

1200 Opelousas Ave. Development

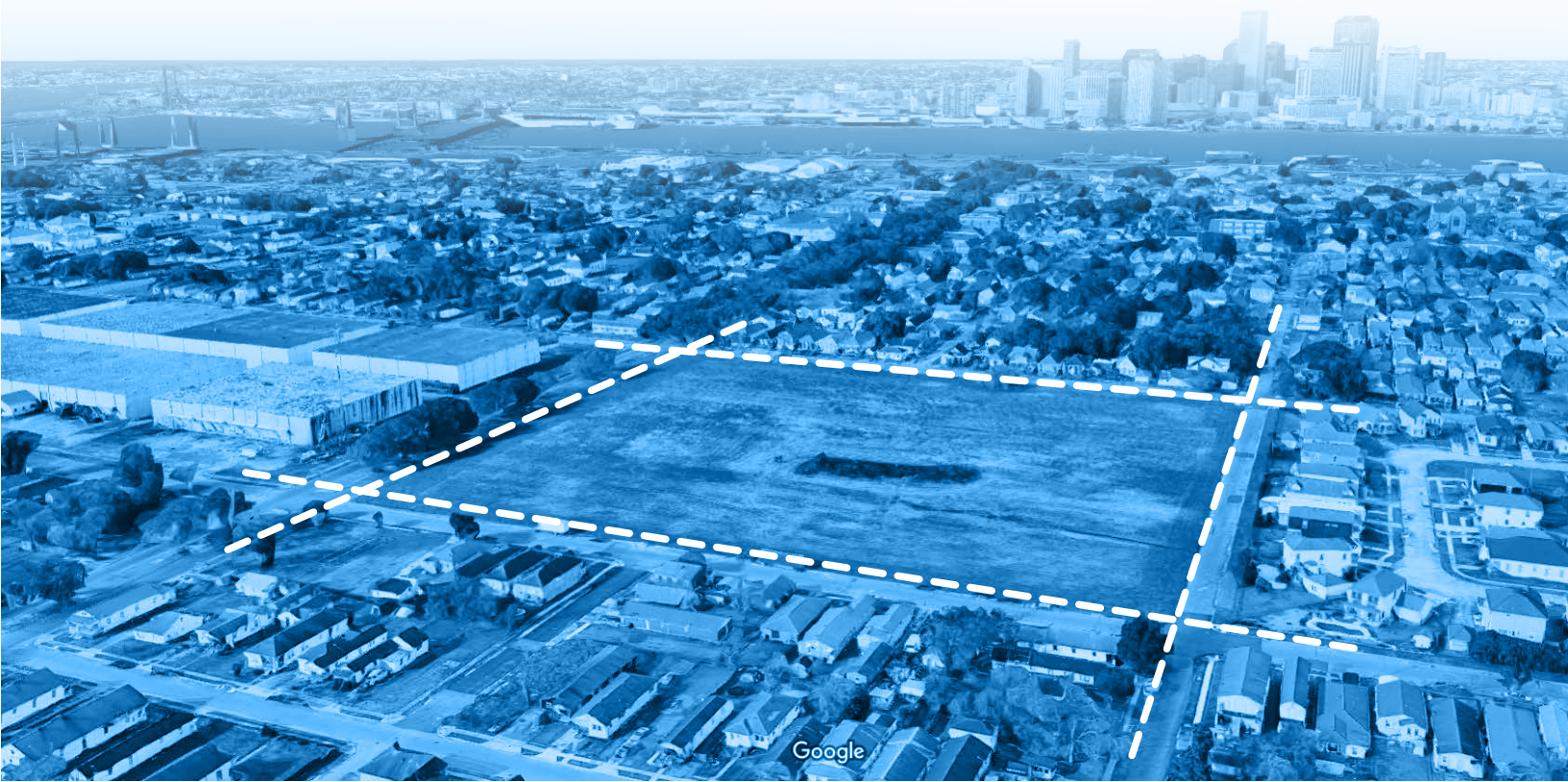
Neighborhood Participation Program Meeting Summary

June 4, 2021

produced by:



concordia



Introduction

Over 100 community members participated at the first meeting for 1200 Opelousas Ave. They informed future program needs and expressed preferences related to architectural design elements.

