

In late 2006, Farr & Assoc., of Chicago, was hired by the City to review our land development regulations, such as zoning, subdivision, and design regulations. This is an implementation step following the 2006 update of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan Update answered questions about the location and type of development in Lakeland's future. Farr & Assoc. will now refine those decisions into development standards which impact site design, quality, character, aesthetics, the provision of infrastructure, and natural resources.

In early 2007, the City created an Advisory Committee of about 11 people, comprising citizens, developers, businesses, and City staff to assist Farr and Assoc. in reviewing recommendations as the project proceeds. To date, the committee has met twice, generally reviewing the same information presented to the public in Community Meetings, which are further explained below.

Farr kicked off the project in March, with Community Meeting #1, a public meeting where the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Plan was reviewed. In addition, a concept known as "the transect" was discussed, to illustrate how the Comprehensive Plan relates to development regulations. The transect is a way to describe the progression that occurs as natural areas transition to rural, suburban, and more intensely developed areas. Along this continuum, each type of development has particular characteristics, and as a result, in some cases blending development types may work, while in other cases it would be inappropriate.

On May 7, 2007, Community Meeting #2 was held, where the public was again engaged. Most of this meeting involved the public participating in an Image Preference Survey (IPS), where 182 images of different types and styles of development were rated on a minus five to plus five scale. For instance, a rating of -5 meant this development is absolutely inappropriate, and +5 meant this image is exactly appropriate, in given parts of the community.

Vigorous discussion occurred, where a few citizens expressed the opinion that they would like to see the same development as we already have, or little development. Both Farr and City staff pointed out that as a formerly rural area that is now on the leading edge of growth in the Memphis region, change will occur. While we can be proactive in putting in place policies to control the location, type, and quality of development, and to an extent, the timing of development, it is not possible to stop growth. For fiscal and other reasons, balancing different types of development is a more sound approach, while providing more choices for people. This is what was put in place with the 2006 Comprehensive Plan Update.

The results of the IPS will be tallied and used to inform Farr & Assoc., the Advisory Committee, City staff, and City Commissions about community perceptions, as one form of input for the development of new regulations.

Within several months, the first sets of recommendations will begin to be delivered by Farr & Assoc.. The recommendations will come in stages. As they are studied and

refined, future public meetings will be scheduled. The ultimate end of the project, when adoption of new regulations could occur, will likely be Summer, 2008.

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