

Lakeside Street Business Area

Visioning Session Summary

"Building a Transformational Future from an Ancient Past"

July 2010

Bay Creek Neighborhood Association with Stitt Facilitations
Funding Provided by the City of Madison Neighborhood Grant Program

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The Lakeside Street Business Area Initiative was launched by the Bay Creek Neighborhood Association with funding from the City of Madison's Neighborhood Grant Program. The effort was facilitated by Bert Stitt, Stiff Facilitations.

The Visioning Session took place at the Baha'i Center and members of the Baha'i Community generously donated their time and their space to this project. The following neighbors, business owners, and stakeholders contributed their time and ideas to this effort at the Visioning Session and other meetings:

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INTRODUCTION

Lakeside Street is one of Madison's most interesting commercial corridors combining a unique mix of locally-owned small businesses including a natural pet supply store, a yoga studio, a knitting shop, a coffee room, a homeopathic remedy store, and a vintage and handmade jewelry and art store. Recognizing the life and vitality the Lakeside business area brings to their neighborhood, the Bay Creek Neighborhood Association utilized a City of Madison grant to launch an initiative focused on supporting and enhancing Lakeside Street as a neighborhood commercial district.

The grant provided funding to convene the neighbors and businesses to generate ideas, build organizational capacity, and identify strategies to enhance the area. On July 10, 2010 the Neighborhood Association hosted a "Lakeside Street Visioning Session" to bring people together to create ideas and discuss the future of Lakeside Street.

The Visioning Session consisted of a series of exercises designed to engage participants in a multi-layered discussion of Lakeside Street's history, existing strengths, and opportunities for the future. The session consisted of the following series of exercises:

- **Review of Past Plans** – In this exercise participants reviewed and responded to key recommendations related to Lakeside Street from past city plans.
- **"Hopes and Wishes" Exercise** – This exercise consisted of participants answering the question, *"What are your hopes and wishes for a healthy and vital future for the Lakeside Street Business Area?"* Individual responses were then categorized and prioritized by the group.
- **Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results (SOAR)** – The SOAR exercise resulted in a long list of characteristics and ideas related to these four words.
- **Vision Statement** – The Vision Statement synthesized the results of the previous exercises into a bold and forward-looking statement for Lakeside Street's Future.
- **Strategic Directions** – The Strategic Directions will transform the ideas from the Visioning Session into next steps and provide the structure for actions going forward.



REVIEW OF PAST PLANS

The Review exercise involved posting a series of recommendations relevant to the Lakeside Business Area from the Bay Creek Neighborhood Plan and the South Madison Plan on the walls of the room and letting participants in the session respond to each one by attaching post-it notes to the posters. The group then had a discussion of the recommendations and responses. The list below summarize some of the overall results of the exercise and the subsequent lists summarize the responses to each of the recommendations from the two plans

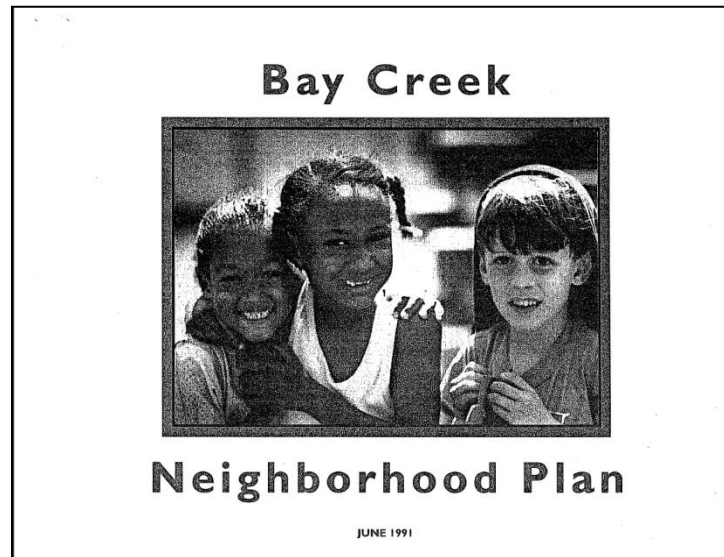
OVERALL RESULTS & REACTIONS FROM THE REVIEW:

