

**Summary Responses and Comments**  
**E John St/Campus Ridge Rd Small Area Plan**  
**Initial Public Input Meeting**  
**December 1, 2015**

On Tuesday December 1, interested property owners and citizens participated in a public input session about the geographic area on both sides of E John Street between I-485 and the Mecklenburg-Union County line, extending northeast to the CSX rail line. This area is generally lightly developed, does not currently have easy access to public utilities, and has limited streets and heavy through traffic along E John Street. The largest developed site within the area today is a Duke Energy substation. Road widening is expected to be completed within the next decade along E John Street, and a new alignment of Campus Ridge Road, now under construction, will become an extension of McKee Road. When public utilities are in place, this area will experience much greater growth pressure. The Town of Matthews is therefore conducting a study now to prepare land use and development policies and action plans for the area.

During the December 1 drop-in session, participants were asked to visit several “stations” around the room. In each station there were questions or issues raised, and participants’ answers were collected. Those responses – checkmarks, ratings, comments, etc. – have been compiled here in summary form. No responses are identified here as coming from any individual.

# Station 1

## Check-In Table

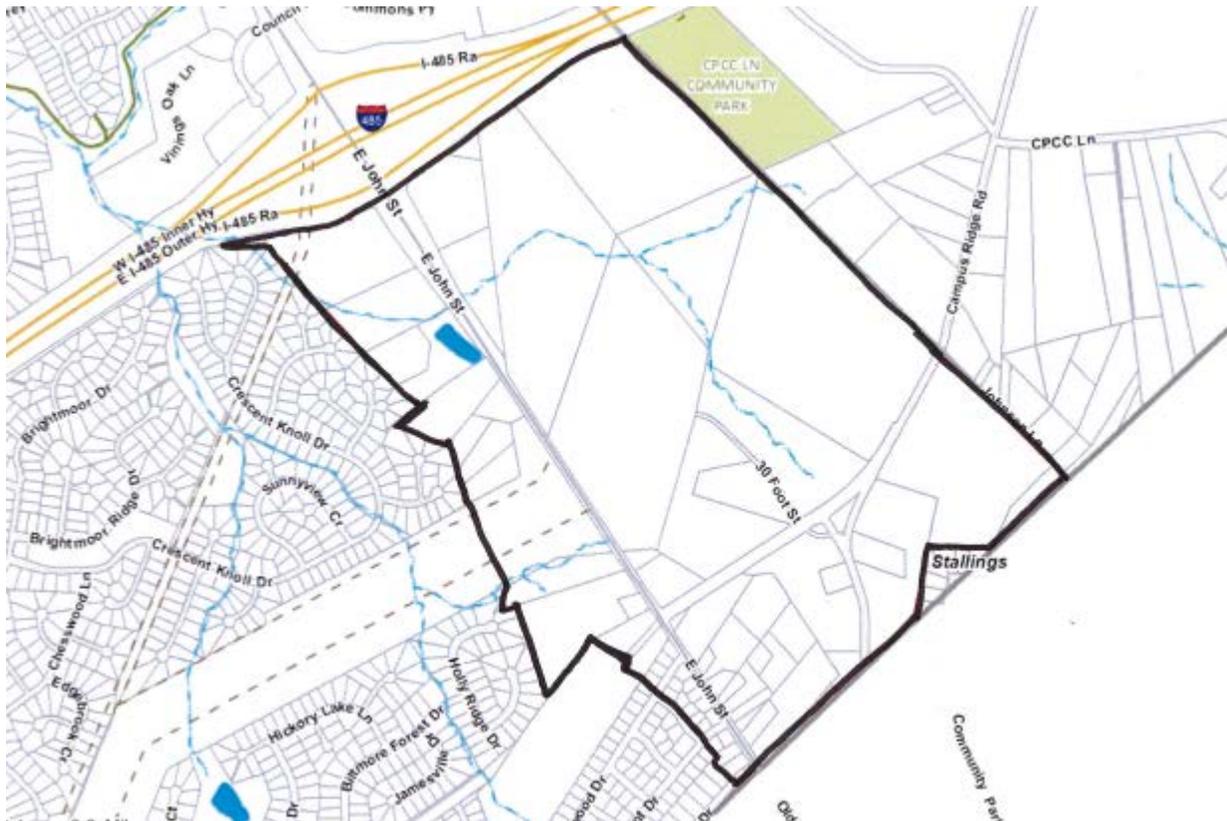
### General Connection to the Study Area

Summary of Statements Made During Public Input Session on  
December 1, 2015

As attendees arrived for the public input session on December 1, 2015, they were asked to mark on a map of the study area how they were connected to the land. People were able to indicate more than one response if they so chose, and some attendees did not participate at this station.

