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PRESS RELEASE

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Citizens get gather for update and feedback on ``Great Expectations``

A cold and blustery day outside didn't keep about 50 people from gathering at the Shreveport Convention Center for a five-hour feedback session on the Shreveport-Caddo 2030 master plan.

A cadre of speakers, elected officials, neighborhood association leaders and local planners joined Mayor Cedric Glover for the extended review and question-and-answer session.

The audience was greeted by Lindora Baker, president of the Caddo Parish Commission, and Winzer Andrews, chairman of the Metropolitan Planning Commission. That duo was followed by planning experts such as Kent Rogers, executive director of Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments; Paul Farmer, executive director & CEO of the American Planning Association; and J. David Waggoner III of New Orleans-based Waggoner and Ball Architects.

``I'm extremely encouraged by the progress that's been made to address the most critical goals in the master plan; those things that have to happen before other things can happen,`` said Angie White, a member of the Community Action Group formed in 2007 to help shape ``Great Expectations: Shreveport-Caddo 2030.`` ``I'm equally pleased that we're able to access more federal grant monies needed in our planning process.``

White and others expressed their delight with key implementation projects related to the master plan. Dara Sanders, master plan administrator for Shreveport-Caddo, reviewed several of those projects, including the Historic Preservation Ordinance and Commission, the Pavement Management System, Choice Neighborhoods and the Shreveport-Caddo Unified Development Code.

Farmer, a Shreveport native, was the keynote speaker and said updates like this one are important to the long-term health of communities across the country.

``Local economies must reinvent themselves and communities must be much more intentional and thoughtful in planning,`` Farmer said. ``That's one of the exciting things about the plan. You've got a conversation going and you just need to make sure that you keep talking to each other about where you want to go.``



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Communities also need to be more innovative when thinking about water and other natural resources, Waggoner said. He said inaction can be costly so planners have to work to shift certain paradigms, such as focusing more on water storage, rather than drainage.

“Why are we letting this asset that falls to the ground get away from us?” Waggoner asked. “We should not look at public investment as an expenditure but as an investment. We have the opportunity to be more than we are. My exhortation is to believe in more.”

Mayor Glover encouraged those present to keep the momentum going and challenged the Metropolitan Planning Commission to coordinate more frequent feedback/update sessions on the master plan.

“We need to see it as a living, evolving document so we can see where things stand and adjust as we go along,” Mayor Glover said. “I certainly want to see this document become as beneficial to Shreveporters 50 years from now as the one that former Mayor Jim Gardener left behind for us to follow.”

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