- The South Madison Plan was done in 2005 so it is relatively recent and it is broadly focused on the entire Southside
- The Bay Creek Neighborhood Plan is detailed and focused on Bay Creek, and it is almost 20 years old and has not been updated since it was originally written.
- The Visioning Session participants strongly agreed with many recommendations but felt as though the previous plans had a bureaucratic approach and were somewhat out of touch with the character of the neighborhood
- The importance of an improved streetscape stood out as a priority in the Plans and for the visioning session participants
- The previous plans gave no thought to sustainability, which is important to Bay Creek residents and the Lakeside Businesses
- The previous plans paid little attention to green space in Bay Creek
- The discussion of the previous plans ranged from the physical aspects of the neighborhood to the organic/spiritual/cultural aspects of the neighborhood
- It was pointed out during the discussion that, in ancient times, Native Americans viewed the Bay Creek area as a spiritual place for healing. This theme and focus of the area continues today in the mix of businesses on Lakeside.
- There was a strong and powerful feeling of community energy as the group was reading the previous plans and responding with ideas of their own.



RESPONSES TO THE BAY CREEK NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN (1991)

The City of Madison completed the Bay Creek Neighborhood Plan in 1991 and the Plan includes a detailed analysis followed by a series of recommendations for action. The following passages are recommendations from the plan followed by bulleted lists of responses shared by participants in the visioning session.



The Bay Creek Neighborhood Plan was one of the plans reviewed. Neighbors supported many of the ideas in the plan but felt others were out-of-date or not a good fit for Lakeside Street

“West Lakeside Street business owners should be encouraged to renovate their businesses. Special emphasis should be placed on creating a distinctive neighborhood retail district. This can be achieved by restoring original building facades, using decorative awnings and banners to create a sense of cohesion, improving the appearance of signs, and landscaping”

- Several positive responses including “Love it”, “Like it”, and “Good Idea”
- There should be a theme to visually unify the neighborhood
- This would require funding to implement and the neighborhood can pursue grant opportunities for this
- Focusing on improving alleyways and spaces in between buildings and lots will do a lot to enhance the image of Lakeside Street



- For things like streetscape improvements, banners, etc., on Lakeside Street, they will make a better statement if they are unique to the street and not “cookie cutter” designs

“Develop Chicago and Northwestern rail line corridor for recreational purposes”

- Residents were unclear on what this means and whether it is possible
- Maintaining the rail corridor for a possible light rail system was suggested
- Improvements to the landscaping of the rail corridor were discussed and supported
- The possibility of the neighborhood leading an effort to put plantings in the rail corridor and improve landscaping in the corridor was discussed

“A Revolving Loan Fund for the Lakeside and other Bay Creek businesses should be explored further. A comprehensive approach that combines physical improvements with efforts to foster a more complementary set of businesses and improved business planning could spark the area's rejuvenation”

- Residents were somewhat unclear on what this means and how a Revolving Loan Fund could be a resource for them

“A neighborhood festival should be held annually to generate positive publicity for the neighborhood and enhance neighborhood identity”

- This idea received many positive responses
- Lakeside Street and Bernie’s Beach were offered as possible locations for a festival
- The idea of rethinking the concept of a festival and doing something more unique and more specific to the theme and character of Lakeside Street was discussed and supported
- One possible idea was to have festivals and events focused on Lakeside Street’s current and historic focus on health and healing

“Enforce speed limits on West Lakeside Street and West Olin Avenue”