The responses provided are as follows:

- Own property in the designated study area: 15
- Work within the study area: 7
- Commute through the study area: 15
- Have an interest in the general area: 26



# **Station 2A**

## **Mobility**

### **Street/Pedestrian/Bike Network**

Summary of Statements Made During Public Input Session on  
December 1, 2015

Participants were asked to imagine how people might most conveniently travel through this area once it is developed, and then indicate what types of public infrastructure improvements might best suit the area. The suggested travel elements were listed as a written description and in an illustrative diagram, and offered ways for people to walk, bicycle, or drive within and through the study area. Attendees were requested to give each one a ranking as to its anticipated benefit to the study area, upon development.

Some of the elements listed were quite common and easily envisioned in attendee's minds, such as sidewalks and cul-de-sac streets. Others are not common in local daily travel habits and were more difficult for participants to picture in their minds for this area.

\* The public infrastructure improvements most favorably received -- indicated as "Definitely needed" or "Would be great here" -- were pedestrian facilities: greenways/multi-use paths (36) and sidewalks (31).

\* The improvements most often marked as "Not important" were above-ground passageways between buildings (12), and limiting cars to the outer boundaries of new development (11).

\* Although the above-two less desirable design elements are not generally found in Matthews today, one very common element was also marked as unimportant: cul-de-sac streets (10).

\* All three of these with higher "Not important" rankings had an equal number of responses that they would be desirable ("Definitely needed" or "Would be great").

\* The one design element which elicited the widest diversity of opinions was an internal loop road through all new development.

Below are the total rankings received for each public infrastructure improvement listed:

**How can a travel network fit this area?**

**Definitely Needed**

**Would be Great Here Here**

**Probably Helpful Here**

**Not Important**

**Don't Know/ Unsure**

Cul-de-sac streets

7

3

6

10

4



Grid streets

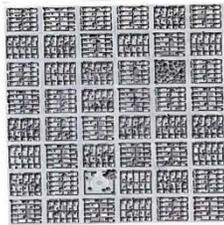
8

9

7

6

1



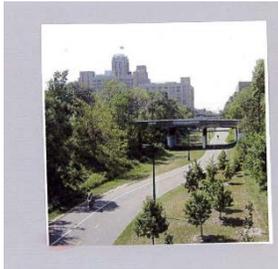
Greenway or multi-use paths

19

17

4

1

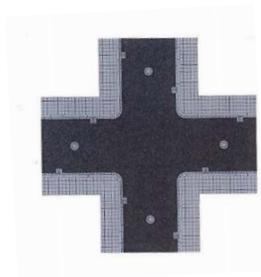


sidewalks beside streets

20

11

4



above ground  
protected walkways  
connecting buildings  
directly

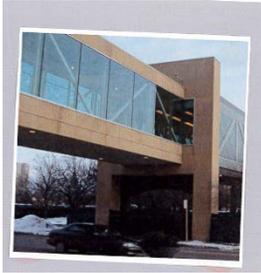
6

3

8

12

5



Internal loop road

2

7

8

5

9



Limited car access to  
exterior only, then  
walking/biking and  
internal streetcar  
within interior

2

8

6

11

5



Off-road neighborhood  
connectors (bike/ped)

14

9

6

3



Central roundabout  
with spoke streets

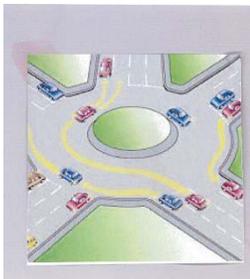
6

7

8

9

2



## **Station 2B Mobility Railroad**

Summary of Statements Made During Public Input Session on  
December 1, 2015

Attendees were asked to think about how the existing rail line impacts the study area, from the perspectives of different individuals:

current property owners;  
future business owners; and  
future residents,

as well as how it affects the greater Matthews community.

\* In all situations, attendees mentioned the noise factor as a negative, and the potential for moving goods or people as a positive. One comment stated the railroad is an “iconic image”.

\* When picturing themselves as current property owners in the area near the rail line, some attendees commented on the potential for commercial, but not residential, development adjacent to the tracks.

\* When envisioning the perspective of future businesses in the study area, attendees commented they could see businesses, restaurants, and employment-generating uses nearby.