The development team and Concordia Architects hosted the first community engagement meeting on April 21st, 2021, at 6pm via zoom. The meeting included a presentation from the design team and two co-design activities. The first activity focused on programming and potential uses for the commercial spaces, and the second activity focused on architectural styles for each building type.

The conversation began by familiarizing the neighborhood with the development team, design team, site history, and zoning information. The immediate project goals were introduced, and a series of schematic visuals were shared to help illustrate the preliminary arrangement of buildings and various site elements.



Activity #1 - Potential Uses on Site

What uses will have the greatest impact on the neighborhood?



Activity #2 - Architectural Styles

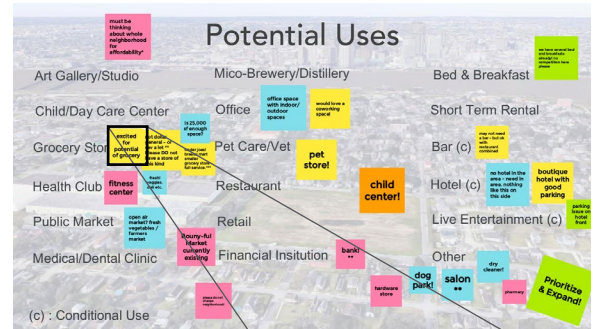
What Architectural Styles are best suited for this site?

Programming Activity Results

The discussion in the first activity focused on potential uses and amenities for the site. Participants were moved into smaller groups with a member of Concordia to help facilitate the dialogue. Here, residents were asked about preferred uses for the site that are currently lacking within the neighborhood, as well as less desirable uses where the need is already being met. These discussions were accompanied by a shared live document that allowed the meeting facilitator to catalog the information for participant viewing.

