

Livability Group

Components:

- Quality of Life
- Aging in Place
- Intergenerational Interaction
- Community Governance
- Education
- Sustainability

VISION STATEMENT: Strengthen a sense of community by having places, services and activities that serve all – youth, adults, seniors, families, people with disabilities – and provide a safe, nurturing, and sustainable environment.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

Quality of Life/ “Village” Basic Services

Guiding Principles:

1. Through public and private efforts, maintain a neighborhood in which residents and their property are safe in their homes, on the street, and in their work.
2. Support, as an integral part of neighborhood life, easily accessible public services, such as the library, the post office, and the fire station.
3. Minimize or discourage noise and light intrusion, balancing against need for safety.

Overlaps: Infrastructure; Commercial/Retail

Tools: code research & enforcement, community agreements with surrounding institutions

DISCUSSION:

The village-within-a-city aspect of Roland Park includes the accessibility of basic services: firehouse; post office; school; library; adequate police protection.

Fire Station:

At Civic Association presentation, Fire Dept. representative discussed need to reduce calls to 911 for non-emergency needs. There is talk of training people to serve as triage/medics/assistants for non-emergency needs. Some 911 calls are really used as antidote to social isolation or decreased capacity to perform simple tasks.

Need to advocate for the retention of fire trucks in our local fire station as opposed to rotating closures among fire stations.

Next Steps:

1. *Find more information on current and future plans from City Fire Department*

Post Office:

Can community affect hours and service level? Midday closure is inconvenient. Is PO in danger of being eliminated? Building is in poor repair, unpleasant. What entities control physical plant?

Next Steps:

1. *Find more information on current and future plans from US Postal Service.*
2. *Find out about building ownership and controls.*

Library (not discussed.)

Subsequent talk with librarians about operations, community relations, and needs yielded this information:

- RP Library has highest circulation per square foot in city system; it is up 30% since reopening.
- Committed volunteers are welcomed to help with shelving and special events.
- The terrace is not used because there is not adequate staff to supervise its safe use.
- Pre-School Story Hours are routinely attracting 60+ attendees.
- Conference room holds 15 -20 people and is getting steady use.

Education (discussed separately)**Aging in Place**Principle

Promote intergenerational living by providing specific services/activities and by supporting accessible infrastructure so that older people and people with disabilities may have the practical means and the confidence to live full lives in their own homes and in their neighborhood

Overlaps: Commercial/Retail; Transportation; zoning discussions

Discussion

Our neighborhoods should allow aging in place in the broader sense of folks being able to remain in the community in which they have lived, providing as necessary the possibility of full continuum of high quality care. Issues around this include zoning, access to amenities and services, provision for social interaction, and accommodation of economic diversity for all modes:

- Independent living
- Assistance in the home / The Village at Home
- Assisted Living facility
- Nursing Care
- Continuing Care Retirement Community

We received a description from Susan Newhouse of what the not-for-profit start-up *The Village at Home* will offer for an *annual or monthly fee*. Its operation is dependent on a strong core of volunteers.

- Membership organization (modest yearly fee, \$550 individual \$950 couples)
- Neighbors helping neighbors
 - Transportation
 - Simple chores
- Discounted vendors
 - Services to install devices around a home to make it more livable as people age
 - Vetted vendors, discounted
 - Village team will check that the work was done properly
- Sharing of knowledge
- Social Events
 - Symphony
 - Wine and cheese

Village at Home would like to find low cost, accessible office space (at least 600 SF) available in the neighborhood, possibly shared space with other non-profit and community organizations. *Refer to Zoning & Commercial space subgroups*

This segued into discussion of promoting social interaction.

Intergenerational Interaction / Social Spaces

Principle: Have a variety of places and opportunities for people of all ages to congregate, socialize, and recreate.

Overlaps: Open Space & Recreation; Commercial/Retail; Transportation

We catalogued existing spaces and potential enhancements:

Roland Avenue is our Main Street. The Eddie's block is our de facto "village square."

- Can we encourage Eddies to revive the idea of a sidewalk café?
- Sidewalks south of the Eddie's block on Roland Ave need to be replaced, re-engineered for better drainage and a better pedestrian experience.
- Lighting scaled to pedestrian activity would be desirable
- Library and its terrace are underutilized. Need for staff oversight keeps the terrace from being viable except for special activities.

Stony Run is our linear park. The full length of Stony Run (Northern Parkway to Wyman Park) attracts dog walkers, joggers, walkers, bicyclists. Along the trail Stony Run social spaces include

- Stony Run Middle Section (Wyndhurst to Cold Spring) with stream crossings and open areas along the trail
- Land north of Bolton Street Synagogue, "The Meadow" is a community open space maintained by the Evergreen community
- Linkwood Park and playground attracts families with younger children, grandparents, nannies.
- Do we need more benches or gathering spots along the trail?

Water Tower area has the potential to become another community social space, is an underutilized landmark for the neighborhood.

Roland Park Swimming Pool area is another neighborhood social space, but is a membership organization with a price for entry.

Cross Keys and its Village Square is another commercial/social space, but crossing Falls Road is difficult, traffic intimidating.

