

Midtown Plaza Area Plan – NW Sub Area Chart Notes

Tuesday April, 23 2013, The Kauffman Foundation

After a brief presentation on project status, and the Vision, Guiding Principles, and public input summary and analysis, the attendees discussed issues and application of the Guiding Principles to the specific geographic area: 31st to 43rd, State Line to Southwest Trafficway. The discussion is generally grouped into 3 topics – Land Use and Urban Design and Transportation.

Land Use and Development:

What Land Use and Development issues are most critical to the future of the North West sub-area?

- The quality of existing development is very important to the character of the area.
- Placement of buildings should be to the street line – it is consistent with traditional urban form.
- We should slow 39th Street through design...this will make it more multi-modal friendly rather than being just an automobile friendly environment.
- The large apartment building at the NE corner of 39th Street and Stateline Road is a concern with some people because they fear it will lead to the demolition of existing buildings that add to the character of the area.
- There is a concern that new development near State Line (KS & MO sides) might take away from the “local” businesses in area and that it might cause tear downs of existing buildings with appropriate scale and uses and replace them national chains and suburban design.
- There is enough density in this portion of the planning area – if density is necessary, it should be concentrated in areas with high vacancies.
- Because KU Medical Center is a given and seems to be expanding, it is essential that discussions between KU, KCMO and KCK occur so that a comprehensive strategy for the area can be created that benefits the local areas.
- The mix of the North Volker Industrial Area is troublesome in relation to existing residential – there must be compatible.
 - Noise, Smells, Pollution
- The new development at 39th and Stateline is very urban compared to the recent suburban developments on 39th that are set back with parking in front. We must stress urban projects or there is danger it could become like 43rd Street.
- Parameters for new development must be established so that everyone knows the rules before starting a project.
- North Volker is trying to downzone property. There are some multi-family projects being talked about and there is fear that there could be “single family” flight from the area....there is enough multi-family in this area already.
- There is a mix of single family and multi-family in the area and we must find a way to continue their co-existence.
- Since it is an older area, the Volker Neighborhood deserves an overlay district to protect its character.

- Can we look at more visual or large scale pictures of what we want the main corridors to look like in 50 years – state line; southwest trafficway (we need images to respond to, similar to Vision Metcalf process.
- 31st Street is a big thoroughfare with lots of development potential that does not get enough attention
- Imagine 39th Street when people are not concerned at all with parking close
 - You may even close it off for pedestrians only – even if occasionally
- Some businesses do struggle due to poor design / development patterns (Chinese Buffet @ 39th and Southwest Trafficway)...it is a suburban development in an urban area
- Scale at street/façade need to be varied (i.e. 39th and State line – Price Bros not appropriate scale for the whole length
- Need to maintain scale / building types for small businesses too.

Transportation:

What specific transportation issues are impacting the North West sub-area and where are they occurring?

- Volker and the KU Medical Campus need more communication between them. KU Medical is seen as being a bad neighbor with their recent expansion efforts because they see the neighborhood as real estate rather than a viable neighborhood.
- Because KU Medical Center is a given and seems to be expanding, it is essential that discussions between KU, KCMO and KCK occur so that a comprehensive strategy for the area can be created that benefits the local areas.
- Speed of traffic is an issue within Volker – can we look at design solutions to the entire system and not just spot fixes – use this to guide PIAC
- No left hand turns on Southwest Trafficway presents circulation problems / how will further development impact this? (i.e. more no lefts due to increased traffic?)
- Pedestrian crossing between neighborhoods not possible during busing time.
- 43d & Southwest Trafficway is a barrier for a lot of pedestrian oriented communities around the vicinity – they are pedestrian oriented “pods” but not linked because of movements and street design/arrangement in this area.
- 35th & Bell not developed and difficult to turn / people ignore stop and go up into yards
- Dead end of Bell & 31st – overgrown –what can we do to turn this into usable inviting spaces (bike / peds, etc.)
- Parking issues at 39th and State Line not necessarily a KU Med issue b/c peaks are Thursday through Saturday evenings.
- Parking permit program with KU Med will not help without adequate parking enforcement
- Balance with active urban center where we just deal with it

Urban Design:

What Urban Design issues are most important to define the future of the North West sub-area?

- Destruction of houses by KC Life in the Valentine Neighborhood needs to be addressed. There must be a way to work with them to get development to occur that satisfies them and fits into the context of the neighborhood.
- The route starting at 39th and Wyoming through the Coleman Highlands Neighborhood on Karnes is a speedway – we must slow traffic.
- Southwest Trafficway is too fast and serves people that travel through the area. The character of the road should still allow people to pass through, but an emphasis should be given to change to serve the local community. Slow it down!
- Crossing and Walking on 39th Street is difficult due to the speed of traffic and narrow sidewalks.
- 39th & State Line “urban renewal project” (price bros) –it is too dense and should not be repeated here.
 - This development only has token gestures to character of neighborhood (fake balconies, etc.)
- Need to fix what is allowed by zoning v.s “urban renewal district” (URD)4
- Do we have a policy for involving neighborhood association in development/redevelopment decisions?
- There is a concern that generic or poorly design guidelines don’t lock people into things that don’t respond to the neighborhood or site context.
- Replacement of homes by more of a “form-based” approach (not necessarily getting to materials, but basic guidelines on how different types make a contribution to the neighborhood)