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Princeton Master Plan

Steering Committee

Agenda

November 10, 2022

1:00 – 1:05 **Introduction and Review of Agenda**: Justin Lesko

1:05 – 1:10 **What We Hope To Accomplish Today:** CCH

a. Review Progress To Date
b. Review of Visioning Survey Results
c. Planning for November 30 Open House

1:10 – 1:20 **Where We Are**: CCH, SGB, Justin Lesko

a. Existing Document Update: CCH
b. Student Survey Update, Economic Development Report Outline: CCH
    i. Outline attached
    ii. Student survey summary attached
    iii. August economic development summary re-attached
c. Engagement Hub Update: SGB, Justin Lesko
d. Steering Committee questions

1:20 – 1:35 **Visioning Survey Update**: SGB

1:35 – 2:45 **Open House:** SGB, CCH, Justin Lesko

a. Goals and Measures of Success: SGB, CCH
    i. Participation
    ii. More specific input and direction on key issues identified from responses to surveys
b. Date, time, venue, logistics: Justin Lesko, SGB
    i. Translation: SGB
    ii. Media spokesperson
d. Promotion/publicity: Justin Lesko

e. Key attendees from Princeton
    i. Steering Committee members
    ii. Mayor and Council
f. Format
    i. Handouts with baseline information
    ii. Station for each focus area
        a) Baseline information and survey responses
        b) Key issues/questions highlighted
        c) Interactive mechanisms for feedback
g. Focus areas
h. Staffing for each station and sign-in table
i. Steering Committee discussion

2:45 – 3:00 General Q&A, Next Steps

a. Draft economic development report for Steering Committee review: anticipated by end of November
b. Draft report on visioning survey for Steering Committee review: anticipated by mid-December
c. Next meeting – January 25

Municipality of Princeton

Master Plan Economic Element Update

Report contents

7. Conclusions and observations
    - North Harrison / Princeton Shopping Center
    - Central Business District
    - Route 206
    - Alexander Road
    - Bunn Drive
8. Economic growth opportunities
    - Downtown maintenance and vibrancy
    - Town and gown relations and dependencies
    - Circulation and parking
    - Housing
    - Retail mix & markets served
    - Zoning and changes
9. MLUL Economic Analysis
    - Comparison of the types of employment to be provided
    - Characteristics of the labor pool
    - Analysis of stability and diversity of economic development

Princeton Master Plan
Economic Development Analysis

Preliminary observations as of November 3, 2022

Community Insights® status report: This report is updated to provide preliminary observations from the student surveys.

The survey was closed on October 18th. Our goal was to receive a minimum of 405 completed surveys, but we were able to secure 502 responses. We are still tabulating the results, but our preliminary observations include responses among all students:

1. The Central Business District (CBD) captures 58% of dining visits and 54% of non-food shopping visits.
2. Students visit downtown at least once a week to dine and 0.6 times per week to shop.
3. Among all responses, 11% never visit the CBD to dine and 55% never visit to shop.
4. The CBD captures 55% of all spending for eating, drinking and in-person shopping.
5. When visiting the CBD, 75% walk, compared to 3% that use E-scooters or public transit and 10% that drive.
6. Among the 10% that drive, slightly more than one-half say the can sometimes or rarely find adequate parking.
7. When asked what type of stores and eateries to add, the most common response was for “more affordable” places to shop and dine.
8. When asked what “other types of changes” should be made in the CBD, more/better parking was the most common response.
9. The main reasons why students don’t visit the CBD more often is too few affordable stores (72%) and too few affordable places to eat/drink.
10. Students have high satisfaction levels issues related to safety, walkability, cleanliness, historic preservation, and arts & culture.
11. Students are dissatisfied with the mix of stores and parking.
12. The best features of the CBD are walkability and the presence of Palmer Square.
13. The worst features of the CBD are parking and expensive stores and eating/drinking places.

14. When asked the most important initiatives to accomplish town-wide, the most often received responses were attract more affordable eating/drinking places, create more off-campus housing, and redevelop underutilized buildings and lots.
15. Only 34% of students say there is sufficient lodging for visitors.
16. Two-thirds of all respondents are between 18 and 22 years of age.
17. Females account for 57% of all responses.
18. 49% of respondents are in their first or second year of education, while 29% are in their third or fourth year, and 19% are graduate or post-graduate students.

