

The Witherspoon Street Corridor Study presents these very important considerations for the future of our community and makes them available to the citizens of Princeton Borough and Township for review and comment. Please submit your comments or suggestions via the "Contact Us" email link here on the website or mail your comments to Princeton Future, P.O. Box 493, Princeton, NJ 08542.

**WSCS Advisory Committee
Draft Document - for Community Review**

*Prelim Parameters List Developed: February 5, 2005 at WSCS Advisory Committee Meeting
(Suggested amendments by WSCS Team, February 26, 2005)*

Reviewed and Revised: March 1, 2005 at WSCS Advisory Committee Meeting

(Reformatted by Drafting Group and forwarded for Advisory Committee Review, March 3, 2005)

Reviewed and Edited: March 5, 2005 at WSCS Community-wide meeting

Introduction

The Witherspoon Street Corridor Study (WSCS), facilitated by Princeton Future, has involved numerous meetings and public working sessions attended by a broad spectrum of the Princeton community. From this process, principles have been outlined to guide the future of a very important corridor and adjacent land uses, with particular attention to the pending changes involving the hospital. A smaller group volunteered to consolidate ideas and put them into the form of a set of parameters. The WSCS Advisory Committee held additional meetings to analyze details of the street, hospital site, zoning, design, and development options. With the concurrence of the community, we hope that the Parameters for the Redevelopment of Hospital Properties will be considered seriously by all parties who hold authority and an interest in the future of our community.

The hospital site on Witherspoon Street, as well as other hospital-owned properties, has evolved, with special land use provisions, in service to the host community for over 75 years. The needs of the general public, in particular the burgeoning neighboring communities, have also been well served in the current locations of the hospital. However, growth within the hospital's market area, trends in medical service delivery, and the desire for growth potential are all Medical Center needs that may well exceed the capacity of the Princeton community to provide or endure. It is time to reconsider the needs of the community and the use of the hospital properties for the greatest benefit and service to the citizens of Princeton.

The community meetings revealed and elevated concerns about the social, environmental, and economic fragility of the street and adjacent neighborhoods. Our preliminary work suggests that it is appropriate at this time to present guiding principles for the future of Witherspoon Street, in the presence of and absent the hospital.

We recognize the benefit of several community meetings held by the hospital over the past two years and the recent report of the Health Care Task Force. The parameters, for the continued use of and future redevelopment of the hospital site, are offered to establish a framework for discussion and planning for Witherspoon Street, the adjacent neighborhoods, and the community.

Parameters for the Redevelopment of Hospital Properties

I. The hospital site must be considered within the context of the local neighborhoods and community. The current density of development (height, bulk, square footage, FAR, etc) on the site is a result of concessions and accommodation given to the Hospital. The current limits would not have been approved for any other occupant of the site. Therefore both municipalities should insure that redevelopment of the site is done at greatly reduced densities, including more compatible building heights, FAR, bulk, square footage, etc.

II. All redevelopment or re-use of hospital properties must be subject to full real property taxation, payable to the Borough and the Township, without exemptions or reductions to local service and education distributions. In its redevelopment, the properties must generate full tax revenues from all potential developers, owners and land uses including current and potential non-profit institutions or organizations, and potential private developers or owners. Full tax revenues, with local service and education distributions, are to be generated from special land use designations, the housing or provision of public services on-site, and as a result of administrative authority of Redevelopment Area or other special designation.

III. All uses should be primarily residential. Planning must focus on the following considerations:

A. Provision for a variety of residential types, unit sizes, and resident populations.

B. Any commercial or public accommodations are to be in service to and supported by the surrounding neighborhoods and local community. A small convenience store, a day care center, service-based non-profit, and teen or community center are some examples.

C. Mixed-use concepts should not result solely from a calculation or percentage formula, should not be applied site-wide, and must not undermine the residential quality of the street. For example, a 60/40 residential/commercial zone along Witherspoon Street, where all first floor spaces are commercial, is undesirable. A site-wide distribution of commercial uses could result inappropriate or undesired commercial uses in the center of the larger site or on the other primarily residential streets.

D. Protection and preservation of adjacent residences, the affordable housing stock, and the residents and units represented by the BHA units on Franklin Ave.

IV. Plans should facilitate flexible site arrangements, multiple parcel configurations, and different developer opportunities.

A. Objectives, policies, and implementation tools should encourage and facilitate diversity.

B. Site options must be considered within the context and character of the surrounding area and its current zoning in the interest of both the community and property owners.

C. Area context and zoning, in terms of separate parcels and in the aggregate must be considered.

V. The community should establish the preferred standard for street reconstruction, land use policy, and development along Witherspoon Street.

A. The pattern and scale of development should be considered in terms of a "small town" setting. For example hotels, malls, office complexes, and many CCRCs (Continuing Care Retirement Communities) are developed in economies of scale that are large and inappropriate for this site as well as the community.

B. Incorporate open, public green space in all options.

C. Develop an area within the hospital site as an important public space and facility along Witherspoon Street (the intersection of Franklin and Witherspoon has been suggested) which will serve as a resource and asset for the residents, the surrounding neighborhoods, and the community.

VI. Planning of hospital properties should be considered in terms of community needs and desires. The following needs have been mentioned in the public meetings:

- Senior and Affordable Housing
- Public gathering spaces
- Small-scale local service retail
- Social service facilities

Additional properties that could be considered in conjunction with planning for the hospital site are:

1. Harris Road houses, must be returned to the neighborhood for individual use and single-family ownership;
2. Franklin Avenue parking lot, might provide additional housing and public paths; and
3. Merwick, with careful consideration of scale, character and neighboring impacts, might serve as a site for all or some of the elements of a Continuing Care Retirement Community.

Strategic Approaches

The Witherspoon Street Corridor Study (WSCS) Advisory Committee has suggested the following Strategic Approaches be used toward developing physical, policy, and implementation options to achieve the objectives of the six-point set of Parameters for the Redevelopment of Hospital Properties. Each approach will consider scale and density of current and potential development; land uses and benefits to the community, and the potential revenues generated by redevelopment.

1. **Least Disturbance:** The "No build" approach involving rehab of existing structures and continued use of garage.
2. **Minor Disturbance:** Continued use of garage, selective demolition, but with the reuse of most buildings on the site.
3. **Moderate Disturbance:** Removal of all smaller perimeter buildings.
4. **Major Demolition:** Removal of most buildings, relocate on-site parking.
5. **Complete demolition:** Remove all existing buildings.

Witherspoon Street Corridor Study Advisory Committee