighborhood organization and neighborhood activities.**

- Through this process, gotten to know neighbors.

-What does neighborhood integrity mean to you?

*(We've heard – "family friendly" is desired)* Think about what amenities you think that families are looking for when they are deciding where to live.

## **GOALS**

Talked briefly about the goal for the South Knoll Area in 3 broad areas: Community Character & Neighborhood Integrity, Mobility, and Public Facilities & Services.

Each Plan chapter will have an overall (general) goal – with a number of strategies and then some specific action items that are intended to work toward the goal for the neighborhood. (reference hand out)

**Community Character & Neighborhood Integrity:** Here is what we have heard through the process:

For discussion – to get you started...

- Family-friendly
- Enhanced appeal to families
- Preserved character
- Long-term viability/preservation of what's left/restoration of what it was created to be
  - Steps towards a direction that promotes a more family-oriented lifestyle, higher expectations of maintenance, parking restrictions – students will stop renting if inconvenient. When can't get the money that want for income properties, families will return.
- *Preserved development pattern (larger lot)*
- *Reduced character impact of rental houses in the neighborhood.*
- *Effective neighborhood organizations*
- *Character of schools and parks*
- *Rental homes would be assumed to put more strain on the infrastructure. Can an additional fee or tax be put on them? No.*
- *Parking restrictions*
  - *Expansions to driveways limited to a certain area (because existing is grandfathered)*
- *Green/greenery*
  - *Landscape maintenance*
- *Walkability*
- *Location (close to A&M, schools, shopping, park, public services)*
- *Safety*
- *Biking*
- *Pro-active property maintenance and code enforcement*
  - City taking proactive measure? Some meetings have mentioned that Code is shifting from proactive to reactive. (Proactive – able to drive down each street and identify each code issue or once a month can look at each area? Don't want to tell on neighbors anymore and want Code to take care of it?) Don't want residents to have to tell others what they should do and shouldn't do.
  - Been implied that the citizens are supposed to report code violations. Got reaction that City needs to take action because they're reactive based on who you are and who you know. (Do have a reactive system, but not 'who you are and who you know'.) "I call and nothing happens." Talked to a Council person and the City called about problem. Reinforced the 'who you are and who you know'. (If you talk to a Council person, then they'll probably talk to someone to get it fixed. See-Click-Fix.)
  - Can't dump everything on City to take care of all problems. Need to promote enhanced communication to help residents solve problems in their own area.
  - Need to get together with students that move in to get to know them as a community.
  - **Recommendation – encourage communication.**
  - Statistics about code violations? Impression that you complain and nothing gets done.

- If going to squeal on neighbor, need to know if it was worth it.
- Need to know what things are code violations. Example – broken aluminum furniture next to front door.
- Address problem of problem of code enforcement of closing the loop? (Yes, this is something that can be included in plan. Issues that might not be violations still make the area more obvious of a student area.)

#### **MOBILITY –**

- Safe street network
- Improve off-road multi-modal
- Context sensitive streets around schools
- Safe routes to schools
- Accommodates multiple modes of transportation while retaining the character and integrity of the neighborhood
- Enhance the vehicular mobility of the arterial and major collectors (Holleman,...). Long-term traffic demands are only going to increase. This is a way to sell the family-oriented character. Rental properties generate a lot more traffic than families do. If our neighborhood continues to grow in a rental-oriented character, a significant infrastructure upgrade will be necessary to be maintained. If we can enhance single-family orientation, that would decrease the demand and also make it so that people will prefer to drive on the major roads (Anderson, SW Pkwy, Holleman, Welsh, 2818, Wellborn) to carry the bulk of the traffic, otherwise cars go through Glade, Guadalupe, etc. Neighborhood cut-through traffic happens with people that know the short-cuts or people that don't want to be stuck in the congestion.
- Keep Dexter at Gabbard Park blocked off.
- Enhance capacity of Holleman Drive for next 30 years.
- (Councilwoman Brick – is it possible that certain neighborhoods with higher rental registrations have higher fees? Make areas mostly rentals, so a reverse impact fee. Don't know if it's a possibility. One way to control problems is to make it more expensive to have rental properties.)
  - Use statistics to show the need.
- Sidewalks – don't want to promote on every street. Where do we really NEED them? Rank from 1-10. Need to prioritize where sidewalks will be built. (Sidewalk Master Plan adopted in 2010. Align with safe routes to schools and parks.)
  - Hondo
- Circle drive at South Knoll Elementary (School district would address that. Little say in what the school district does.)
- Continuity of bike routes.
- Within neighborhoods, biking is fine, but riding across larger streets like 2818 and Rio Grande, not safe. Getting across barriers of creeks and winding roads, look for a way to make the routes faster.
- Buttons on 2818 for crossing aren't accessible.
- Signage for elementary schools. Educate drivers where there are concentrations of children.

- Berkley put up signs that say “School has started again” at the beginning of each new school year.
- Integrating the transient population to let them know what’s there and what we have. May be a higher level of respect for what is here.
- Improvements for how bike routes are physically identified. Some curb identification or sharrows?
  - Sign underneath designation with arrow and text “to Anderson”/”to Dexter”.
  - QR Code for bike route information (bike map) on signs.

**NRT Recommendation: improved bike route signage to show linkages.**

- Rio Grande has one side of a bike lane.
- More traffic enforcement – organize PD in other areas instead of just SW Pkwy around South Knoll Elementary.
- Study Pedestrian movement at intersections.

**PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES-**

- Neighborhood Identification - (through signage, parks, etc.)
  - Entrance to Lawyer Pl and Shadowood, have pinkish-beige brick that is in disrepair, neighbors have talked about fixing it. Residents are responsible for it. Do something where there is a barrier, but this part of Southwest Pkwy may be the only area that is appropriate.
- Clean and well maintained public spaces
  - Update Arboretum
  - Put sign up on SW Park to explore nature
- Safe
- Pro-active Code Enforcement
- Education for residents on Codes, etc.
- Glade speed monitor program (like Eastgate’s)
- Street lighting
- Community message board
  - Bee Creek trail
  - South Knoll
  - SW Park Church
  - Kiosk at Gabbard

**STRATEGIES** – big picture ways to try to reach your goals.

*(We’ve heard – more Code Enforcement needed)* Think about what the key violations are that are detracting from the neighborhood. What do you wish that we could enforce that we may not have rules for? Is it parking? Tall grass? If we had additional resources, where would you focus them? How would you protect a family character?

**Next meeting – Tuesday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>.**

We’ll be discussing PARKING and PARK NEEDS!