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Princeton Master Plan
Economic Development Analysis

Community Insights® status report: Currently in the fact-finding phase. Analysis and recommendations are next steps. The fact-finding phase includes site visits, merchant and stakeholder interviews, and consumer and student surveys.

Preliminary observations as of August 19, 2022

Site visits: Central business district (CBD), Princeton Shopping Center, Route 206 (State Road), Princeton Theological Seminary, Alexander Road, Bunn Drive professional offices

1. Directional and wayfinding signage is inconsistent and could be enhanced
2. CBD and Princeton Shopping Center in need of maintenance and updating
3. Alexander Road retail development may draw consumers away from CBD
4. State Road and Bunn Drive are auto-dependent and increase vehicle demand

Stakeholder interviews: Originally asked to interview 19 stakeholders, but added others from Princeton SID, Princeton Future and Edens Group. A total of 32 interviews revealed:

1. Concerns over signage, notice and timing of Witherspoon and Graduate Hotel projects
2. Substantial disagreement over optimal redevelopment of Witherspoon Street
3. Remarks about lack of CBD maintenance including tree pit and sidewalk conditions
4. Concerns about retail mix and which markets to target (upscale v. everyday)
5. Substantial disagreement on the role of Princeton University in local commerce
6. Consensus that housing market serves only two markets: wealthy and poor, and debate about the need and procedure to serve a middle-market
7. Zoning regulations are viewed as outdated and in need of sweeping change

Merchant Interviews: Visited nearly every merchant but many were reluctant to speak for various reasons. A total of 19 merchant interviews were conducted to learn:

1. Majority of merchants rent their space, even among long-tenured merchants
2. Average tenure of businesses is over 18 years indicating favorable economic conditions
3. Most businesses draw customers from a trade area of 25 miles or more
4. Few merchants rely primarily upon University consumers
5. Most merchants have seen revenue decline in the past year and CBD merchants faulted construction, traffic flow and parking for revenue declines
6. Merchants stressed the need for more sit-down dining and wider variety of retail goods

7. Nearly all CBD merchants complained about construction and lack of parking and signs
8. Merchants perceive the availability of parking in CBD hinders ability to attract employees
9. Other suggestions include: public bathrooms, façade improvements, need for short-term parking for pick-ups, and less strict parking enforcement

Consumer surveys: Survey was closed on August 15th. Our goal was to receive a minimum of 405 completed surveys, but we were able to secure 3,778 responses. We are still tabulating the results, but our preliminary observations include:

1. Princeton captures 49% of dining spending but only 24% of non-food shopping
2. Consumers want more dining including outdoor and more affordable options, as well as more retail stores, especially clothing stores
3. Non-residents visit the CBD 30% less than residents but spend 12% more per visit
4. 61% of consumers drive their personal vehicles when visiting the CBD and less than 1% use a train, bus, taxi/Uber/Lyft, or shuttles
5. 4 in 10 consumers say it is difficult to find parking in the CBD
6. 82% of consumers say CBD streets are fair, poor, or very poor for bikes and scooters
7. 71% of consumers say there is a need to improve traffic controls and crosswalks
8. 49% of consumers say there is a need for more parking garages
9. 49% of consumers think vehicle traffic should be banned from entering certain areas of the CBD
10. Consumers are highly satisfied with safety and security, arts and culture in the community, overall appearance, and condition of parks and public spaces
11. More than 6 in 10 consumers say it is important to improve streetscapes and revitalize storefronts, retain existing businesses, attract more independent shops, and attract new retail stores and restaurants and eateries
12. Most consumers say it's important to provide more mid-rise apartments, townhomes and condos in a walkable setting near shops
13. 51% of consumers say it's important to provide option for smaller, less costly housing units such as secondary housing or micro-housing of 600 sf or less
14. 63% of consumers say Princeton lack sufficient lodging choices
15. 65% of consumers say Princeton is not business-friendly