\* When thinking about future residents nearby, attendees said the railroad tracks could limit accessibility through the area.

Here are the comments received:

### **What are the benefits and detriments of the railroad track location to the entire Matthews Community:**

- Railroad would bring jobs.
- Increase property values. Increased foot traffic. Increased business opportunities.
- Great access point for future businesses. More noise pollution/potential traffic back up if train is operated poorly.
- Iconic image to leverage.
- Traffic back up at railroad intersections.
- Positive for jobs and travel. Negative for noise.
- Potentially beneficial for transporting goods.
- Negative is noise. Positive is light rail.
- Quaint Downtown charm and nostalgia.

- Progressive image/message.
- Positive- Potential mode of transportation. Negative- noise, possible pollutant, limits potential development.
- The railroad is going to be here. Can't really change.
- Traffic.
- Very important for businesses located there. Benefit to Matthews community. Benefit to current and future residents.
- Could facilitate light rail to downtown Charlotte. Reduce traffic to downtown.
- To get to downtown Charlotte.
- Trail along tracks.
- Traffic.
- Great area for shopping center.
- Moving people over from CLT to Matthews community.
- Efficient access to Uptown.
- Might attract people or a museum of trains.
- Noise pollution. Traffic congestion.
- A benefit if CSX would allow passenger rail either on their track or ROW.

**What are the benefits and detriments of the railroad track location to future businesses that may locate here:**

- Bring in more business.
- Positive benefit for traffic and development. Noise could be an issue. Mostly a benefit.
- Negative-Noise. Positive-Travel for out of towners.
- Eateries along the railroad.
- Future business to the area could help boost the Matthews economy.
- Transporting resources and final products to and from the place of production.
- Positive- more jobs.
- Negative- noise. Positive- maybe low property value due to proximity to tracks, offering low startup costs.
- Light rail could facilitate business or restaurants.
- Potential positive economic impact- jobs, access to transportation.
- I don't see CSX being a benefit to new business in the context of a mixed use development.
- Aesthetics. Noise.
- Closer to South Charlotte residential with easy access to Uptown business opportunities.
- Great place for future business but NOT homes due to noise.

**What are the benefits and detriments of the railroad track location to current property owners:**

- Railroad is what you make of it.
- As long as use of rail to light rail for Ped use into Charlotte.
- Noise.
- Negative-More traffic. Positive-More jobs.
- Loud, noisy for those near the railroad tracks; traffic congestion if train is operated/managed poorly.
- Noise.
- I think it could help people get downtown and not sit in traffic.
- Noisy.
- Can't be cargo rail if residential in front.

- As a property owner on railroad, I view railroad as an attribute for commercial development.
- Downtown and corridor property value increases.
- We like the sound.
- Great for future if commuter. Otherwise, neutral.
- Ok as is. Leave as is.
- Improve roads. Help with traffic.
- It could be good if there could be used for also additional use. Good home to railroad.
- Noise and visually unappealing.
- Extensions could be negative. Noise pollution. Safety.
- Negative- noise. Positive- travel.

**What are the benefits and detriments of the railroad track location to future residents:**

- Safety. Transportation. Jobs.
- Positive-travel, jobs. Negative- noise.
- Could be used for transportation to and from Charlotte.
- Allows residents shopping area.
- Need for road and utility crossings at railroad.
- Would like transportation to get to downtown Charlotte.
- Negative-train noise. Positive- more public transportation.
- Unsafe. Noisy. Potential pollution. Positive is possible transportation.
- Jobs for future residents.
- Connector to Uptown. Could be nice for younger residents.
- Passenger rail would attract future residents and new development.
- Hinders road and neighborhood connectivity.

## **Station 2C Mobility Public Transportation**

Summary of Preferences Given During Public Input Session on  
December 1, 2015

The study area today does not have general access to public transportation. We asked attendees to the December 1, 2015 session to indicate their preferences about a variety of modes of public transportation that could be integrated into the study area.

\* The results show that citizens feel they would be comfortable having one mode of public transportation through the study area that they are used to in Charlotte. "Light rail" received the greatest number of "Like" checkmarks from attendees. Light rail actually generated the greatest number of responses, while receiving one of the lowest "Dislike" totals. Tied for second highest in the "Like" column are "Light rail with bus feeder" and "Commuter rail".

\* These preferences were based on photographs of various modes of public transit without written descriptions, so it is not possible to fully determine what citizens may have been considering when they provided their assessments. Since the study area has an active freight rail track already in place, it is possible citizens could envision using the same rail corridor for passenger travel.

