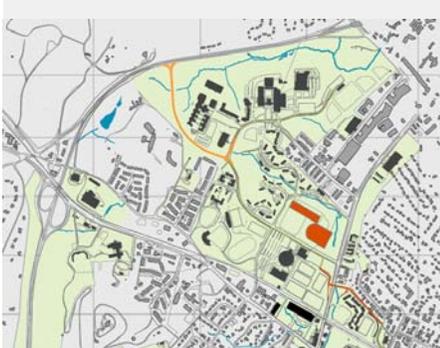

The Corner Workshop

MEETING NOTES: Saturday, October 22nd, 2005

OFFICE OF THE ARCHITECT FOR THE UNIVERSITY

Summary: The Corner Workshop

A follow-up meeting was held Tuesday, January 24, 2006. Notes from that meeting can be found beginning on page 7.



Attendees

Office of the Architect

David J. Neuman, FAIA	Architect for the University
Mary Hughes, FASLA	University Landscape Architect
Julia Monteith, AICP	Senior Land Use Planner
Brian Hogg	Senior Historic Preservation Planner
Andrew Greene	GIS Planner
Matthew Longacher	Planning Intern

Community Partners

Danny Wilmer	Community Relations, UVA
Ashley Cooper	Neighborhood Planner, City of Charlottesville

University and Community Stakeholders

Arthur Lichtenberger	Lewis Mountain Neighborhood
Bobbie Bruner	Venable Neighborhood
Herb Porter	Fifeville Neighborhood
Gaither Pratt	10 th & Page Neighborhood
Dennis Barnes	JPA Neighborhood
Mark Lorenzoni	Ragged Mountain Running Shop
Bob Mincer	Mincer's
John Bartlett	Sycamore House/Studio Art
George Mastakas	College Inn
Tom Harkins	Medical Center Administration
Judy Maretta	Director of Space Management
Bill Cromwell	Director of Real Estate, UVAF
Rebecca White	Director, Parking and Transportation
Maryann Griton	Lieutenant, UVA Police Department
Vicki Hawes	Manager of Off-Grounds Housing
Christina Morrell	Assistant Vice-President for Student Affairs
Aaron Lauschway	Director, Fraternity and Sorority Life
Paige Hawkins	Assistant Director of CASE
Richard Minturn	Senior Academic Facility Planner, Provost's Office



Highlights and Recommendations

Held at St. Paul's Memorial Church

The Corner Workshop was well attended by a broad group of participants including neighborhood Representatives, Corner merchants, and University staff and students. Following the introduction, workshop participants formed four Focus Groups based on the themes of Transportation, Parking & Service, Student Housing, Neighborhoods and Student Life & Security. Facilitators for each group queried the participants with the questions noted below, while tracking the responses of each group.

A summary of the participant's responses is provided below to be presented at the follow-up meeting planned for January 2006.

1. What are the most positive and functional aspects of The Corner?
2. What are the missed opportunities that could be improved?
3. In your view, how does The Corner compare with similar student-oriented areas adjacent to other universities or colleges? (provide examples as possible)
4. What changes would you like to see the a) University b) City of Charlottesville c) Private sector make to improve the problems they observe in the current situation?

Based on the responses from the participants, the five **most positive attributes** of The Corner are:

- Convenient dining/retail/entertainment options for students due to close proximity and relative affordability.
- A pedestrian oriented neighborhood due to the mix of uses and proximity to the University.
- A stable environment of long-time business owners who are invested in the Corner.
- High density zoning providing convenient housing for students.
- Trolley and UTS options help to address parking constraints in the neighborhood.

The five **key issues** to be addressed at The Corner to be are:

- There are limited retail options with respect to essential goods and services, including groceries and other practical everyday items.
- The undergraduate night life emphasis of the current uses discourages use of the district by general patrons and families.
- Parking and traffic congestion, either real or perceived, is a major concern for local business owners and for visitors.
- There is a need for increased cooperation between the University, City and businesses in planning for the success of the area (including housing, pedestrian and park amenities, etc.).
- Limited access due to the railroad and safety concerns related to illegal crossings.

Transportation, Parking and Service

1) Positive Functional Aspects:

- Availability of transit options and their frequency, including city and University buses as well as taxis.
- Good walking district due to mixed use nature and proximity to the University.
- Crosswalks and signage are affective as a result of a Corner merchant/city initiative.
- Managed hours at the parking lots aid in late night crime prevention.
- Structured parking on Elliewood Avenue and the corner of 14th and Wertland Streets.

