



# process 2

## COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

“Designing in public,” the Dover-Kohl team conducted an open planning process beginning in December 2005 to identify the ideas, needs and concerns of the community. Participants helped to create the Revitalization Plan through an intensive design event called a *charrette*. Over the course of seven days, the community and the team of design professionals worked together to create the plan. Interested residents and stakeholders participated in the planning process, including property owners, neighbors, business people, developers, elected officials, city staff, and community leaders.

### WHAT IS A CHARRETTE?

Charrette is a French word that translates as “little cart.” At the leading architecture school of the 19th century, the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, students would be assigned a tough design problem to work out under pressure of time. They would continue sketching as fast as they could, even as little carts, charrettes, carried their drawing boards away to be judged and graded. Today, “charrette” has come to describe a rapid, intensive and creative work session in which a design team focuses on a particular design problem and arrives at a collaborative solution. Charrettes are results-oriented. The public charrette is fast becoming a preferred way to face the planning challenges confronting American communities.

### Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. & Veronica S. Shoemaker Blvds. Revitalization Plan PLAN TO ATTEND:

#### Community Kick-off Presentation

Monday, November 28th from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm at the Dunbar Community School.  
An informative presentation to introduce the community to the planning process.

#### Hands-on Design Session

Saturday, December 10th from 9 am to 2 pm at the Quality Life Center.  
Come work alongside your neighbors on the plan for the future of these two corridors.

#### On-site Design Studio

Sunday, December 11th from 1pm to 7 pm; Monday, December 12th through Thursday, December 15th, from 9 am to 7 pm at the Quality Life Center.  
Stop-by throughout the day and review the work in progress. On Tuesday, December 13th from 6pm - 8pm there will be a design studio Open House.

#### “Work in Progress” Presentation

Thursday, December 15th at 6:30 pm at City Hall Council Chambers.  
A “wrap-up” presentation of the work completed to-date by the consultant team.

For more information please visit [www.cityofmyers.com/mlk](http://www.cityofmyers.com/mlk)  
or contact Anne Mullins, Principal Planner at the City of Ft. Myers, 461-2696.

The City of Fort Myers mailed and delivered flyers to property owners to announce the planning events.



Dover-Kohl team members noted areas of interest in detailed base maps of the study area.



Team members walked and photographed the corridors.



Articles in the *News-Press* helped to inform the community about the planning process.

## CHARRETTE PREPARATION

Prior to the charrette, the planning team focused their efforts on gathering base information and studying the existing physical conditions of the area. This included learning about local history, reviewing previous plans and studies, examining existing city ordinances and land development regulations, and analyzing the physical, social, and economic characteristics of the study area. Members of the team visited Fort Myers throughout the fall of 2005 and met with city officials, city staff, property owners, community leaders, business owners, and other local stakeholders in preparation for the charrette and to better gauge the vision and ideas for the future of the corridor.

A key element in preparing for the charrette was generating public awareness. City staff spread the word about the planning process by including ads in the local newspaper, posting public notices and sending extensive mailings, and providing updates on the city's website.

## SITE ANALYSIS

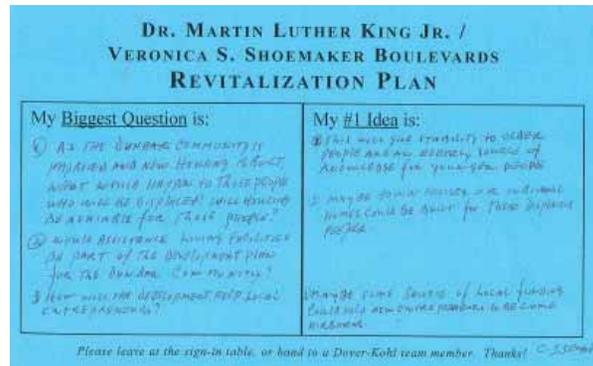
The team examined the corridors and intersecting streets on foot and by car. With base maps in hand, the planners and designers studied the existing urban fabric, paying careful attention to street connections, pedestrian safety, redevelopment opportunities and unique conditions and characteristics of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and Veronica S. Shoemaker Boulevard.