\* Attendees were not favorable to some futuristic modes. "Maglev bullet trains" received the greatest number of "Dislike" checkmarks. "Modern street car" received the second most "Dislike" checks, followed by "Monorail".

\* Citizens attending the session were evenly split between "Like" and "Dislike" on "Traditional bus" and "Traditional street car".

Actual results are:

### Public Transportation Preferences

<u>Mode</u>	<u>Like</u>	<u>Dislike</u>
Bus Rapid Transit	16	10
Maglev Bullet Train	1	20
Modern Street Car	6	17
Light Rail with Feeder Bus	20	6
Light Rail	32	4
Traditional Street Car	13	14
Monorail	9	15
Commuter Rail	20	3
Traditional Bus	14	14

## **Station 3**

### **Ideal Build-Out Preferences**

Summary of Statements Made During Public Input Session on  
December 1, 2015

Four groups of photos were provided and participants were asked to give their opinion on whether they felt each photo could be appropriate for the study area's future development or not. The four categories included: 1) residential styles, from traditional detached houses to higher density and modern multi-family structures; 2) commercial and mixed use buildings and streetscapes; 3) business/employment based settings including industrial, warehousing, and offices; and 4) styles of open green space and parks. It is understood that photos incorporating "activity" – people and vehicles – will generally be perceived as more visually interesting and inviting, so the three structure-focused categories utilized photos without these extra elements, detailing instead the buildings, grounds, and surrounding public use areas.

#### **Residential Development Preferences**

Attendees were presented with 12 images portraying different styles of housing including single family, apartments, townhomes and duplexes.

- \* The images with the highest scores were predominately brick and were of more traditional styles.
- \* The images that had the most negative feedback were more modern in style. Many of the images with negative reviews also showed visible garages. Both townhomes and single family homes that were designed with forward facing garages scored poorly.
- \* The images that showed the most green space and tree lined streets had some of the highest scores.
- \* There was no clear direction in terms of preference for actual housing styles with single family, attached pinwheel condos, townhomes and mixed-use scoring well.

The percentage shown in the upper right corner of each image indicates how well the image was received, with actual totals given below.

## Forms of Development

### Residential Development Styles



Like 5

Dislike 19



Like 13

Dislike 13



Like 27

Dislike 4



Like 20

Dislike 9



Like 3

Dislike 24



Like 9

Dislike 16



Like 7

Dislike 20



Like 18

Dislike 4



Like 3

Dislike 24



Like 16

Dislike 27



Like 4

Dislike 24



Like 17

Dislike 31

### Commercial and Mixed Use Development Preferences

Attendees were presented with 12 images representing different styles of general commercial and mixed-use development.

\* The images that scored the best were generally those that portrayed a walkable atmosphere with trees and seating areas.

\* Although images of a more urban style fared well, building heights of about 3 or 4 stories or less were preferred.

\* Standard suburban development, with parking located in front of the building, scored very poorly.

\* A heavy emphasis appears to be placed on provision of quality amenities in public spaces. For instance, there are several images that scored well that have plentiful seating, tables with umbrellas and street trees. However, images that were fairly austere, such as the one showing an unadorned table with built-in seating and clean concrete sidewalks scored poorly.

The percentage shown in the upper right corner of each image indicates how well liked the image was. Actual total checkmarks indicating participants liked or dislike each photo are given below.

### Forms of Development

#### Commercial and Mixed Use



70%

Like 17 Dislike 7



58%

Like 14 Dislike 10



90%

Like 28 Dislike 3



68%

Like 19 Dislike 9



65%

Like 15 Dislike 8



7%

Like 2 Dislike 26



68%

Like 19 Dislike 28



52%

Like 11 Dislike 10



30%

Like 8 Dislike 18



42%

Like 11 Dislike 15



23%

Like 5 Dislike 17



80%

Like 20 Dislike 5

## **Industrial, Warehousing, and Office Development Preferences**

The feedback in this land use category was perhaps the most difficult to analyze. Preferences were distinctly different for industrial/warehousing images and for office sites. In retrospect, the two uses should not have been displayed together as office development is generally more visible to the public and therefore its design is more attentive to visual details than warehousing and industrial spaces.

\* While industrial buildings scored poorly, it is worth noting that industrial areas are a critical component of an economically viable and diverse employment-healthy community. An emphasis should be placed on both architecture and proper location.

\* Office buildings ranging from two to seven stories scored well with those featuring the most green space and landscaping scoring best.