- This recommendations generated a lot of responses and a lot of dialogue



- People generally agreed that calming traffic on Lakeside Street should be a priority as a way to improve the business environment and enhance neighborhood safety
- Ideas for how to calm traffic included enforcement mechanisms as well as physical changes to the street
- The potential of having a permanent radar sign was suggested
- Potential physical changes discussed included a traffic circle at Gilson, a stop sign at Gilson, pedestrian “bump-outs” at crosswalks, and brick paving of crosswalks
- It was mentioned that there had been past discussions about traffic calming measures and ideas were rejected due to concerns about emergency vehicle access

“Improving the visual quality of the Bay Creek Neighborhood should be a priority. Emphasis should be placed on tree planting and flower planting, neighborhood entrance signs, decorative banners, and burying utility wires...The theme of a neighborhood surrounded by water should be emphasized in these improvement projects”

- Participants agreed with this statement, and we would do well to consider aesthetic improvements unique to the character and flavor of Lakeside Street

“Increase neighborhood businesses awareness of programs and services offered by the Small Business Development Center (SBDC). The Bay Creek Neighborhood Association should obtain information from SBDC about its programs”

- Residents thought this was a potentially good resource and more information is needed

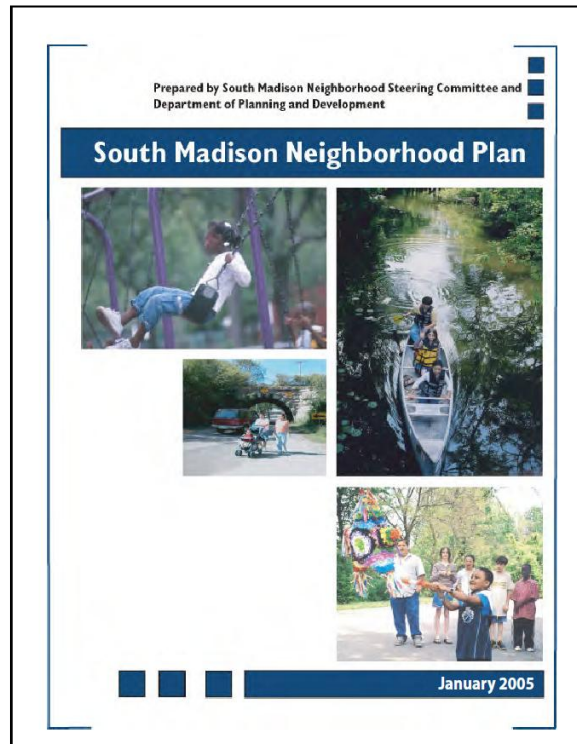
“Linkage and coordination between the Bay Creek Neighborhood and adjacent neighborhoods should be encouraged. This could be accomplished through joint neighborhood projects such as Wingra Creek improvements, the Park Street Plan project, etc.”

- This is something that the Bay Creek Neighborhood Association might strive to do and it may be more of a long term effort



RESPONSES TO THE SOUTH MADISON NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN (2005)

The South Madison Plan is a more recent document that was completed in 2005. However, the Plan addresses the entire Southside of the city and, the level of detailed focus on neighborhood-scale issues is somewhat limited. Nonetheless, the Plan includes a number of recommendations that directly or indirectly relate to the Lakeside Street business area.



The South Madison Plan was reviewed as part of the Visioning Session and includes a number of recommendations related to Lakeside Street. However, it is broadly-focused document that covers the entire Southside

“The Lakeside Street Commercial District is a neighborhood friendly, pedestrian-oriented commercial node that is, and potentially can improve upon, serving the neighborhood with neighborhood-oriented business and/or service enterprises”

- Residents agreed with this statement and shared thoughts on trying to build on this idea



- Comments suggested trying to make the area more pedestrian friendly and adding a grocery store as a “neighborhood-oriented business”

“Enhancement of the district’s identity, such as: wayfinding signs (i.e., banners), façade improvements, and streetscape amenities (benches, bicycle racks, planters) to beautify the business district is encouraged”

