

Appendix A: Airline Community Meeting – June 23, 2005

The Airline Vision Team, in partnership with the Harris County Community & Economic Development Department, Office of Harris County Precinct One Commissioner El Franco Lee, and the Office of State Representative Kevin Bailey hosted the Airline Community Meeting, on Thursday, June 23, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. at Carroll Academy, 423 W. Gulf Bank Drive; Houston, TX 77037.

To announce the meeting to all interested parties, the Airline Vision Team distributed over 1,200 bilingual flyers to residents through door-to-door tagging, put inserts in monthly neighborhood newsletters, made announcements at homeowner and civic meetings, had newspaper articles written in “The Leader” and “The Northeast News”, left flyers at local stores, the Sunbelt Fresh Water Supply District, and Nitsch and Sons Industries. Approximately 110 community members attended the meeting. This is inclusive of residents, business owners, educators, and clergy. Bilingual individuals from the Airline Vision Team and HCCEDD were available to translate information to residents. A deputy from the District II Harris County Sheriff’s Department attended the meeting.

During the community meeting, attendees were asked two basic questions that define the community:

1. What attracts me to my community?
2. What can be added or changed to keep me here in the future?

Thus, residents develop their own agenda for community development in Airline.

Meeting attendees were asked to collaborate and discuss among themselves strategies and proposals to improve the community. During the meeting, each person had the opportunity to visit five stations at their leisure and comment on that particular aspect of the community planning. The five categories are: housing, transportation and infrastructure, human services, community facilities, and economic development.

After residents visited each planning station and thoroughly analyzed their community, the prioritization exercise ensued. Residents were given 3 colored dots per station (for a total of 15 dots). Each resident was asked to place the appropriately colored dot next to the issue he/she felt was most important to the revitalization of Airline. If there was one particular issue a participant felt passionately about, he/she could place all three dots next to that issue. If however, there were two or three issues of importance to residents, he/she could place their dots accordingly. After all participants placed their dots, facilitators at each station identified which issues received the most dots and announced the five most important issues for their respective category. Following are the issues identified by category at the meeting.

Housing specifies places where one raises a family and displays personal items. Homes can be single-family, multi-family, and mobile, contain garages or patios, and generally portray any characteristics a resident wishes to display. It is

important that housing contain basic services, such as safe drinking water, as well as providing both a sense of privacy and connection to the larger community.

1. Improve flooding and drainage problems
2. Greater enforcement of deed restrictions
3. Restrict multiple families (housing units) living on one lot
4. Restrict trucks with more than 2 axles on residential streets
5. Install streetlights and sidewalks along major thoroughfares and residential neighborhoods
6. Limit the number of mobile home communities
7. Remove abandoned cars from street and yards
8. Landscape trees and cut overgrown lawns to beautify community
9. Demolish burnt and abandoned homes
10. Clean yards of trash and debris

Economic Development provides the basic goods and services for a community. Local buildings contain hair and beauty establishments, restaurants, grocery stores, automotive related services, and any other businesses local entrepreneurs choose to develop. Despite the variety of mega-malls and massive chain stores, it is these neighborhood businesses that provide the proverbial daily bread.

1. Greater enforcement of noise abatement laws (extreme noise from mobile home communities)
2. Ditches and culverts need to be cleaned and mowed more often to prevent flooding
3. Better water and sewer service to service areas and provide service to unserved areas to attract commercial investment
4. Install streetlights on Airline Drive and Gulf Bank Road
5. Greater police presence in areas around commercial district on Airline
6. Locate a grocery store in the target area
7. Encourage more family style restaurants to locate to community
8. Better maintenance of streets (paving streets and repairing cracks)
9. Install a sidewalk on Aldine Mail Road
10. Beautify community to attract investors (remove abandoned cars)
11. Initiate school to work programs
12. More heavy trash pick-up days
13. Initiate more youth programs
14. Greater enforcement and regulation of dumping on abandoned properties

Transportation & Infrastructure is the foundation of a community. Streets, water lines, sewer lines, sidewalks, and lighting are all part of the transportation and infrastructure framework. Basic services exist because of a solid infrastructure. An organized transportation system allows residents to access businesses both for employment and leisure. Transportation options, such as buses, walkways, and bike paths, diversify communities, reduce traffic, and enhance quality of life.

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1. Improve traffic management of flea market patrons on weekends
2. Install flashing school zone speed signs
3. Install traffic signals at the intersection of Gulfbank Road and Cobbleshire Road
4. Improve pedestrian traffic control at the flea markets
5. Restripe yellow lines
6. Investigate installing speed bumps on Rockcliff, Lillja, and Karen Streets
7. Increase and improve METRO bus service
8. Prevent drivers from using turn lanes as passing lanes
9. Investigate feasibility bussing flea market patrons into community from nearby Park & Ride lots

Human Services connect people to each other. They assist people in meeting health, welfare, employment, and other basic needs. Human service providers can be public or private, non-profit or for-profit, and range from day care to drug counseling to job training. Human services create the social fabric that supports a community.

1. More heavy trash collection days (4 times a year)
2. Develop a community watch program
3. Better litter control of public places
4. Provide more after-school programs/activities for children and adolescents (investigate partnerships with school districts and other youth organizations)
5. Investigate locating a 24-hr medical clinic in the Community & Economic Development Department
6. Provide adult education programs
7. Make childcare more affordable

Community Facilities constitute the cultural, educational, and social gathering places of a neighborhood. There are two types of community facilities: public and private. Public facilities include parks, schools, community centers, and any other site specifically designed for general resident gathering and owned by the public. Private facilities include churches, hospitals, theaters, and any other sites privately owned. Community centers, elementary schools, parish churches, and local libraries help define the sense of place within a given area. They provide a location for the collective energies of a community.

1. Locate a Harris County Sheriff's Department Storefront at the intersection of Airline Drive and Gulfbank Road.
2. Locate a community center in the target area
3. Provide greater police presence throughout the entire Community & Economic Development Department
4. Initiate a Weed & Seed Program in Airline
5. Clean up parks and locate new parks (possibly small pocket parks) in the Community & Economic Development Department

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Following are pictures of residents discussing and prioritizing issues at the community meeting.



Source: HCCEDD, 2005



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