

Abundant Ideas for River Road Neighborhood

About 30 neighbors gathered for the River Road Community Organization (RRCO) Annual Holiday Dessert Potluck. An abundance of ideas for enhancing our neighborhood were expressed. Perhaps some of these will tickle your fancy.

Because the Goodwill Store in our neighborhood center has closed, many ideas were projected on that location. Frequent suggestions were to return it to its original use as a grocery store. Of course, neighbors wanted updated versions: a store or co-op with organic or natural food containing bulk foods, produce and other food sourced within 100 miles; perhaps a deli with salad bar, bakery and cafe with a bookstore; a health food store; or a farmers' market with artisan crafters. Other ideas were for an indoor astro turf soccer field and soccer shop, a neighborhood resource as a meeting place, or an expanded River Road-Santa Clara Volunteer Library.

As we discussed these suggestions, it became clear that this wasn't the only neighborhood location that we could dream up visions for. Vacant land between Kelly Middle School and the Northwest Expressway and various other large locations along River Road seem to have temporary tenants and huge parking lots that are underutilized. Several people asked for organic community gardens and one person wanted "gardens that look like gardens" with availability of inexpensive water. Another request was to not use pesticides and herbicides to protect bees. They are also seeking people who are willing to host bee hives to keep bees thriving and to pollinate flowers, trees, and shrubs. One big idea was for front lawns to be turned to gardens for healthy food, as an opportunity to reconnect neighbors with one another, and to reduce crime by having eyes on the street.

Another round of ideas centered on biking and pedestrian amenities. A request was made for a bike and pedestrian way along Northwest Expressway with access connecting it to neighborhood streets. One of our members noted that such a bikeway is in the master plan. This was a pleasant surprise to most of us. Mandatory bike safety classes for 12 years of age and up was an ardent plea. One mom wanted a sidewalk between River Road and River Road Elementary School with an added blinking light and the 20 MPH speed limit enforced. Another vision was for the West Bank Bike Path and Park along the Willamette River to have it enhanced with community gardens, dog park, and children's playground.

Another neighbor has a vision of large welcome signs at the north and south ends of River Road, inviting vehicles to slow down to enjoy the beauty of the neighbor and be aware of the prevalence of pedestrians and bicyclists. The extension of EmX services along River Road would be welcomed as it will reduce the number of cars traveling through our community. The Oakleigh Meadow Cohousing Community is seeking additional members to buy into their vision of an "intergenerational community of independent households committed to finding purpose and a sense of belonging through working, learning and playing together in a neighborhood designed to make a small and beautiful footprint on the land."

Another general area of interest surrounds the need for our neighbors to step up to their responsibility of taxing themselves to provide for police patrols and other public safety services. Several members reported experiencing criminal activity on their properties, so there was much agreement for additional police services.

Other various noteworthy ideas were shared: The wish for a more passionate and active creative

community, a book group, sign language classes, fences for pit bulls, no Coal Trains traveling on the western border of River Road, no ivy in the cottonwood grove along the bike path, and that everyone participating in tonight's event would remain active with RRCO throughout the year.

Last but not least, one person wished that people would resist making speeches!

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