



## **Overton Square Public Meeting/Charrette July 24, 2009**

The Memphis Regional Design Center held a one day public meeting and mini design charrette concerning the future of Overton Square on July 24, 2009 at the offices of Memphis Heritage, 2282 Madison Avenue, Memphis, TN 38104. Over 80 attendees including neighbors, business owners, architects, planners and other concerned community members spent their day discussing the history of Overton Square and what they'd like to see happen to the Square in the future. Participants were encouraged to keep an open mind by envisioning a new Overton Square preserving the existing buildings, demolishing them and a combination of preservation and demolition. About 1/3 of the day was spent discussing their ideas and the rest of the day was spent putting those ideas to paper, drawing plans.

### **Discussion Phase**

The community was asked to share their thoughts on what they wanted to see at Overton Square. Following are the suggested uses expressed by the attendees:

1. Mixed Use (Residential/ Retail)
2. People
3. Greening (Landscaping)
4. Bike lanes to Overton Park
5. "Little shops" (like bike rentals)
6. Art Gallery
7. Bikeable network (address drain issues)
8. More restaurants (all price points including Deli)
9. Grocery
10. Wide sidewalks
11. Outdoor cafeteria
12. Good music/ entertainment
13. Odd shops/curiosity shops
14. Water
15. Open-air meeting place
16. Clothing Retail
17. Small specialty Book Store (like Books & Books in Miami)

18. Outdoor Theater
19. Bakery/ Café
20. Toy Store
21. Florist
22. Hotel
23. Garden Center
24. Rest Station for Bikers
25. Identity of Overton Square
26. Trees
27. Public Wi-Fi and Park Benches
28. Business Association Established
29. Hands-on Art Shop
30. Small Professional Businesses
31. Mix of Uses, Center for Office/Retail and Restaurants
32. Technology
33. Public Art
34. Apple Store
35. Small Children's Play Place
36. Dedicated transportation (like trolley/ bus lines)
37. William-Sonoma
38. Lit (small)
39. Specialty Destination Store
40. IKEA
41. Gift Shop (like Babcock's)
42. Jewelry Store
43. Wine/ Liquor
44. Pet Grooming
45. Minor Medical
46. Hardware
47. Destination/ Identity
48. More People
49. Schools (Satellite Facility)
50. Daycare
51. Destination!!!
52. Specialty Store
53. Like Japan Town/ SFO
54. General Mast
55. Jake's Place (closed circuit TV)
56. Police Substation
57. Flea Market
58. Uses supporting the Theater such as Lighting, Quality Hotel
59. Establish as Destination Place (part of Entertainment Package)
60. Craft Items
61. University-oriented Bookstore
62. Parking
63. Tourist Center (MCVB)

Public input could be categorized in the following 4 areas:

Uses:

- Wide Range & Mix (Retail/ Office/ Residential)
- Center of Gathering in Midtown (a Destination arguably regional in character)
- Local Serving Retail – Specialty, Destination

Physical Design:

- Street-Oriented Development (Cooper, Madison, Florence)
- Share, Minimize, Hide Parking
- Quality Experience – Streets, Trees, Etc
- People First, Not Cars
- Transit-oriented, Walkable, Bikeable
- Public Gathering Spaces
- Links to Overton Park, Cooper Young, Etc
- Compatible w/ nearby neighborhoods
- Safety Through Design
- Consider traffic & on-street parking

Development Strategy:

- Incorporate Turner Dairy, French Quarter
- Zoning which makes the right thing easy to do
- Win-Win-Win (Developer, Neighborhood, Community/ City)
- Set the Best Precedent for City – All eyes on us
- Be Open to Discussion without Excessive Secrecy
- Build Partnerships to Get it Done
- Leave the Best for Last – No Mistakes

Community History/ Heritage:

- Respect the Legacy We Are Left With (Leave a Good One to Our Kids)
- Capitalize on Sentiment & Brand – Midtown, Site
- Preserve the Best (Architecture, Places, Boulevard)

## Design Phase

Participants were broken up into 3 teams.