2) Missed Opportunities:

- Late night crowds are sometimes disruptive.
- Railroad tracks pose a danger to pedestrians due to illegal crossing. A gated pedestrian crossing behind the lot east of Elliewood Avenue would be one possibility to solve this issue.
- Delivery management requires ongoing attention. Deliveries should be prohibited during the lunch period from 11:00 am and 2:00 pm.
- The Corner is lacking a good management organization. A merchant/University/City collaborative effort is necessary for planning purposes and to address problems.
- There are continual pedestrian/traffic challenges. Improved signal timing and pedestrian education is necessary.
- Marketing of the Corner is currently lacking. Opportunities for use of Clark Park, as well as events and University/Corner partnerships should be explored.
- City trolley linking University and Downtown sometimes unreliable – an improved schedule is needed.

3) Comparison with Other Similar Student-Oriented Areas:

- Princeton University – Adjacent retail opportunities are too high-end rather than student-oriented as they are on The Corner
- Harvard and Columbia Universities – Retail opportunities consist largely of national chains rather than locally-owned businesses.
- Brown University – The University and City of Providence are in a renewal partnership.
- University of California, Berkeley – the University and City of Berkeley are at odds.
- University of Iowa – The University is integrated into city fabric with mixed retail and academic uses.

4) Changes Suggested (by the University, City or Private Sector)

- University growth will include a 1,200 +/- car garage with ground floor retail on West Main Street.
- New high-density zoning in Venable neighborhood will result in at least 1,000 new housing units, with reduced parking requirements and greater pedestrian pressure on the Corner and the CSX railroad tracks.
- Proposed historic district designation for portions of the Venable neighborhood.
- Mix of retail options will need to improve, including grocery, dry cleaner, and pharmacy choices on The Corner.

Student Housing

1) Positive Functional Aspects:

- Proximity both to the University and local businesses.
- Mix of undergraduate, graduate, and medical students in the neighborhood.
- Higher density zoning successful in encouraging development of new housing and redevelopment.
- Market demand high due to convenience of location.
- Cooperative agreement between Charlottesville and University police in place to ensure safety.
- University's Off-Grounds Housing Office provides education and assistance regarding student housing in adjacent neighborhoods.

2) Missed Opportunities:

- Condition of housing variable, including fraternity houses.
- Population primarily single undergraduate and graduate students rather than married students or families.
- Homeownership options not available for younger buyers, and a general trend of decreasing homeownership apparent in recent years.
- Commercial establishments weighted towards food and beverage, with essential shopping (groceries, etc.) requiring trips elsewhere.
- General congestion and noisy nightlife discourages families and older groups from utilizing The Corner.

3) Comparison with Other Similar Student-Oriented Areas:

- Reduced potential for drinking and driving as compared to other universities due to close proximity of Corner nightlife to housing for many students.
- College of William and Mary – Far fewer off-campus housing options within close proximity.
- Fraternity and sorority houses are university-owned or managed at many other universities.

4) Changes Suggested (by the University, City or Private Sector)

- Strengthened cooperation among the three entities would allow for greater ability to address problems in the neighborhood.
- City should increase role in keeping the commercial area viable.
- Improved enforcement of city codes necessary with respect to property managers and renters.
- University cooperation in managing fraternity and sorority houses and potential for role in encouraging renter responsibility through education.
- Increased housing density will require plans to address traffic congestion and additional student vehicles.
- Safety improvements for pedestrians and encourage attractiveness of Corner businesses in the evening.
- Blue emergency phones in residential areas would promote greater safety of off-grounds student housing.
- Improved mix of retail options on The Corner would lessen the need for student-owned vehicles in the neighborhood.

Student Life and Security

1) Positive Functional Aspects:

- Provides a central zone of engagement for students due to proximity to University.
- Serves the social/entertainment needs of the undergraduate population well with more affordable options than downtown Charlottesville.
- In addition to goods and services, Corner businesses also provide employment options for students.

2) Missed Opportunities:

- Security/safety concerns with dark areas of parking lots and illegal railroad crossing.
- Change in use over time has resulted in a bar/restaurant emphasis as opposed to essential goods and services. A greater range of options could better serve the needs of students as well as the broader community.
- Parking constraints contribute to the isolation of The Corner from the rest of Charlottesville.
- Currently missing exterior space such as a plaza for students to congregate socially.
- Missed opportunity on the part of the University for growth in and around The Corner district.
- Lack of constant police presence has reduced perception of overall security and allowed increased speed on University Avenue at night.

3) Comparison with Other Similar Student-Oriented Areas:

- The Corner compares favorably with commercial areas in other college towns in both proximity and in supporting students and their activities.
- Duke, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill – Provide a broader mix of retail options, including clothing, hair salons and other necessities.
- Duke has a more visible police presence in student-oriented areas.