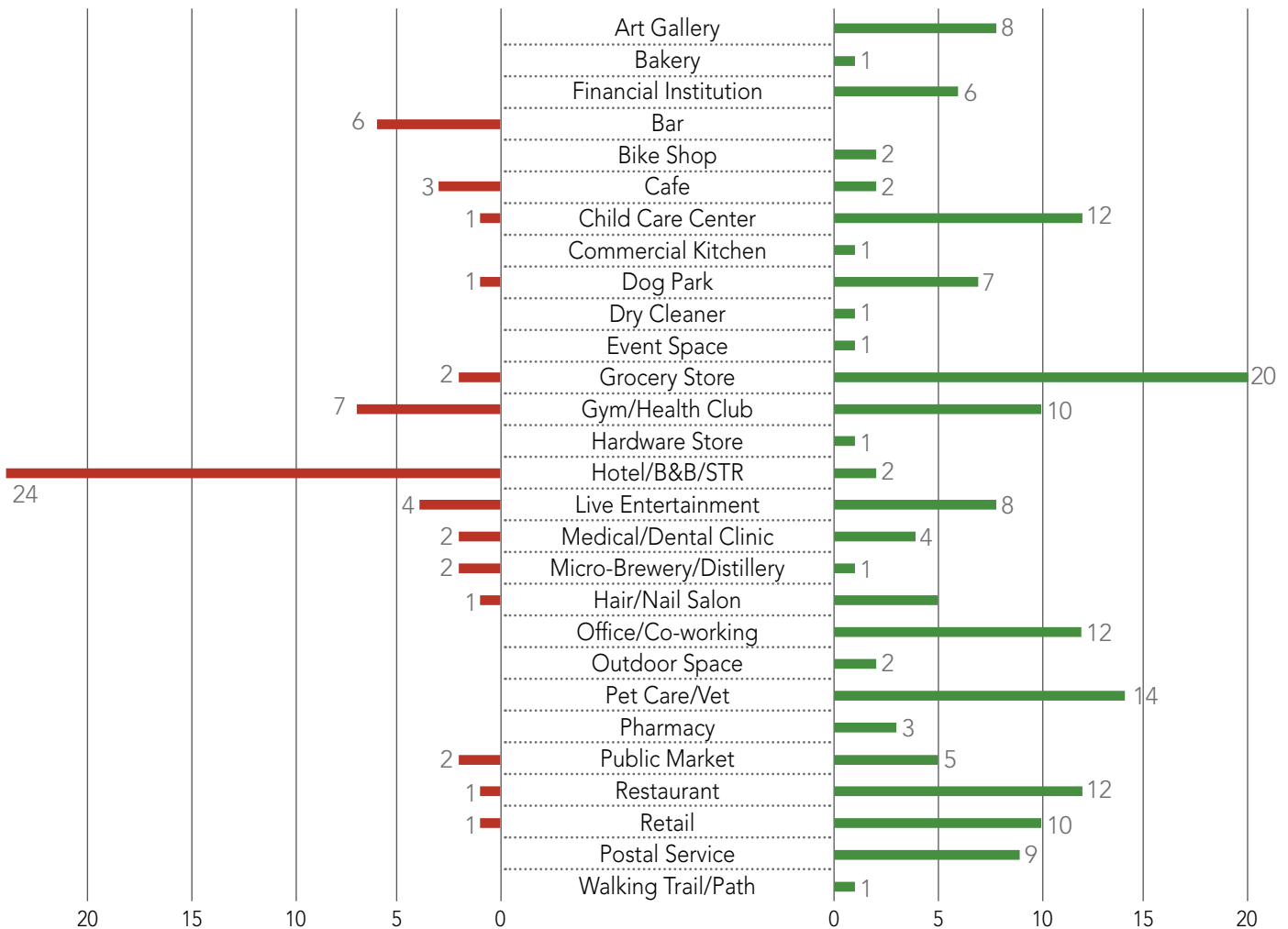
Over 30 different proposed uses were discussed among the breakout rooms. These mentions were tallied based on how many times it was referenced during the conversation, and categorized as either desirable or undesirable. Additional comments and explanations made by residents were collected to provide context and reasoning for the desirable or undesirable sentiment.

The bar graph below represents the information collected from the programming breakout rooms. The green bars represent the number of times community members said that a program or use would be a positive addition to the site. The red bars represent the number of times a program was mentioned as undesirable, or whose needs are already being met in the neighborhood.

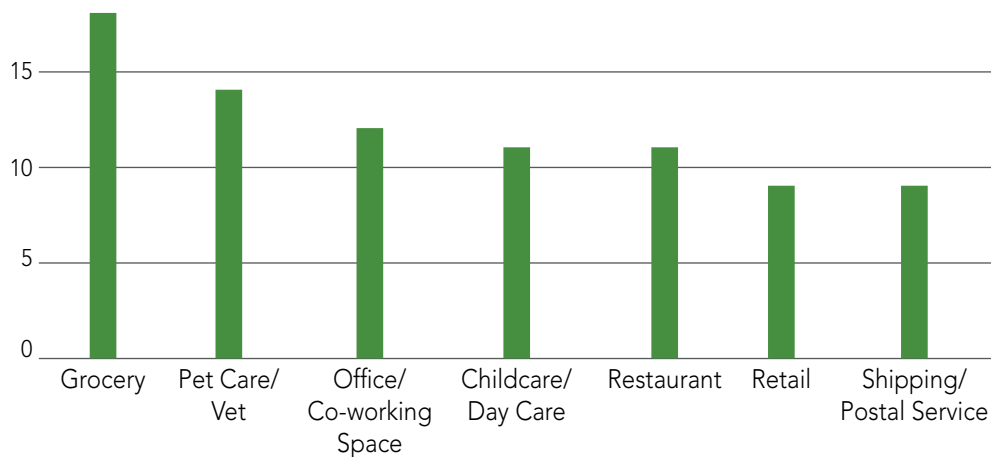


Board that was shared live by the facilitator with participants' notes.

