

Florence-Firestone Vision Plan Summary Notes

Community Workshop #1 – Issues, Opportunities and Goals
January 10, 2009, Miramonte Elementary School

On Saturday January 10, 2009, members of the Florence-Firestone community met for the first of three public community workshops to develop the Florence-Firestone Vision Plan. The purpose of this first workshop was to re-affirm the existing issues facing the community and then to prioritize long-term goals for Florence-Firestone. Approximately 30 members of the public attended the workshop.

The workshop began with the community answering a series of questions about their community. The four questions asked and the responses were:

1) Where do you live? – Community members put a sticker on a map of the community showing the location of their home.

2) Where do you work? – Community members put a sticker on a map of the community showing where they worked. If they did not work in the Florence-Firestone area then they wrote the location of their job on a post-it note and placed it on the map.

3) What are the key issues in the community? – Community members wrote comments on post-it notes and placed them on the map. The following are the comments received:

- Drug Sales
- Gangs
- Loitering
- Improve safety at Blue Line stations
- Illegal dumping
- Lack of development. Need quality grocery store, better housing and more businesses.
- Car sales on streets
- Illegal vendors
- Cleaner streets
- Stray cats and dogs
- Improved parking for Florence-Firestone commercial corridor
- Damaged sidewalks throughout the community
- Small, vacant lots that the zoning code will not allow any new buildings on.
- Trash around school construction sites
- No trash cans at bus stops
- Continuity of services from the County

4) Magic Genie – Community members were granted 3 wishes to improve their community. They wrote their ideas on post it notes and placed them on a map of the community.

- Enforce and stop illegal dumping
- Stop illegal yard sales
- Stop illegal vending, especially on weekends
- Stop gangs
- Build a movie theater
- Reduce crime

- Stop drug dealing
- Reduce homelessness
- Stop gangs
- Get rid of bar on Graham Avenue and Firestone
- Get rid of liquor store on Beach Street and Firestone
- More economic development
- More restaurants
- More senior housing
- Clean up community (trash and graffiti)
- Get rid of all used car dealerships
- More security and less gangs and drugs on the street
- Get rid of pornographic stores
- Get rid of liquor store at Compton and 76th Place
- Improve pre-school for children
- More parking on Florence Mile
- Better local transportation
- Get rid of all poker players in public parks
- Get rid of pallet companies in residential areas
- Build a local dog pound – there are too many stray dogs.
- More street lights on neighborhood streets

Following these exercises there was a presentation by Matt Raimi of Raimi + Associates, Inc., the lead consultant on the project. The presentation described the project, the existing conditions in the community and over 30 potential long-term goals for the community. The goals were divided into 6 topic areas: built environment; economy and jobs; transportation; public facilities and services; community life; and health and safety. (Attachment 1 describes the goals.)

The community members then broke into groups of 8-10 people to discuss the goals. Each member was given 12 sticky dots to vote on their top priorities and each member was asked to vote for at least 1 goal in each of the 6 topic areas. The results were then compiled and community members reported back on why each goal was a priority for their group.

The following is a summary of the results of each breakout group and any additional comments made by the public. Attachment A includes a list and description of each goal in English and Spanish, the number of votes each goal received in each group, the total number of votes received from all groups and the rank of each goal. (Note: Groups are numbered 1, 3 and 5; there were not groups at tables 2 and 4).

Group 1

Top Goals

1. Improve public safety – It's difficult to accomplish other goals without feeling safe first.
2. Enhance job training
3. Enhance services for youth, seniors and disabled
4. Preserve existing and attract new jobs
5. Enhance neighborhoods (more lights on the streets)
6. Improve traffic safety (speed in residential areas and near schools)
7. Attract more retail
8. Improve transit stations and facilities
9. Reduce trash and graffiti
10. Green the community

11. Increase educational opportunities (tie with 10)

Additional Comments from the Group

- Security – Parks and Metro stations
- Revitalize street facades to reduce crime and other illegal activities
- Create programs that will increase community interests from residents
- Identify residential areas in need of more patrol from law enforcement
- Revitalize Firestone Blvd. No services or programs exist to revitalize Firestone Blvd. Problems exist with liquor stores and metro stations.
- Vehicle Sales on residential streets.