\* The images with the highest scores featured decorative walking bridges, green plazas and numerous trees.

The percentage in the upper right hand corner of each image below indicates how well liked the image was, with actual total checkmarks listed below.

## Forms of Development

### Industrial, Warehousing and Office Development



27%

Like 7 Dislike 19



0%

Like 0 Dislike 30



0%

Like 0 Dislike 25



4%

Like 1 Dislike 24



5%

Like 1 Dislike 22



92%

Like 24 Dislike 2



67%

Like 16 Dislike 24



27%

Like 7 Dislike 19



88%

Like 21 Dislike 3



74%

Like 20 Dislike 7



46%

Like 12 Dislike 14



87%

Like 27 Dislike 4

### Parks and Open Space Preferences

Overall, parks and open space imagery scored well in comparison to other forms of land usage. There were several categories of open space presented for review.

\* The two images of trails located in power line rights-of-way scored very positively. With a large portion of transmission line right-of-way located in or near the study area, this is a positive response.

\* Two images of standard greenways and walkways also scored highly. These images

showed either a well-manicured and well landscaped trail or a more natural greenway setting.

\*Public plazas featured differing levels of interest with those that appeared more active and showing people in the image scoring much higher than empty spaces. One image in particular, an urban plaza designed to look like a pedestrian alley, only featured one negative response, in spite of its lack of in-the-ground landscaping. The plaza features a quality surface treatment that resembles brick pavers, is filled with seating areas, and is “enclosed” by buildings 4 stories in height with a high degree of detail.

\* Another public plaza with plenty of pavement and architectural detail and places to sit or be active did not score as well.

Percentages in the top right corner of each image indicate how well the image was received, with total checkmarks listed below.

# Forms of Development

## Parks, Plazas, Trails and Open Space



Like 29 Dislike 0



Like 20 Dislike 8



Like 30 Dislike 0



Like 11 Dislike 13



Like 11 Dislike 13



Like 24 Dislike 1



Like 21 Dislike 23



Like 21 Dislike 4



Like 18 Dislike 5



Like 27 Dislike 1



Like 18 Dislike 7



Like 23 Dislike 2

## **Station 4**

### **Miscellaneous Comments and Concerns expressed during the “Build-Out Game” Exercise**

Summary of Statements Made During Public Input Session on  
December 1, 2015

- Attendees who were property owners in subdivisions adjacent to the study area were primarily focused on preserving the open space in that area. Most people wanted very little if any development (change) adjacent to their homes and neighborhoods.
- One couple expressed a strong interest in protecting wildlife habitat in the area.
- One couple spoke of their concern for storm water runoff in the area once impervious surfaces were built. They questioned if new development would cause runoff to flood the existing development.
- Several groups did not like the idea of multi-family residential housing being an option for the type of development to locate adjacent to established single-family neighborhoods.
- Several groups had the idea of adding a greenway or bike/pedestrian path that could act as a buffer and connect the existing developments. They would like to see this pathway connect to CPCC Levine and the Sportsplex.
- Some business owners in the study area suggested a mix of uses go in the area (multi-family, general business, office, and institutional).
- Some nonresident property owners wanted to see a mixed use development with greenway connector in the area (similar to the Metropolitan/Sugar Creek Greenway relationship in Charlotte).
- Several concerns were expressed regarding newly generated traffic which would be added to E John St from new development.

## Miscellaneous Written Comments When Leaving Session

Comments Left in Comments Box

December 1, 2015

\* Great opportunity to create something great. Don't limit it to old rules. This can be a major area Matthews can be proud of. Thanks.

\* I would hate to see shopping and busy places bringing in a criminal element behind my home. I would hate to have a lot of noise or something overtopping over my house. It could also destroy the value of my home. Would love green space, parks, etc.

\* Love to see a similar development as  
Baxter Village  
Birkdale Village  
Smart Living Eat/Work/Play

\* It would be wise to consider water and sewer extensions during I-485 and John Street projects to avoid the need to tear up new roads. Plans in this area will significantly affect the town's tax base and future tax revenues.

\* If Matthews is a Tree City and a Bee City, what destroy the green space? Traffic is already congested during peak commute times – adding to this will ruin the small town feel and environment.

\* We have been dealing with surveys and?? Small promises for a long time and nothing has come about. We don't know if we should remodel or if we can get a permit. Fast action would be helpful.

\* I think this is be a big boost to our community. And one more thing, this is going to be awesome!

\* I think it's good!