- Residents stressed the neighborhood’s focus on being a “green” neighborhood and Lakeside Street’s health and healing theme as things that should guide efforts to enhance the district’s identity
- Possible ideas included solar pedestrian lighting, green roofs, improving “interstitial spaces”, and community art incorporated in the street
- Emphasis was placed on making improvements with a low impact approach and on creating an identity that is unique to Lakeside Street
- It was noted that the existing Bay Creek “Welcome Signs” are deteriorating and two of them have large cracks and holes

“Although the VFW site is valued by the neighborhood, it is speculated that this use will change in the future. Professional office and/or mixed-use development would be desired future uses for this site. Since this is an important gateway site leading into the neighborhood, creating a public art space should be considered”

- Several residents mentioned that they do not often think about the VFW and had not thought about the possibility of redevelopment
- The idea of a mixed-use development on that site received some support
- The possibility of redeveloping the city-owned property south of the VFW was also mentioned as an idea

“New mixed-use development on the north side of the 300 block of W. Lakeside that reflects the scale and character of the existing business district would be supported”

- Residents had concerns about the idea of redeveloping property on the 300 block of Lakeside and felt strongly that most, if not all, of the structures in the 300 block should remain as they are
- Residents felt the scale and character of any redevelopment will be important and they want development to be consistent with the existing buildings



- The specifics of where redevelopment would occur was identified as the critical issue with this recommendations; with most residents feeling that some properties on Lakeside could support redevelopment while they want to keep most existing buildings
- It was pointed out that much of Lakeside Street is already mixed use with apartments above the storefronts
- Residents expressed hesitancy to support redevelopment but an openness to listen to ideas

“Bay Creek and Bram’s Addition neighborhoods should jointly host events, targeted toward families and children of the neighborhood, to strengthen community ties and cultural, ethnic understanding among individuals living in the area.”

- Residents generally felt that collaboration with Bran’s Addition is a good idea
- Residents also felt that partnerships and collaborative efforts with other neighborhoods would be beneficial



“HOPES AND WISHES” EXERCISE

The second exercise of the Visioning Session consisted of participants using post-it notes to jot down answers to the question:

“What are your hopes and wishes for a healthy and vital future for The Lakeside Street Business Area?”

The responses were then posted on the wall of the room and organized into categories. The categories and the responses were then ranked in terms of their level of priority. The following lists are the categories that emerged and the responses that were grouped into each category. The subsequent chart shows the results of the ranking.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING AND FUNDING

- Build greater awareness in the community and foster a stronger sense of community in the neighborhood
- Connect Lakeside Street to similar initiatives focused on Park Street
- Track funding and pursue grant opportunities
- Encourage involvement
- Make things happen through the passion of the neighborhood
- Involve neighborhood institutions (such as the Baha’i community, Franklin School, and the Montessori School) in neighborhood efforts
- Unified, joint marketing of businesses

FOOD, HEALTH, AND HEALING

- Create a neighborhood garden on or near Lakeside Street
- Emphasize the health and healing theme of the business area and its history
- Encourage new businesses that contribute to the health theme of the area and that provide food (possibly including a deli, restaurant, or natural foods grocer)

BUSINESS MIX AND IDENTITY

- Encourage eco-friendly businesses on Lakeside Street that contribute to the identity of the area



- Pursue funding to help support existing businesses in efforts to revitalize their spaces and become more green
- Prioritize job opportunities for neighborhood residents
- Encourage businesses that are useful and help meet daily needs of neighborhood residents
- Encourage putting a grocery store or deli on Lakeside Street
- Attract more businesses
- Attract businesses that complement and enhance those that are already on Lakeside
- Create an identity for the area built around a movement that links the businesses to larger goals of transforming lives, providing sustainable/local goods, and celebrating Lakeside Street's identity as a magical place

PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS INCLUDING TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

- Beautify the neighborhood
- Create and install street lamps, banners, planters, etc. that are unique to the character of Lakeside Street
- Beautify the railroad and roadway
- Make Bernie's Beach clean and vibrant
- Improve public spaces
- Create an innovative streetscape
- Repair/replace neighborhood entrance signs
- Implement traffic calming on Lakeside Street