Team members photographed the corridors, noting building form, building placement, architectural character, and street design. Particular attention was devoted to analyzing the existing conditions of key intersections of MLK and VSS corridors to help prepare for redevelopment scenarios. The analysis enhanced the team's understanding of current issues, concerns, and redevelopment prospects.

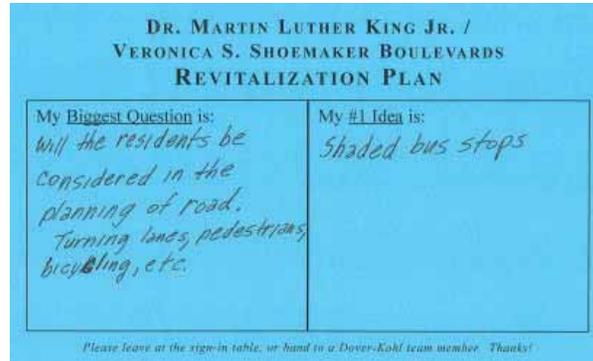
## THE CHARRETTE

On Monday, November 28, 2005 a Community Kick-off Presentation marked the start of the planning process. Residents, city leaders, and local stakeholders gathered at the Dunbar Community School for an evening presentation. A welcome message was provided by Mayor Humphrey. Victor Dover, Principal of Dover, Kohl & Partners, then outlined the challenge for participants during the planning process. He stressed the importance of citizen involvement throughout the process to ensure the creation of a plan truly representative of community ideals. He emphasized that the revitalization plan for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and Veronica S. Shoemaker Boulevard would be created by the community, for the community. He provided background information on traditional town building, redevelopment, and preserving community character.

Victor Dover introduced other members of the team, including Billy Hattaway of Hall Planning & Engineering, who spoke about advances in transportation planning and showcased examples of livable streets across the country. Dr. Lee Duffus spoke about economic and community development strategies. Bill Spikowski of Spikowski Planning Associates discussed issues related to policy and implementation. At the end of the presentation attendees were encouraged to ask the consultant team questions about the process and project and present ideas and issues to guide the planning process. Approximately 80 citizens attended the kick-off presentation to begin working together to create a plan for the Dunbar community and for both corridors.



At the Kick-off Presentation, residents were asked to write their "Biggest Question" and "#1 Idea" on how to revitalize the area.



### MY BIGGEST QUESTION IS:

- How will the development help local entrepreneurs?
- What is going to happen north of Michigan with the highway on VSS – will the revitalization continue through to Palm Beach Boulevard?
- What steps will be taken to include the Dunbar area in the tourism market?
- What incentives and assistance are going to be available for property owners and for these businesses to thrive?
- As the Dunbar community is improved and new housing is built, what would happen to those people who will be displaced? Will housing be available for those people?
- How can churches leverage their resources to facilitate development of the community?
- What mechanisms will be created to facilitate community economic development? What resources will be recommended to expand debt and equity capital?
- What will happen to my real estate taxes under the plan you are proposing as you envision substantial economic development and escalation of real estate prices will likely occur?
- Will the city acquire any of the resident property during the revitalization?



Approximately 80 citizens attended the Kick-off Presentation.





Residents worked together and shared ideas for the future of the corridors and Dunbar neighborhood.



On Saturday, December 10, approximately 30 community members gathered at the Quality Life Center for the Hands-on Design Session. The event began with a short introduction and briefing by Joseph Kohl, Principal of Dover, Kohl & Partners, to further explain the challenge for participants, orient participants to base maps, and set ground rules and goals for the session. Working in small groups of approximately five people per table, participants gathered around tables to draw and share their varied ideas for the future of their neighborhood and the MLK and VSS corridors. Each table was equipped with base maps, markers, scale bars, scale comparisons, and aerial photos of the study area. A facilitator from the Dover-Kohl team was assigned to each table to assist participants in the design exercises.



A sample of the drawings produced during the hands-on session



During the first part of the table sessions, community members identified the important issues associated with the overall future of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. Participants actively drew on base maps to illustrate how they might like to see the corridor evolve in the future by describing the uses, open spaces, building design, street design, transportation, parking, and services to be located along the corridor. During the second part of the workshop participants focused on Veronica S. Shoemaker Boulevard. During both exercises, the table groups identified specific redevelopment areas along the corridors. At the end of the workshop, a spokesperson from each table reported their table's ideas for the revitalization plan for their community and the corridors, to the entire assembly. Of the many ideas heard, some of the most widely shared ideas included:



One representative from each table presented their work to the group.