4) Changes Suggested (by the University, City or Private Sector)

- University Avenue should be a two-sided street, with a porous flow between Grounds and The Corner.
- Use of Clark Park should be promoted as a vibrant outdoor meeting space.
- A greater mix of residential and retail space would provide a more vibrant district.
- Use of the Cavalier Advantage card for Corner businesses would provide added convenience for students.
- Increased police presence on the part of the University and the City.
- Potential of future West Main Street development to accentuate The Corner and unify the district with Downtown.

Neighborhoods

1) Positive Functional Aspects:

- The Corner is a diverse and interesting place with complex layers.
- Strong merchants' association with long-time business owners.
- It is a relatively safe neighborhood.
- Pedestrian orientation for the neighborhood that compliments the University and its facilities.

2) Missed Opportunities:

- Lack of pedestrian access across the railroad tracks serves as a barrier and safety issue.
- Clark Park is currently not a usable meeting space due to lack of access and amenities.
- There is a lack of goods and services to meet the daily needs of neighborhood residents.
- Parking limitations restrict the use of The Corner businesses by the larger community.
- Proper maintenance of housing, including the fraternities is a neighborhood-wide issue.
- The University coal plant located adjacent to the Corner serves as a limitation to options for expansion.

3) Comparison with Other Similar Student-Oriented Areas:

- Generally very few problems in comparison to other similar areas.
- Washington & Lee and Randolph-Macon - Experiencing a deterioration of university-adjacent neighborhoods.
- Princeton – Nearby commercial opportunities are high-end and beyond the reach of most students. The Corner is close and for the most part affordable.
- University of Georgia – More traditional grid characterizes interaction between University and community.

4) Changes Suggested (by the University, City or Private Sector)

- Increased pedestrian amenities are necessary, including wider sidewalks and a pedestrian railroad crossing.
- Inadequate CSX maintenance of railroad tracks (trash, weeds, etc.) poses safety issues and should be addressed.
- Coordination among the three parties regarding traffic flow in the neighborhood.
- Clark Park improvements are needed.
- Enhancement of city housing inspections could improve overall neighborhood condition.
- The University could attract a grocery store with its future West Main Street parking garage project.
- Increased city investment in neighborhood schools is necessary to preserve their quality.

The Corner Workshop

FOLLOW-UP MEETING NOTES: Tuesday, January 24, 2006

OFFICE OF THE ARCHITECT FOR THE UNIVERSITY

Summary:

Held at St. Paul's Memorial Church

Attendees

Office of the Architect

Mary Hughes, FASLA	University Landscape Architect
Julia Monteith, AICP	Senior Land Use Planner
Brian Hogg	Senior Historic Preservation Planner
Andrew Greene	GIS Planner
Matthew Longacher	Planning Intern

Community Partners

Danny Wilmer	Community Relations, UVA
Jim Fitzgerald	Community Relations, UVA
Mike Farruggio	Charlottesville Police Department/Traffic

University and Community Stakeholders

Bobbie Bruner	Venable Neighborhood
Mark Lorenzoni	Ragged Mountain Running Shop/Corner Merchants Association
Bob Mincer	Mincer's/Corner Merchants Association
Tom Harkins	Medical Center Administration
Judy Mareta	Director of Space Management
Meg Fisher	The Pita Pit/Corner Merchants Association
Richard Minturn	Senior Academic Facility Planner, Provost's Office
Jim Wilson	UVA Foundation
Paul Collinge	Heartwood Books/Corner Merchants Association

Questions and Comments from the Corner Stakeholders

1) Additional Concerns Regarding the Relationship between the two Sides of University Avenue:

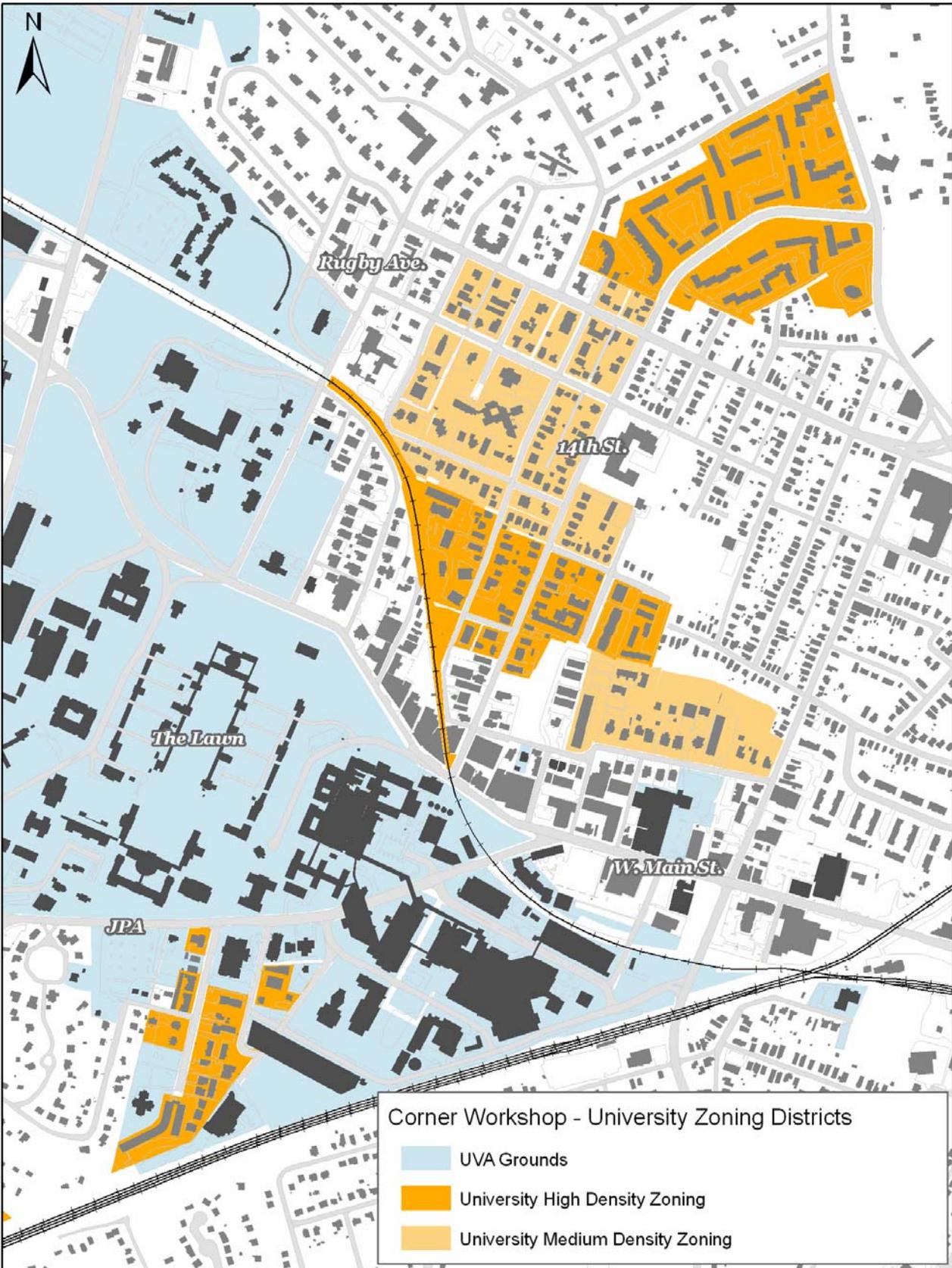
- The stone wall at the University edge acts as a barrier, creating a one-sided street. However, recognition of the historic significance of the wall and of Brooks Lawn is crucial in considering this relationship.
- There is a desire for greater permeability to connect University open spaces, including Brooks Lawn with the Corner commercial district.
- A suggestion to create additional pedestrian crossings along University Avenue raises additional concerns regarding safety.
- UVA lighting improvements along University Avenue have proven successful, but additional lighting is needed at the corner of 14th Street with respect to the railroad overpass and from Hospital Drive to 14th Street in front of the Women's Center.

2) Further Discussion Regarding the Need for Improved Dialogue and Cooperation between the University, City, and Corner Merchants:

- The Corner is an important and frequently visited area of the City, but it gets less attention from City Hall than the Downtown Mall.
- Disruptive deliveries and associated illegal parking have become an increasing problem and need to be addressed with proper signage and enforcement. Previous time constraints for deliveries were effective but signage has since been removed.
- Coordination of deliveries to the University and to the Corner businesses has the potential to ease some congestion in the area, especially during peak business/dining hours.
- The addition of convenience oriented businesses – Lucky 7, Starbucks and Bodo's also seems to be creating issues with parking and deliveries.
- The potential for a neighborhood meeting involving Corner stakeholders, perhaps facilitated by UVA Community Relations, will be explored.

3) High Density Zoning in the Venable Neighborhood Continues to Raise Questions:

- Safety issues regarding illegal railroad crossings will only become more pertinent with new development and additional residents on 14th and 15th Streets. Communication with railroad officials has been unproductive to date.
- Efforts to address parking constraints should include early education for new student residents of the Venable neighborhood regarding the availability of UVA satellite parking facilities.
- Corner stakeholders should be proactive in addressing changes in the neighborhood and work closely with neighborhood associations and with the City.
- A graphic of the zone is attached on Page 9 for reference.



Corner Workshop - University Zoning Districts

- UVA Grounds
- University High Density Zoning
- University Medium Density Zoning