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

- Hold a neighborhood festival (something unique to the themes of the area)
- Have more regular neighborhood events such as storytelling, movies in the park, etc.
- Encourage more use of Franklin School in the summer for events

COMMUNITY VALUES

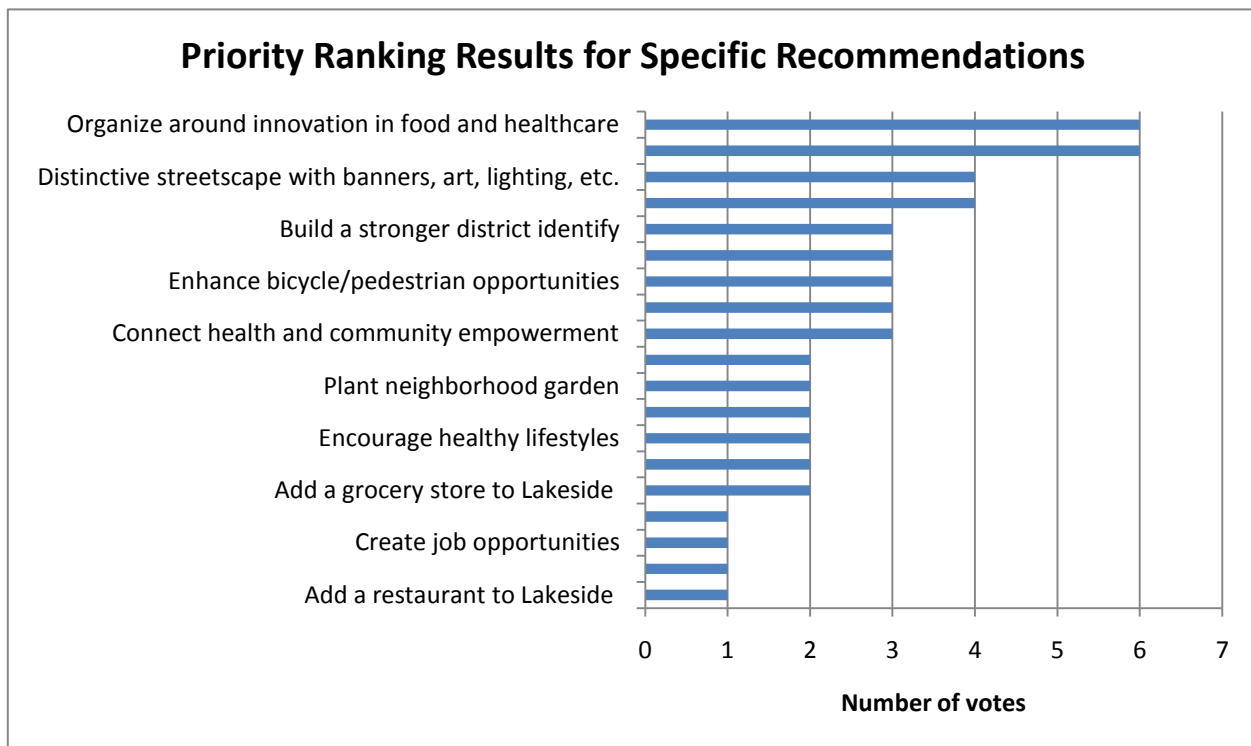
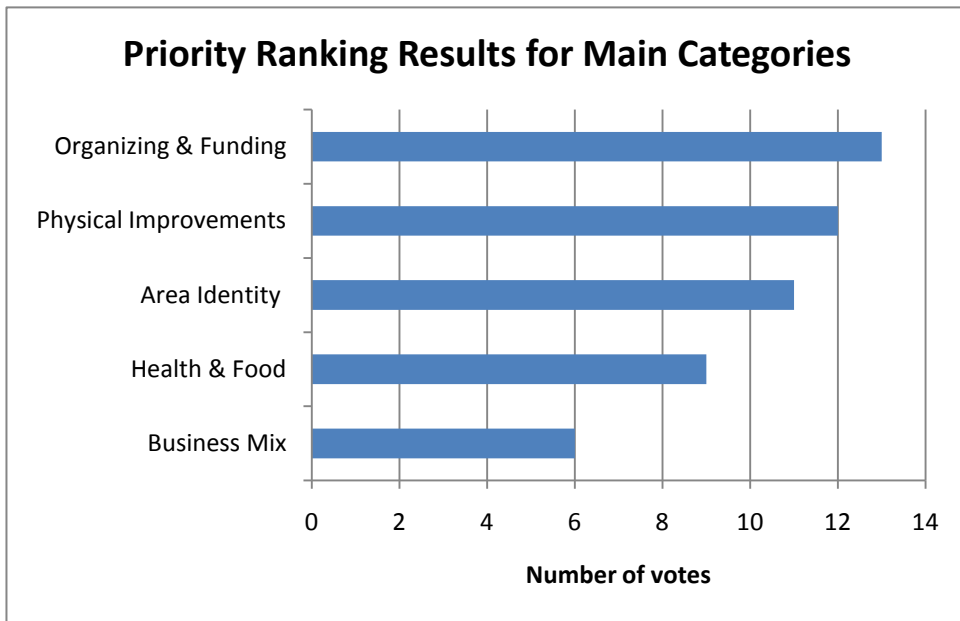
- An emphasis on the health of people and the health of the planet are values of the neighborhood reflected in the Lakeside Street businesses
- The neighborhood values and supports the hopes and dreams of each individual