excited for potential of grocery



Most Requested Uses



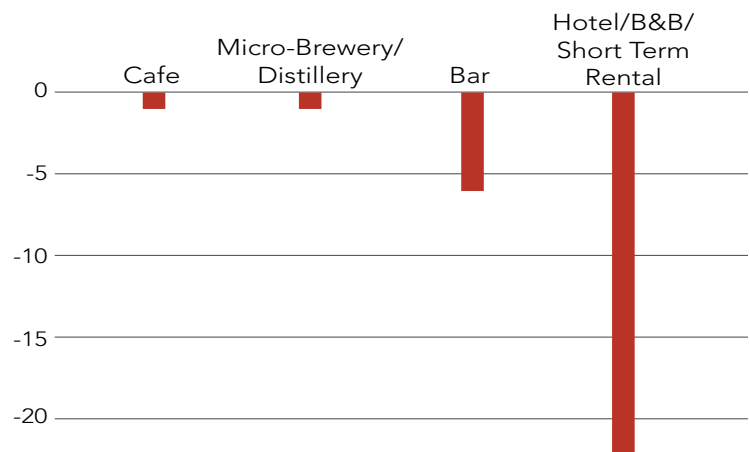
Graph shows the most requested uses, any negative mention was subtracted from the positive mention total.

Residents agreed that a grocery store would be beneficial to the community, but urged for it to be a full-service grocery that offers a selection of fresh and healthy foods. Some residents expressed hesitancy about the grocery store, as previous attempts to solicit a tenant for the area were unsuccessful. Pet care was mentioned as an underserved use within the area, and was underscored by residents who spoke about the pet friendly culture throughout the community. There was a strong sentiment for office environments and coworking spaces, especially given the recent work from home shift. Participants mentioned having an alternative option to their home office, especially one with meeting rooms and an outdoor component, would be desirable. Finally, child care, restaurant space, retail, and postal services all scored highly as amenities that would benefit the community.

Some of the less preferred uses for this site include a hotel, bed and breakfast, bar, and cafe. Many agreed a hotel or additional Air Bnb units would not be suitable for the surrounding area and bring in unwanted traffic. A bar was commonly mentioned as a use where the demand is already being met, as there are already three or four options to patronize in the vicinity. Residents felt a new coffee shop or café wouldn't be a good use of space as this need was already being met.

Some unique ideas included an open outdoor market for and local artisans and vendors to sell products. A desire for live entertainment was also expressed, that could be accomplished in an outdoor setting during appropriate times. The idea of a flexible space came up when discussing the potential for an art gallery, as this could cater more to pop-up events and double as a community gather area when not in use.

Least Requested Uses



Graph shows the least requested uses, any positive mention was subtracted from the negative mention total.

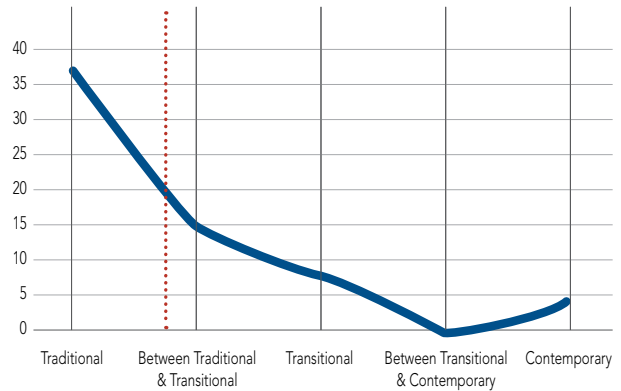
Look & Feel Activity Results

After the break out rooms, community members participated in a second activity focused on the look and feel of the architecture on site. The activity included three categories: commercial space, multi-family housing, and single-family housing. For each category participants were shown precedent images of existing buildings with various styles, ranging from traditional to transitional to contemporary.

