

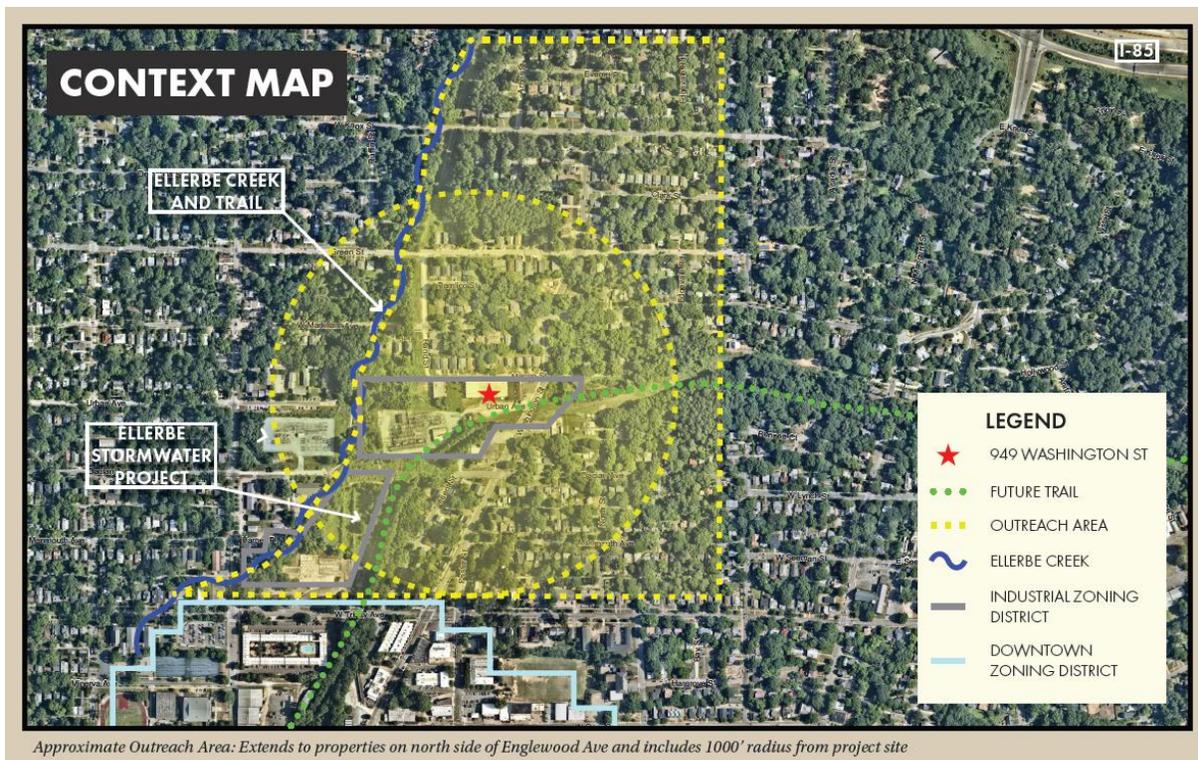
OUTREACH SUMMARY FOR THE PROPOSED URBAN AVENUE STREET CLOSING & DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

October 21, 2019

Part One: Overview & Background

This is a summary of public comments received by City staff regarding the potential closure of 934 feet of Urban Avenue to accommodate redevelopment of the Brame Building.

Public comment was open for three weeks period between September 18th, 2019 and October 4th, 2019. The effort was a multi-departmental partnership with staff from the following departments: General Services, Neighborhood Improvement Services, Public Works, Office of Workforce and Economic Development, and City-County Planning. As shown in the context map below, the outreach area spanned the Washington Street corridor roughly from Club Boulevard in the north to Trinity Avenue in the south. Special effort was paid to the blocks that would be most impacted by the project, such as Orient Street, Macon Street, Rand Street, Markham Street, and parts of Washington Street.