- Supporting the mixing of people at different economic levels is important to the neighborhood
- We want to encourage the mixing of generations (young and old) in the Lakeside Street Business Area
- Bay Creek is a friendly and neighborly place
- Physical and spiritual health, active lifestyles, and diversity are neighborhood values

After grouping the responses to the “Hopes and Wishes” question into categories, participants then voted on which categories are the highest priority and which particular responses within each category are the highest priority.





STRENGTHS, OPPORTUNITIES, ASPIRATIONS, & RESULTS (SOAR)

During the SOAR exercise, the group created four lists of features and ideas about Lakeside Street that relate to each of these four words.

STRENGTHS

- Health/wellness theme
- Goodman pool
- The theme and history – our ancestors, health, education, family, animals, land
- Niche businesses
- Land to cultivate for gardens
- Defined geography (by water)
- Neighborhood leaders
- The people in the neighborhood
- Surrounded by active community members
- Existing strong businesses
- Great location within city (close to Downtown, Goodman pool, lake, creek, bike trails, Beltline, etc)
- Cooperative attitude among businesses
- Engaging community-oriented business owners
- A group of committed, talented business people
- Alliant energy center nearby
- True desire to keep the uniqueness of the neighborhood (enthusiasm)
- Historical, unique feel of business locations
- People with a fire in the belly and businesses with common values
- People with vision
- Olin Park proximity and opportunities for change
- Existing neighborhood association
- Lakes and waterways
- Existing businesses



Lakeside Street Business Area Initiative: Visioning Session Summary & Strategic Directions

- Gathering places (Ba'Hai Center, coffee shop)
- Close to water (lake, bay, and creek)
- Smart, friendly, and attractive neighbors
- Great mix of businesses
- Historic buildings
- Lots of kids
- Walkable business area
- Proximity to downtown
- Vandewalle & Associates
- Close to the pool (active place)
- Destination businesses
- Monona Bay
- Wingra Creek
- Bike Trails
- Franklin School
- Good start with existing businesses
- Diversity
- Pride in businesses from neighbors
- Access
- People willing to listen to others ideas/building on each other's ideas
- Woodland Montessori School
- A gem (special places)
- Mix of income levels
- Neighborhood feel community



