

INNSBROOK

next
Land use study for tomorrow.



PHOTOS/BOTTOM LEFT: Paul Kreckman (with tie and glasses), President, Innsbrook Owners Association, and Sidney Gunst, Founder of Innsbrook, chat before the meeting.
TOP: Brian Menditto, Senior Property Manager, Highwoods Properties and Peter Jardine, VP of Marketing, Highwoods Properties.
RIGHT: Paul Kreckman welcomed more than 40 stakeholders to the meeting.

Stakeholders look into the future and like what they see

More than 40 Innsbrook stakeholders turned out in mid-December for a glimpse of the future being developed by a planning process organized by the Innsbrook Owners Association. Judging from questions and comments, they generally liked the vision they heard.

In the schematic plans, acres of asphalt parking lots would be replaced by new buildings with their own internalized parking structures. New buildings near the spine would be taller—perhaps much taller—than existing buildings. And, they would not all be offices.

Indeed, the next phase of development may focus more on residential structures, from multi-level condos and apartment buildings near the center to townhomes near the edges of the park abutting external single-family neighborhoods. The future may include playgrounds, and even a school.

“The typical development scenario involves housing first, which attracts retail development” to serve those residents, Paul W. Kreckman, president of the Innsbrook Owners Association, noted. “Office development usually comes last, but in Innsbrook we already have the hardest part—the last part—in place with 20,000 jobs.”

Cox Road would be maintained as a parkway, pocket parks would be added to preserve the green, heavily landscaped atmosphere that participants view as one of Innsbrook’s greatest strengths.

The key is mixing uses instead of segregating them, within “villages,” blocks and even within buildings themselves. A single building might have retail on the first floor, offices on the next few floors and residential uses on upper floors.

All of these changes would be possible with “form-based zoning,” which governs the size, shape and exterior appearance of buildings, but not how they are used, as under typical suburban zoning. Henrico has a planning designation—urban mixed-use district (UMU)—to accommodate this new trend in development that relies on more density of usage to preserve greenspace.

Reaction following the presentation included comments on the need to address traffic congestion on West Broad Street, and a suggestion to place parking decks near the entry points to the park so people could leave their cars there to minimize congestion within the park. One participant suggested that “parking decks don’t have to look like parking decks,” and another suggested a community center. Kreckman said the Snag-A-Job Pavilion will be retained in any plan, “but just where it will be, we don’t know yet.” **ITM**

They saw a series of five communities within Innsbrook, all featuring a more urban street grid system to create a “village” atmosphere and to move people and cars through them more easily.

The preliminary conceptual ideas are available for review and comment at www.innsbrook.com, by clicking on the InnsbrookNext icon. An initial planning session in November drew 50 active participants, but when the conclusions about Innsbrook’s strengths, challenges and opportunities were posted on the website, an even greater number of viewers submitted additional comments and suggestions. All comments were considered in the preliminary plans outlined at the December meeting.

The three existing lakes would be connected by creeks as the equivalent of a linear “central park.” Along that same “spine” would be an internal “people mover” system. Instead of having to use your car to go from one place to another within Innsbrook, you could walk or bike safely--or possibly go by boat!

The objective is to create a 24/7 environment, not just a workday community, that provides economic, social and environmental sustainability. The next steps are to get further comments and reaction to the conceptual vision and refine it in more detail. The result will be presented to Henrico County’s Planning Department as part of its study of the larger Innsbrook area.

“This is a bold, exciting idea. It’s ‘downtown Henrico,’” G. Edmond Massie told the group. Massie is primarily a residential real estate developer with property adjoining Innsbrook.