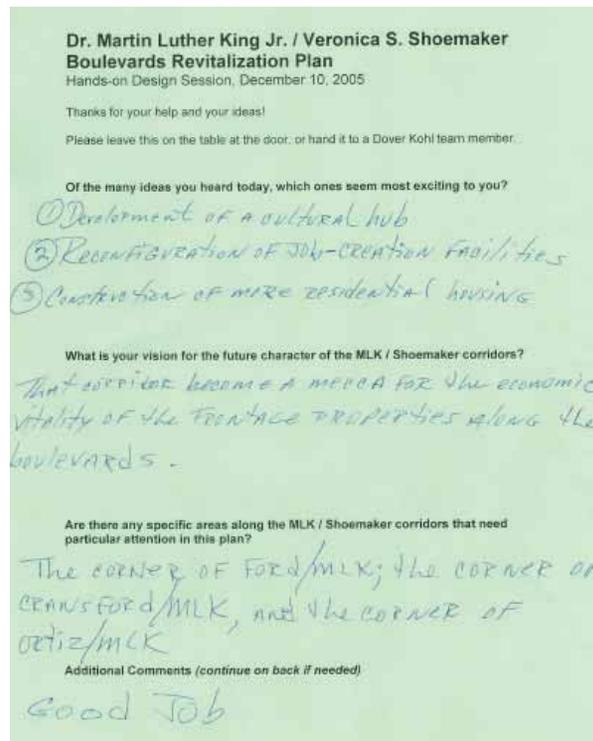
- Create a community center celebrating African-American history and culture
- Maintain affordable housing
- Encourage business development and local enterprise
- Improve pedestrian safety along the corridors
- Create a gateway to Fort Myers and the Dunbar community
- Provide opportunities for infill development
- Include police sub-stations in neighborhoods
- Concern over potential traffic bottlenecks where VSS intersects MLK and Michigan

In addition to the group presentations, each participant filled out a survey at the end of the session. The survey responses reveal additional ideas from the individuals that participated. The goal of the hands-on session was to forge an initial consensus and develop an overall community vision.

From Sunday, December 11 through Thursday, December 15 the design team continued to work with the community in an open design studio at the Quality Life Center on MLK. Citizens and local leaders were encouraged to stop by the studio throughout the week to check the status of the plan, provide further input, and to make sure the design team was on the right track. The table drawings and plans from the Saturday design session were placed around the room for easy review as new people became involved. While community members visited the studio, the design team continued to analyze the information gathered at the hands-on session and site analysis in order to formulate the initial concepts for the plan. The team was tasked with synthesizing the many ideas heard from the community throughout the week into a single cohesive revitalization plan. The planners and designers created lists, diagrams, draw-



The design studio was located in the Quality Life Center, offering easy access for community members and local leaders to stop-by and add further input to the plan.



Sample survey response



The multi-disciplinary team worked together on the technical components of the plan.



The design team created illustrations of how the corridors could grow more complete.



Citizens were encouraged to stop by the studio daily to check the status of the plan.



Technical meetings during the week helped to shape the details of the plan.



ings, and plans, working to combine and refine the ideas. Working in Fort Myers allowed the design team ready access to the study area during all hours and on different days of the week.

In addition to the public design studio, members of the design team met with community stakeholders and experts in scheduled technical meetings. The meetings were used to answer design questions, discuss the draft plan, and further gain input in regards to details associated with the redevelopment of the corridors. Technical meetings included sessions with city staff, elected officials, business owners, church representatives and property owners. The technical meetings helped to further shape the detailed elements of the plan and to ensure that the ideas being processed were balanced by awareness of many viewpoints.



Victor Dover presented sketches illustrating the hypothetical build-out of the corridors



Community members asked questions and offered comments at the end of Work-in-Progress Presentation.