OPPORTUNITIES

- Work with school
- Safer, more welcoming, and more attractive Olin Park
- New business in YWCA building
- Vacant dairy building could be reused/redeveloped
- Funding opportunities for green initiatives
- Grants for future projects
- More events and a festival
- Tapping into existing movements
- Streetscape improvements
- Influx of people to pool
- Community building (day-to-day connections)
- Coalition for good
- Attract new businesses
- Coordination with Park Street businesses
- Younger families moving in
- Beautify neighborhood
- Safe route to school funding
- Neighborhood Leaders
- Grant and revitalize existing businesses
- More local interaction production
- Partner with Franklin
- People who choose to live here care about neighborhoods
- Beauty
- Grants might be available
- A willingness to do things differently than they have been done in the past
- Lakeside bookends – Olin Park and Dairy property both could be great
- Lots of recent housing investments
- Partnerships between and organizations like school & VFW
- Timing – it's a good time to get people to buy into hope
- Organizational capacity among business owners and residents
- Enhance streetscaping



ASPIRATIONS

- Greater synergy between businesses and neighbors
- “Young” energy
- Residents and visitors are delighted when they travel to the street
- Natural fit
- Business sustainability
- Continued success of existing businesses
- People and kid and pet friendly
- Healthy businesses
- More attractive street
- Lakeside as a fun place
- More businesses for day-to-day needs
- Safer street
- Get people out-and-about
- Neighbors that know each other
- Improved Olin Park
- Truly get existing businesses to work together for positive change
- Revitalization of dairy property
- Opportunities to get together and reinforce intentions
- The doors are open, the sidewalks are alive, the benches are full
- Greater sense of community
- Neighborhood interaction is regularly occurring/people are stopping
- That we model good values
- That it be a good experience for both customers and proprietors
- Soul-level healing takes place from daily interactions
- Residents can utilize businesses frequently and they enhance their lives
- Road is more pedestrian/biker friendly



RESULTS

- Green, calm neighborhood
- Beautiful district and joyful people
- A great set of business for daily use and neighborhood identity
- Stability green business supportive business people
- That what is accomplished is good for pets, people and the earth
- Being able to meet all my needs without car
- People from outside the neighborhood come here (but not too many)
- Beautiful, functional, and safe street
- City investment in this area
- Community visioning and sustaining opportunities continue
- Maintain neighborhood quality of life
- Community supports business – business supports community
- Motivated business owners and residents who continually engage in opportunities for Lakeside Street
- Strong community feel



VISION STATEMENT

The Vision Statement is a synthesis of all the ideas shared during the session and provides a single, unified statement from those present of a vision for the future of the Lakeside Street business area. The statement draws from the history of the area as a sacred place, references its assets and strengths, and communicates the neighborhood's aspirations for its future.

*Building a Transformational Future
From an Ancient Past*

The Lakeside Business Area is distinctive and attractive.

Businesses and residents are actively engaged in an organized and collaborative working relationship to build responsible stewardship of the earth and all its creatures with respect for the history of the neighborhood.

We have calm traffic, we have safe streets that are comfortable for bicyclist, pedestrians, children, and pets, and we have a unique, healthy, and locally-owned business mix. Our business area enhances life and healing with fun, vibrant, green, sustainable energy.



STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The Visioning Session led to hundreds of exciting ideas for Lakeside Street and a bold Vision Statement for its future. The Strategic Directions are four key categories that emerged as key focus areas to guide the effort to implement these ideas and advance toward the vision.

1) ORGANIZATIONAL COHESION

- Foster joint efforts by neighbors & businesses
- Encourage more proactive efforts from the Bay Creek Neighborhood Assn.
- Identify and pursue future funding



2) AREA IDENTITY

- Build on Lakeside's "healing" theme
- Create a marketing / "branding" strategy for Lakeside
- Pursue business growth opportunities



3) SENSE OF COMMUNITY / EVENTS

- Build a stronger sense of community
- Launch new events in Bay Creek involving neighbors and businesses
- Have a neighborhood festival



4) PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

- Calm traffic on Lakeside Street
- Make Lakeside more attractive
- Work with the City on streetscape design and implement public improvements (better lighting, public art, crosswalks, etc.)