Team A based their designs on keeping the existing structures on the south side of Madison Avenue.

Team B based their designs on demolishing all of the existing structures on the south side of Madison Avenue.

Team C based their designs on a combination of preserving some of the structures and demolishing some of the structures.

### TEAM A - ANALYSIS

Preserve:

- Historic Architecture (uniform)
- Streetscape (reinforce & enhance)
- Central Location
- Smaller Shops (Affordable)
- Entertainment District (Lafayette – Great Concerts. Music/Bar)
- Neighborhood Gathering
- Street Wall (Madison)
- Cottage (Businesses)
- Human Scale
- Impactful Street Ensemble at Curved Façade
- Mix of Storefront Sizes
- Possibilities for Mixed Use
- Accessible by Transit (Car, Bike, Mass Transit, Union by Foot)
- Central to Major Roadways System
- Close to Upscale Demographic Market
- Existing Business
- Community Affection
- Art Community (Generator of Traffic) (open space for artists)
- Tradition of Creativity
- Mixed Income Housing
- Large Scale Ownership (LLC or Merchant Association)

Addition:

- Transform Parking Lot to Public Garden Space
- Connecting Bosco's to Theater stretch (Bundle Amenities)
- Mixed Use Building (Ground Floor: Retail; Upper Floor: Office/ Residential)
- Restore Green Right of Way, Uniform Building Façade
- Weekend Fitness Use (Events)
- Urban Wall – Residential

- Leave & Add Trees
- Square
- Specialty Clothing
- Middle Overton (Residential)
- Specialty Food
- Redesign Corners
- Sewer Upgrade
- Greenway
- Pedestrian Crosswalks/ Traffic Calming
- Economic Development District
- Boundary of Overton Square (Archway Entrance, Banners, Awnings, Color, Logo, Slogan, Period Lighting, and Street Furniture)

Remove:

- Dumpster Removal
- Reduce High Speed Traffic
- Transform Surface Parking
- Cleanup Curved Façade
- Trimble Becomes Pedestrian
- French Quarter
- Quick Shoppe
- Visual Side of Massive Parking

Urban Design by Kevin Lynch:

- Boundaries ( W-Diana, N-Poplar, E-Cox, S-Union)
- Pathways (Traffic Calming, Bike Access, Lick Creek Wall, Enhance Streetscapes to encourage Walkability, Cooper Shuttle, Public Art, Median)
- Nodes
- Landmarks (Public Art Installation, Parks, parades, processions, Art Walk, Weavers' Walk)
- District (Archway Entrance, Banner, Awning, Logo, Banners, Slogans, Lighting, Street Furniture)

### TEAM B – ANALYSIS

- Gas Station as Cultural Center
- Water Feature for Retention
- B Streets – Expendable?
- Parallel Parking on Madison/ Cooper as Pedestrian Shield
- Pocket Park or Plaza at Main Corner
- Textured Pavers on Madison Avenue
- Service Entrance is Issue

## TEAM C – ANALYSIS

- Grocery 50,000 SFT/ Smaller/ None
- Parking – Surface
- Retail
- Green/Open Space
- Pedestrian Circulation/ Promenade
- Hierarchy of Spaces – Streets/ Alleys
- Ideal Uses
- Save Which Buildings – Curved Façade
- Linkages/ Connections
- Trolley/ Public Transit/ Alternatives – Taxis/ Bikes
- Context
- Alternative Sites – Dairy/ Union (Gas Station/ Office) French Quarter
- Outdoor “Places”/ Retain Character
- Perimeter Retail/ Office/ Residential Above
- Heights on Cooper More
- Animate Cooper/ Hotel/ Outdoor Eating
- Residential Above Ground Floor Retail
- Galleries/ Studios
- University of Memphis Architecture/ Planning Satellite Building/ Education Buildings (Arts Focus)
- Anchors (Arts/ Cooper-Madison)