The charrette week ended with an evening “Work-in-Progress” presentation on Thursday, December 15 at City Council Chambers. Over 40 citizens attended the presentation to hear and see how the planners and designers were able to synthesize the community’s ideas into the vision for the future of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and Veronica S. Shoemaker Boulevard. Victor Dover began the presentation with a summary of the week’s events, then presented sketches and visualizations illustrating the hypothetical future build-out of the corridors. Focusing on specific areas, Mr. Dover walked the audience through a “future tour” showing both short and long-term changes that are possible under the plan. Renderings showed “before” and “after” illustrations of possible redevelopment scenarios. At the end of the presentation, another survey was distributed to gauge the community’s opinion on the ideas presented that evening.



Mayor Jim Humphrey responded to citizens’ questions.



While Councilwoman Veronica Shoemaker answered questions from the media, some residents studied the sketches for the different areas.

## AFTER THE CHARRETTE

At the conclusion of the week-long charrette, the design team returned from Fort Myers to their own offices. They produced a charrette bulletin that documented the initial ideas and drawings from the charrette. This bulletin was printed and widely distributed by city officials to increase public awareness and solicit further citizen input to the plan.

In addition to distributing additional project information in the charrette bulletin, Bill Spikowski and Dr. Lee Duffus set-up a booth at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration at Centennial Park. Throughout the day, Duffus and Spikowski responded to community questions and distributed brochures showing initial ideas from the plan.



Sample pages from the Charrette Bulletin

January 12, 2006 The Community Voice

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**Help Shape the Future of Dunbar**  
 Your neighbors are contributing ideas for a revitalization plan for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. & Veronica S. Shoemaker Boulevards

**Two more chances to participate are coming up soon:**

Visit the Dover-Kohl booth at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Monday, January 16 - noon-5:00 pm at Centennial Park  
 Pick up a brochure showing initial ideas!

Second Hands-on Design Session Thursday, February 23 - 6:30-9:00 PM Stars Complex, 2690 Edison Avenue

*Revitalization Plan is being prepared for the City of Fort Myers*



Lee Duffus answered questions at the Dover-Kohl booth during the MLK day celebration at Centennial Park.

The Community Voice January 5, 2006

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**LOCAL**

Members of the Dover-Kohl team.

**DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR./VERONICA S. SHOEMAKER CORRIDORS REVITALIZATION PLAN HELD AT CITY HALL DECEMBER 15, 2005**

**Community Ideas**  
 Submitted by community members during the planning process so far:

- Support for existing community economic development entity that can manage and leverage debt and equity capital.
- Just stick with the plan would make us happy. Could make things happen if you find a way to publicize these meetings on the wall of a local building
- Would this area not be better suited for the development of commercial office, shops, light industrial facilities

Revitalization events were published in the local paper, *Community Voice*, to increase public awareness.

Fort Myers, Florida

**SECOND HANDS-ON SESSION**

An additional public meeting was conducted to engage new participants to help refine the proposed plan on Thursday, February 23, 2006 at the STARS Complex. Over 50 residents attended the session. Victor Dover began the presentation with a brief summary of the process and designs to date, then asked the participants to critique and improve the proposed plans. During the table sessions, community members identified problem areas along the corridors and came up with a list of improvements of what they would like see happen in Dunbar.

The goal of the second hands-on session was to give the community a further opportunity to provide ideas for the plan. The meeting also helped to continue the momentum for the planning effort, build consensus, and mobilize the residents of Fort Myers to work together as a community on the revitalization of the MLK and VSS corridors.

**REVITALIZATION PLAN**

Over a period of ten weeks the plan drawings produced during the charrette and the February public hands-on session were refined and the revitalization plan was created. The plan was then submitted for city and community review. The following report represents the community's desires and goals for the future of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and Veronica S. Shoemaker Boulevard and sets forth a workable framework of specific implementation measures.



Approximately 60 residents attended the workshop.



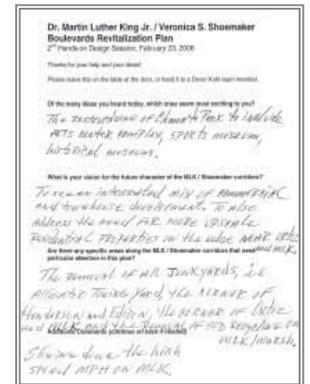
Community members worked together.



Representatives from the tables presented their ideas.



Sample table drawing



Sample exit survey