

The Community Planning Process

Envisioning the Future of Naples Park

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The Dover Kohl team tours the streets of Naples Park by bicycle.



The Friday night Kick-Off presentation.



Neighbors work in small groups at the Saturday Hands-On Session.



"Citizen Planners" working together throughout the morning.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

In November 2002, the residents of Naples Park and the surrounding areas of Collier County joined together with the Collier County government and a consultant team of planners, market analysts, drainage engineers, and transportation experts on a planning venture to promote and guide the future of Naples Park. The consultant team, led by Dover, Kohl & Partners (Town Planning), included Agnoli Barber & Brundage, Inc. (Drainage Analysis), Hall Planning and Engineering (Transportation Planning), J Eppink Partners (Market Analysis), Merrill Ladika (Redevelopment Funding Expert), and Spikowski Planning Associates (Implementation Expert). This planning effort was initiated as a result of a plan adopted by the County in 2001, entitled "Toward Better Places: The Community Character Plan for Collier County". The Community Plan for Naples Park builds upon this previous work, taking large concept ideas and applying them within the neighborhood.

The Community Workshops

Following months of background work and preparation, the public participation process began in November 2002. The Dover-Kohl team relied on residents of Naples Park to prepare a vision for the future of their neighborhood. Concentrating on a process known as "designing in public," the Dover-Kohl team conducted a week-long community workshop to identify the needs and concerns of the community. Emphasis was placed on giving the community many opportunities to participate - a successful community planning process is dependant upon having a plan that is for the community, by the community. Over the course of seven days, a series of design events were held with the community and consultant team. Flyers were distributed door-to-door by County staff to advertise the planning workshops. Road signs were placed on both 111th Avenue and Vanderbilt Beach Road, to remind residents of the time and location of events. Community participation was good at all events - participants included property owners, neighbors, business people, developers, county employees, and community leaders.

Friday, November 15th, was the official "kick-off" of the Naples Park community planning workshops. During the day, the Dover-Kohl team toured the neighborhood by bicycle to perform a detailed site analysis. That evening, a Kick-Off presentation was held at Naples Park Elementary School. Open to the entire community, over 200 residents interested in the future of their neighborhood attended. At the event, Dover-Kohl presented an overview of ideas generated in the county-wide "Community Character Plan for Collier County," and reviewed



A representative presents the table's work to the larger group at the Hands-On session.



Residents review the drawings that were produced at the Hands-On session.



Talking with residents at the on-site design studio.



Creating images for the neighborhood plan.

the schedule of events for the upcoming week. Following the presentation, participants were given a chance to give their opinion about the future of Naples Park during an open-mike question and answer session. The event adjourned with each person filling out a comment card containing two questions - one word to describe Naples Park today, and one word to describe Naples Park in the future.

The highly interactive Hands-On Session was held the following morning at the Naples Park Elementary School, attracting a crowd of over 100 community members. The day began with a brief presentation of urban design principles and transportation issues, given by Victor Dover (Dover, Kohl & Partners) and Rick Hall (Hall Planning and Engineering). Ground rules for the day were discussed as residents began to work together in small groups. Each table was assigned a member of the design team as a table facilitator, and given a map of existing conditions in Naples Park. Residents came full of ideas and went to work, becoming "citizen planners." The community worked in small groups for about two hours, discussing and drawing ideas for improving the Park. Overall discussion and illustration involved land uses, activities, services, and physical characteristics of the neighborhood. Citizens were then asked to prioritize their ideas, creating an "A" list, which contained every improvement they had discussed, and a "B+" list, a shorter list containing only the ideas the citizens felt were vital to the neighborhood's future. Later in the day, a spokesperson from each table presented their main ideas to the larger group of community participants.

The goal of the Hands-On session was to forge a community consensus and develop a vision for the future of the Park. Many ideas were heard and discussed at the session. In addition to the community presentations, each participant filled out a survey at the end of the session. In doing so, the planning team was able to gain further insight into the needs of the community. Feedback was very positive and the event was a great resource in creating the community plan for Naples Park.

The following day, the planning team set up an open design studio at the Naples Park Community Center, where they began to consolidate the many ideas they heard into a unified plan, while continuing to receive input from local citizens. Throughout the remainder of the week, meetings were held to gather additional information. Residents were invited to come by the design studio to review initial ideas and evaluate the progress of the planning effort. The location of the Community Center within the neighborhood, as well as immense community interest, led many people to stop by throughout the day. The table drawings and plans from the Hands-On session were placed around the room for those to review what their fellow community members had in mind for the neighborhood. As community members stopped-by, the planning team continued to incorporate information and revise the initial concepts for the plan.

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Ideas are presented to the community during the Work in Progress presentation...



...and the residents respond.

A Work in Progress presentation of the Community Plan was presented to the community on Thursday night. The standing-room only crowd of approximately 200 citizens was eager to hear the ideas that the planners and designers had generated for the future of the Park. Sketches and computer visualizations were presented, illustrating hypothetical development scenarios for the neighborhood. The main focus of the night was the completion of the "Citizen Planner Pack," a detailed survey that was passed out midway through the presentation. The Citizen Planner Pack included nine "Idea Sheets," which summarized ideas that were heard frequently throughout the week. Each idea was presented to the community, and citizens were asked to write down how they felt about each suggestion. The "Idea Sheets" included physical improvements, policy reforms, and financing alternatives. Equipped with the vital community input contained within the completed Citizen Planner Packs, the Dover Kohl team returned to their offices to continue work on the Community Plan for Naples Park.

The community involvement process did not end the week of the charrette; members of the Dover Kohl team returned to Naples Park in February and April of 2003, holding community meetings. A draft of the plan was posted on the internet, so that residents could easily access and evaluate it. All in attendance at the community meetings were asked how they felt about various plan elements; feedback was used to further refine the plan.

9 IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE OF NAPLES PARK

(Common ideas and suggestions heard from citizen planners during the planning workshop)

- Idea #1: Great Streets: 6th, 7th, & 8th**
- Idea #2: A New Address in Naples Park:
"8½ Street"**
- Idea #3: Great Avenues: Drainage + Walkability**
- Idea #4: Community Squares**
- Idea #5: Revitalize Business 41**
- Idea #6: Code Enforcement/Education Step-Up**
- Idea #7: New Standards: Design, Regulations,
and Incentives**
- Idea #8: Promoting Affordability/Diversity**
- Idea #9: Neighbors on a Given Avenue Segment
Chose and Pay**

(A detailed explanation of the ideas within the Citizen Planner Pack, and the community response to these ideas, can be found in Chapter 6; the Citizen Planner Pack has also been included for reference in Appendix D.)