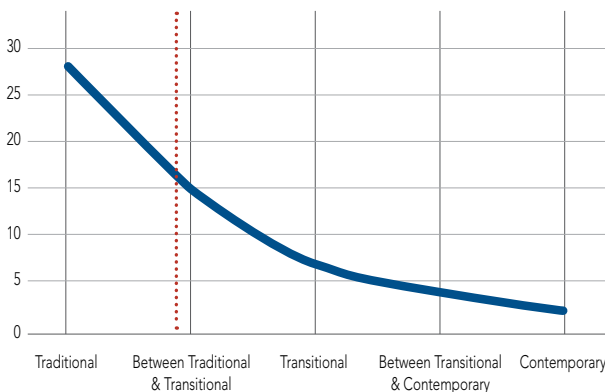


For each category, participants voted on where their style preference landed on the spectrum between traditional and contemporary. The results are shown in the graphs below. The blue line represents the number of votes for each style option. The red dotted line shows the average style voted for on the spectrum. In each category, the average vote landed between the traditional and transitional styles. The commercial space category was the closest to transitional, while the single-family housing was the closest to traditional. Participants want the site to respond to and fit in with the surrounding neighborhood.

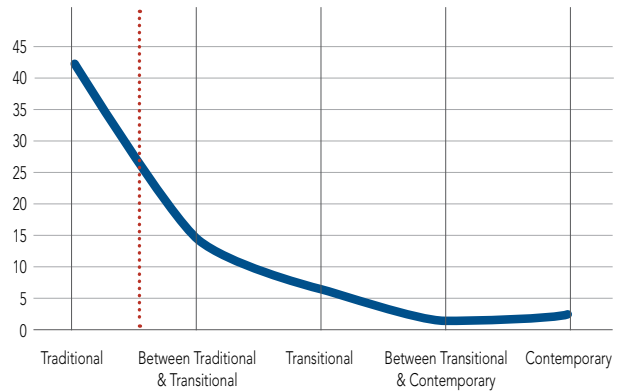
Multi-Family Housing



Commercial Space



Single Family Housing



After Action Reviews

Over 40 people submitted questions, concerns, and suggestions to the project team with regard to the proposed development. When asked what was accomplished at the meeting, most participants said that it was a good introduction to the project that allowed for dialogue between the community and the development team. Many people were appreciative that there was genuine outreach for soliciting input.

When participants were asked what their concerns were, many mentioned the growing population density of the area. Residents felt the addition of the workforce housing may overwhelm the neighborhood and subsequently increase traffic, noise, and flooding. The topic of stormwater management was a common theme, as participants conveyed their personal experiences with past flooding events in the area. Other common concerns referenced providing sufficient parking for the development and retaining ample greenspace. Some participants had concerns about the feasibility of gaining project approval due to some people's resistance to change in the area, and in turn nothing would be built.

Finally, participants were asked for suggestions for improvement and any other ideas for the project. The most common suggestion was to keep the community engaged in an authentic, impactful way. Others wanted to be sure that the commercial uses support the existing neighborhood. Suggestions of ways to accomplish this included incentivizing women and/or minority owned businesses. There was some divisiveness over how to handle the multi-family housing and greenspace. Many people suggested lowering the density of the workforce housing while some asserted that higher density structures allow for more greenspace.

Next Steps

The design team is working to revise the site plan based on input from the community meeting, conversations with individuals and community groups, and surveys completed by residents. The updated designs will be presented to the community at a second meeting during the summer. For more information, please visit Concordia.com/projects/1200-opelousas-ave-community-engagement.