- Need traffic calming on Falls Road
- Is a single lane with median strip and bike lanes viable?
- Pedestrian crosswalks to get to Cross Keys to facilitate more neighborhood walk-in traffic

Schools - Indoor and outdoor activity spaces

- Roland Park Baseball League is an example of community utilizing outdoor spaces of neighborhood institutions
- Roland Park Country School hosts public lectures and offers continuing education opportunities for the general public
- Is it possible to utilize school spaces for social events specifically for neighborhood teens and for seniors? Who would organize them?

Discussion moved from place-based to activity-based interaction.

Inter-generational Social Networks & Events

Community Events that contribute to social cohesion:

- Neighborhood wide
 - 4th of July
 - Sunday Street Roland Ave Street closure (and beyond RPP)
- Smaller scale events (stimulate more of these)

- Block parties
- Halloween parades
- Progressive Dinners
- Newcomers Brunch
- Christmas caroling
- Churches host
 - Strawberry Festival
 - Christmas Bazaars

Find more ways to take advantage of the knowledge and skills of older members of our community:

- Experience Corps model with training and coordination provided for volunteers to work with local schools
- Employ more creative strategies to stimulate interaction
Example: Use Cylburn project, children's mailboxes, as model. Put mailboxes on Roland Ave, one each block. 4 or more. Do a theme for a month at a time. Each week put a different note with information in each box. Themes could include
 - History of Roland Park
 - Poems
 - Nature

Next steps / Questions to be answered:

- *Is it appropriate to have a civic entity initiate social interaction?*
- *Should Roland Park Community Foundation include this in its mission?*
- *What do the private schools see as their relationship and contribution to the community?*
- *What do churches see as their relationship and contribution to community?*
- *Is a neighborhood-focused Volunteer Central-type electronic billboard on RP website useful as a way to publicize needs and opportunities?*

Community Governance

Principle: Encourage broad participation in community governance and improvement structure – RP Civic League, Roads & Maintenance and the RP Community Foundation.

DISCUSSION: Does Roland Park need a community benefits assessment? First discover what current level of participation is for voluntary fees. Is there a mechanism to mandate payment to R & M? Are fee levels adequate to 21st century needs?

Civic League often invites participation of broader community around issues affecting quality of life. Residents of surrounding communities might regularly contribute funds if asked. Should boundaries be extended or should there be adjunct memberships for outliers like North Roland Park?

Is Foundation the entity that might channel funds from broader community to improve community assets? Thus far solicitation has been project-based, i.e. the library and fire station.

Foundation's mission is to preserve green space and civic buildings. It has dropped initiation of social events like New Residents Welcoming Party. Should it or some other entity include fostering social interaction in its area of responsibility?

What role do the local schools, churches, and commercial establishments play in supporting or participating in the RP Civic League and Foundation?

Next steps / Questions to be answered:

- *What is the current level of neighborhood participation regarding volunteerism, fees and donations for our three civic entities?*
- *What do the private schools see as their relationship and contribution to the community? Is there a consortium of schools' community outreach representatives*
- *What do churches see as their relationship and contribution to community? Does Civic League or Foundation ever reach out to consortium of Roland Ave Churches?*

Education – Public & Private Institutions

Principles

Support the neighborhood 's public elementary, middle, and high schools, maintaining standards of excellence.

Support pre-school, private and adult education opportunities and institutions as integral elements of the community.

DISCUSSION:

If RP residents were more aware of activities at schools and invited more frequently to view/take advantage of cultural, educational, and sports offerings, would schools feel more integrated into community?

Are there mutually beneficial opportunities for Private/Public School interaction?

- Collaborative Service Projects (Stony Run)

- Opportunities to share information (Green School example with RPEMS & RPCS)
- Academic projects
- More Diverse foreign language exposure for public school 8th graders
- Collaborative cultural offerings – choruses, art exhibits, etc.

Find ways to provide mutual benefits.

Private schools may be looking for ways to earn income from underused facilities and teachers in the future.

- Adult education offerings
- Cultural events
- Community events
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Public school has discussed creating off-site pre-K that is feeder to RPEMS.

Traffic management at beginning and end of school day is major issue.

Next steps/Questions to be answered:

What relationships already exist among private schools? Between private and public schools? What relationship-building strategies are viable?

How do private schools see their relationship to RP community? Responsibility?

Sustainable Living

Principles

Encourage at the neighborhood and individual level practices and activities that create a sustainable neighborhood.

Promote opportunities that integrate safe non-automotive mobility – bicycling, walking, and running – as means of access to commercial, educational and recreational resources.

Maintain healthy waterways and accessible green areas through community vigilance and stewardship.

Through zoning, communications infrastructure and spaces accommodate a variety of working modes – home offices, telecommuting, co-op office space – and provide opportunity for civic and non-profit organizations to office in the community.

Overlaps: Transportation; Infrastructure; Commercial/Retail; Open Space and Recreation

Tools: zoning; community stewardship; agreements with surrounding institutions and with City agencies; public relations campaigns

DISCUSSION (time limited):

Safe crossings would stimulate more pedestrian activity

- Cold Spring Lane, access to light rail
 - bridge
 - crosswalks
- Falls Road traffic calming, access to Cross Keys
 - crosswalks & walk signals
 - median strip
 - single lane and bike lane

Recycling: need local options

- CFLs
- Plastic bags
- Separated trash/recycling bins on commercial blocks

Stewardship activities along Stony Run are important ongoing efforts and great community unifiers.