Group 2

Top Goals

1. Improve public safety – It's difficult to accomplish other goals (e.g. walkable community) without feeling safe first.
2. Improve alleys
3. Reduce trash and graffiti
4. Create an identifiable image for Florence-Firestone (e.g. gateways to the community)
5. Attract more supermarkets, restaurants and shopping – That offer more (healthy) choices and that create jobs.
6. Address code violations
7. Enhance services for youth, seniors and disabled
8. Enhance Florence Mile
9. Revitalize Alameda Street
10. Community Education (new goal added by group) (Offer residents a handbook / guide outlining local ordinances related to code enforcement)

Additional Comments from the Group

What are the most important goals?

- Alameda Street – beautification, attract a supermarket with more quality food
- Public safety
- Trash and graffiti because it improves health
- Code violations – need higher fines and more man power at county to reduce violations
- More law enforcement should be added to the goals

Group 3

Top Goals

1. Improve public safety – People want to feel safe in their community
2. Enhance services for youth, seniors and the disabled – Keep kids off the streets; provide senior housing
3. Address code violations – Clean up illegal vending; car sales, etc.
4. Preserve existing and attract new jobs – Attract new jobs within the community; rebuild underutilized areas to attract new jobs; better industrial jobs
5. Enhance neighborhoods – Pride of ownership
6. Enhance job training – Vocational training; people are willing to work but there is a lack of skills and jobs that match skills
7. Attract more supermarkets, restaurants and shopping – Higher quality foods
8. Enhance Florence Mile – This is the heart of the community; attract more businesses; make it safer

9. Increase access to health care – The community needs affordable health care near Florence-Firestone.
10. Create an identifiable image for Florence-Firestone – We need to know who we are and have community pride.

Additional Comments from the Group

- Crime and enforcement of crime is important
- More security and safety is needed
- Community identity – improve the negative image of the community
- Create a datasheet/information on the crime in the community
- Many street lights are out – make sure facilities work
- More outreach and communication is needed to empower the community
- Without public safety many of the other goals cannot be achieved
- Hospitals and emergency care are needed in the community
- More job training is needed – more programs at schools and parks
- More supermarkets are needed and a wider variety of supermarkets that sell higher quality foods.
- More code enforcement is needed especially for illegal vending in public areas, on weekends and to address public health issues
- Increased public safety at train stations is needed; the stations are unsafe
- Increased bus connections are needed and safety on buses and at stops is lacking
- There is no parking enforcement after 5pm and on weekends. There is parking congestion and more parking is needed.
- Places and services for teens are needed
- Enhance job training for youth and elderly
- Create a local shuttle to connect existing shopping with transit facilities

Summary

Follow the discussions in the breakout groups, one member of each group reported back to the larger group on their top 10 priority votes and the total number of votes for each goal was tallied. The following is list of the top 10 priority goals from the public workshop.

- Improve Public Safety (30 votes)
- Enhance Services for Youth Seniors and the Disabled (20 votes)
- Improve Alleys (16 votes)
- Attract More Supermarkets, Restaurants and Shopping (14 votes)
- Preserve Existing and Attract New Jobs (13 votes)
- Enhance Job Training (13 votes)
- Reduce Trash and Graffiti (13 votes)
- Address Code Violations (13 votes)
- Create and Identifiable Image for Florence-Firestone (12 votes)
- Enhance Florence Mile (11 votes)
- Enhance Neighborhoods (10 votes)

Next Steps

There will be 2 more workshops held to help create the Florence-Firestone Vision Plan. The workshops will be held on February 21st and March 28th. Each member of the community is encouraged to spread the word about the workshop and to bring at least 5 other people to the workshop.