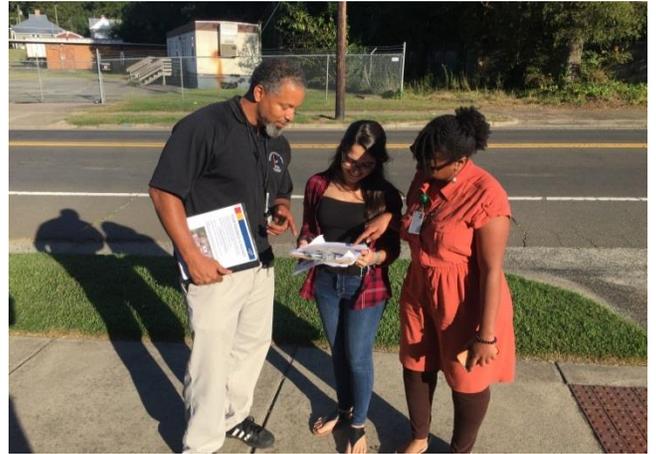


In alignment with the City's Equitable Community Engagement Blueprint, a variety of approaches were utilized to engage the neighbors most likely to be impacted by the project and to solicit participation by historically under-represented communities. See table below for engagement details.

Summary of Outreach & Participation		
Item	Details	Volume (Approx.)
<i>Notice Letters</i>	Mailed notice letters in English and Spanish to renters and property owners in the outreach area	600 letters
<i>Survey</i>	Hosted an online survey in English and Spanish that also collected demographic information such as income, race, and sex; also made paper copies available	79 responses
<i>Door-to-Door Canvassing</i>	Lead a door-knocking campaign with English and Spanish-speakers, focused on Orient Street, Macon Street, Rand Street, Markham Street, and parts of Washington Street	75 doors knocked, spoke with 20 people
<i>Online Video</i>	The City's online video series, <i>Bull City Today</i> , profiled the deal and informed viewers about upcoming outreach.	17 views
<i>Flyers</i>	Shared neighborhood flyers in both English and Spanish	50 flyers shared
<i>NextDoor Post</i>	Posted input opportunities on the Duke Park and Old North Durham neighborhoods NextDoor pages	793 online residents
<i>Open Houses</i>	Hosted two open houses at the proposed street closure site, one on a workday evening (Thursday, September 26 th , 4:00pm – 7:00pm) and one on a weekend morning (Saturday, September 28 th , 9:00am – Noon). English and Spanish staff members were available at all times.	25 attendees
Estimated Total: Approximately 100 neighborhood residents or stakeholders participated, with 83 submitting written comments (79 surveys & 4 letters/emails)		



Staff made a variety of resources and materials in English and Spanish available to participants.



Multiple canvassing teams went door-to-door around the site speaking to residents in both English and Spanish.



The multi-departmental outreach team met regularly to discuss outreach strategy and effectiveness.



Staff members speak to a neighborhood resident.



Two Open Houses were held at the site, in the neighborhood, with City staff and members of the development team.

Part Two: Key Survey Findings

This section provides a summary of the 79 surveys completed, 77 in English and 2 in Spanish, that were completed either online or in person (e.g. during canvassing or the open houses). As not all respondents answered every question, the numbers are adjusted accordingly to those that responded to that particular question. All responses are also included as an appendix for those that are interested in reading verbatim comments.

- **94% of participants live in the neighborhood** and participants included 25% people of color, 33% renters, and 32% earning less than the area median household income. (Please note that roughly one third of respondents did not fill out all demographic information).
- **92% of participants found something to like in the project.** The survey asked respondents to identify what, if anything, they liked about the proposal. Nearly everyone who completed the survey identified at least one thing they liked about the proposal. 6% of respondents stated they did not like anything about the proposal, and 1% had no opinion. The most popular responses (e.g. please note respondents could choose more than one) were:
 - Improvement / re-use of the building (65%)
 - Donated trail construction (63%)
 - New investment in the neighborhood (58%)
 - Donated construction of parking spots (38%)
 - Cash donation (37%)

Among traditionally underrepresented groups, 85% found something to like in the proposal.

- **Roughly half, or 46%, of participants would change something about the project.** The survey asked respondents to identify what, if anything, they would change about the proposal. Respondents were free to write anything they wished. The five most popular suggested changes / themes were:
 - Increase the existing donations, such as a larger cash donation or more linear feet of trail (13%)
 - Improve transportation infrastructure, such as better pedestrian amenities, street paving of Macon Street, or traffic mitigation strategies (6%)
 - Require green space and / or greater stormwater controls (6%)
 - Allow for vibrant neighborhood uses / mixed use (instead of more traditional office space), including things like a beer garden, farm stand, coffee shop, co-op, etc. (6%)
 - Do not accept anything and / or gentrification concerns (6%)

Among traditionally underrepresented groups, 37% would change something about the project.

