



DOWNTOWN STEERING COMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY 2.

Marshalltown, Iowa
January 10, 2019

The Downtown Steering Committee met to continue developing a new downtown master plan. The meeting was facilitated by planning and design consultants, Bob Kost, Bill James and Antonio Rosell.

1. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

ONLINE SURVEY

To date, 966 people have responded to the 18 question, online survey. Predominant responses indicate:

- + 1/3 work in downtown
- Over ½ visit downtown at least once or twice a week
- The primary purpose for visiting downtown is for eating and drinking followed by services and shopping
- The highest ranking desired additions to downtown include:
 - Greater variety of restaurants and bars
 - More shopping options
 - Increased entertainment options
 - More trees and greenery
 - More events and festivals
- Historic buildings were cited as the most attractive downtown feature, unique non-chain store shops were second
- Parallel parking and run-down store fronts were cited as most disliked aspects
- About 20% would consider living in downtown, 20% aren't sure and 55% aren't interested
- Potential downtown residents are evenly split on preferring to own or rent
- 2/3 feel downtown is a safe place, safety for 1/3 varies depending on multiple factors (time, day, location, etc.)
- ½ are supportive of city investment in downtown, ¼ are somewhat supportive

- 95% of respondents are not downtown business or property owners
- Over ½ prefer online communications for type of involvement
- Primary participation, to date from white, English speaking

A Spanish language version of the survey is also available on the project web site. Additional outreach to the Hispanic community is needed to increase participation.

FOCUS GROUPS

Four Focus Group sessions were facilitated by consultants on Wednesday and Thursday:

1. Large Employer/Financial (5)
 - a. Support for continued public investment in downtown improvements and redevelopment
 - b. Much of their work force live on edge and outskirts of city
 - c. Work force are well trained/educated, well paid
 - d. Like downtown's centralized location, close to eating/drinking
2. Small Business (2)
 - a. Tornado hurt everyone, under and non-insured hurt worst
 - b. Most people support downtown investment except "tax payers assoc." types who are against change, see improvements as wasteful frills
 - c. 3-hour limit, on-street parking doesn't turn over fast enough
 - d. Difficult to get business owners to agree on business hours, quality of renovations/enhancements
3. Hispanic Business (9)
 - a. Lack of government assistance follow up / follow through
 - b. Many are undercapitalized, and were under insured
 - c. Feel welcome and supported by community
 - d. Interested in a flexible, informal market space supporting entrepreneurial opps.
4. Arts and Culture (7)
 - a. Public art program is recent and has 2 successes so far
 - b. Annual festival with art fair, music, food, etc.
 - c. Library serves as hub for routine cultural activities

- d. Orpheum renovating and reopening – venue for theater and arts
- e. Difficulty in conveying economic impact / return on investment from arts and culture – some see as frills / extra \$

Consultants described prevailing themes / messages conveyed by each group. A more detailed summary is being prepared and will be shared upon completion.

2. ASSESSMENTS / ANALYSES

Consultants provided and update on their data collection, assessment and analysis of current conditions:

- Existing Zoning
- Parking
- Land Uses
- Public Spaces and Greening
- Streetscape
- Streets and Connectivity

Committee members suggested the plan address organizational and staffing recommendations to ensure adequate resources are in place to successfully for implement the plan.

Consultants pointed out that there is a lack of available digital data for parking, street layouts, sidewalks, vegetation and street lighting. The team is using past work from others along with some on-site verification. Work products presented were “work in progress” with updates and refinements continuing until the February design charrette.

3. DRAFT GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Consultants and steering committee members reviewed a set of twelve, draft guiding principles which will be used to evaluate redevelopment and enhancement options and guide project recommendations.

1. Encourage an 18 hour district where people can live, work and play
2. Support a vibrant business economy along downtown streets
3. Develop a variety of downtown housing options
4. Create reasons and spaces for people to visit, socialize and celebrate
5. Protect and showcase downtown history, heritage, arts and culture

6. Enhance beauty and functionality of the public realm
7. Strengthen and enhance safe, accessible, transportation and connections
8. Raise the bar on quality and authenticity
9. Expand and sustain downtown partnerships to achieve common goals
10. Balance creative vision with market reality
11. Address current opportunities while planning for an ever changing future
12. Embrace and engage Marshalltown's diverse community from planning through implementation

Committee members remarked that it's been common (in past planning endeavors) to encourage engagement with non-white / non-English speaking community members. This has been difficult to accomplish and even more difficult to normalize or institutionalize. Consultants remarked that engaging diverse populations is a long-term process that requires continued commitment at all levels of government and community interaction. The process needs to be viewed as a form of relationship building, not fulfilling a project requirement. There are multiple avenues of engagement available from using local artists and business members to educators and service providers. A key component is short and long term (post-project) follow up.

4. CHARRETTE

Consultants presented information on the upcoming multi-day design charrette planned for February 20th through the afternoon of February 23rd including:

- Purpose and Benefits
- Activities and Work Products
- Logistics
- Draft Schedule
- Roles and Opportunities

Committee members are expected to participate in the three community meetings, W, TR and SAT. A scheduling sign-up sheet will be distributed to steering committee members so they can also volunteer to assist greeting and assisting community member visitors to the design studio space on Thursday and Friday morning. Locations for the three large public meetings still need to be determined.

The charrette description presentation will be posted to the project web page for additional review.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 PM

Downtown Steering Committee meeting # 3 will be held on Friday, February 22, 2019 from noon to 1:30 pm, in the City Council Chambers / studio space.