Comments were varied, but included concerns about gentrification, desire for mixed-use development in the project, and desire for public and/or green spaces.

- **78% of participants provided suggestions on how to spend the proposed cash donation.** The survey asked respondents to share any ideas they have as to how the proposed proffer of ~\$31,000 should be spent. There were a very wide range of responses, but the five most popular ideas / themes were:
 - Donating proffer directly to the Belt Line Trail budget (14%)
 - Improving general bike and pedestrian infrastructure in the surrounding area (11%), such as better sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, general trail improvements, etc.
 - Improving public safety around the trail areas (10%), such as better lighting, an emergency call button, or cameras.
 - Paving (or repaving) neighboring streets (10%), such as improving Macon, fixing potholes, etc.
 - Requiring a higher cash proffer (6%).

Among traditionally underrepresented groups, 78% also had an idea about how to spend the cash proffer. Comments were varied, but top concerns included improving public safety, requiring a greater cash proffer, and improving the quality of streets in the area.

- **49% of all participants shared specific ideas or concerns about the project.** The survey asked respondents to share what other ideas or concerns they have about the proposal. The five most popular concerns / ideas / themes were:
 - Gentrification (10%), such as “there won’t be affordable spaces” and “caters for the well to do.”
 - Traffic (7.7%), such concerns about noise and the pace of cars, etc.
 - Storm water / trees / green space (6%), such as “protect Ellerbe Creek” and “will there be any tree cover remaining?”
 - More proffers (5%), with comments such as “negotiate harder,” “get more money,” and “the city is being undercompensated.”
 - Pedestrian infrastructure (4%), such as access across Washington Street and the property being a “pedestrian island.”

Among traditionally underrepresented groups, 63% shared concerns or ideas. Comments were varied, but top concerns included gentrification, traffic/roads, and desire for mixed-use.

Part Three: Other Input

City staff received input in four other ways:

- An email / letter received on from the Ellerbe Creek Watershed Association, stating, among other things: “...It is [] critical that the City consider the implications of this exchange in terms of deleterious effects on water quality and public access to recreation amenities along South Ellerbe Creek.....Any publicly assisted project upstream should contribute to improved rather than degraded water quality....” Their letter proposed (1) making the street closure contingent upon low-impact development standards for annual water volume and (2) protect via conservation easement or land trust land adjacent to the stream that is currently part of this project.
- An email from a homeowner on Orient Street stating: “I am a homeowner on Orient Street, and I just want to say that I cannot express my support for this project strongly enough. The building in question has long been an eyesore in the neighborhood, and this particular block has gone underutilized for a number of years.The city has my full support to approve this project, and I hope that the city also seeks to expedite green lighting the project to avoid scaring this developer away from the neighborhood.”
- An email received from the Durham Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC) Development Review Committee requesting more public parking spaces, a trailhead, parking space management, pedestrian / bicycle infrastructure, a connection between the Belt Line Trail and Ellerbe Creek Trail, minimization of crossing distance across Washington Street, a flashing beacon across Washington Street, affordable housing potential near the site, and incorporation of crossing design recommendations from the Belt Line Master Plan. Their email is included in the appendix for more information.
- Flyers put up around the neighborhood by an unknown person or group, stating “Rich Gentrifiers Want to Build This Near the Corner of Washington & Trinity” and “Hands Off Our Neighborhood.”

Part Four: Conclusion

At the August 8, 2019 work session, City Council instructed staff to develop and manage an inclusive public outreach process that would solicit input from residents in surrounding neighborhoods. Particular emphasis was placed on reaching traditionally underrepresented groups, such as racial/ethnic minorities, renters, Spanish speakers, and low income individuals/families. City staff believes they have fulfilled that objective by using strategies from the City's Equitable Community Engagement Blueprint. Examples include: using bilingual materials (English and Spanish), canvassing door-to-door in the neighborhood (including apartment buildings), having Spanish speaking staff at all events, collecting demographic information from participants, and hosting two events in the residents' neighborhood. Ultimately, City staff engaged roughly 100 neighborhood residents/stakeholders, with 83 people submitting written comments (79 surveys & 4 letters/emails).

The most popular components of the proposal were the re-use and revitalization of Brame's brick warehouse and the construction of the trail. Based on the feedback received, Staff recommends support of the proposal.