



# Options for Downtown Community Open House

January 25, 2016 | Summary

## | Workshop Overview

This open house brought stakeholder groups together to learn about potential options and provide feedback about the direction of the Options and Choices phase of the Downtown Plan. The open house focused on several key issues in the downtown area:

- Atmosphere and Sense of Safety
- Bicycle Parking
- Climate Action Plan Implementation
- Creative Industries
- Growth and Density
- Parking Management
- Supporting Future Downtown Investment

Approximately 80 residents, working group members, business owners and employees, design professionals, and property owners attended the event. Attendees provided feedback via sticky notes on boards around the room and on written comment cards. Below is a brief summary of the feedback received for each of the key issues.



## | Atmosphere and Sense of Safety

- Overall, most attendees feel safe in the downtown area
- Appreciation of downtown's atmosphere: overall cleanliness, places to sit, flowers, plazas, and public spaces
- Desire to address noise and traffic impacts
- Acknowledgement of ongoing initiatives (i.e. Homeward 2020) to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness
- Concerns about panhandling and drug use



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## | Bicycle Parking

- General agreement that sidewalk space is already congested; concerns that adding more bicycle racks to sidewalks will negatively impact pedestrian experience
- Suggestions for alternative bicycle parking locations: alleys, rear entrances, and parking garages
- Concerns about usability and capacity of racks (i.e. current on-street rack design )
- General support for on-street bicycle parking to reduce vehicle use, encourage transit
- Desire to preserve on-street vehicle parking spaces in front of retail stores

## | Climate Action Plan Implementation

- Overall support for CAP emission reduction goals
- Identification of a need for additional community education, outreach, and showcasing environmental innovation
- Suggestions about incentives and recognition for development
  - Green roof incentives
  - Power generation (solar, wind, geothermal) incentives
  - Green building recognition
- Emphasis on increasing energy efficiency in new buildings and expanding the use of rooftop solar downtown
- Requests for additional recycling bins and curbside composting
- Suggestions to expand transit, cycling, and walking to reduce emissions

## | Creative Industries

- Concerns about adding too much bureaucracy in an attempt to support creative industries
- Desire for additional marketing and publicity for existing arts and culture activities
- Requests for informal, unstructured, "pop-up" type spaces
- Suggestion to build on what already exists (DBA events, etc.)
- Questions about whether it is the government's role to create a support structure for creative industries

## | Growth and Density

- Acknowledgement that we are likely to continue seeing larger buildings downtown
- Desire to protect Old Town area and historic context; larger buildings in other areas
- Emphasis on ground-floor character and the pedestrian experience of larger buildings
- Differing opinions – some desire more density, others are concerned about the impacts of growth
- Concern about transitions from larger buildings downtown to residential areas
- Identification of impacts of larger buildings; issues in addition to compatibility:
  - Parking and traffic



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- Trash collection
- Lighting

## | Parking Management

- Overall support for option presented: implement various management strategies before piloting paid on-street parking
- Suggestions to incentivize use of garages by making the time limit for free parking in garages longer than the time limit for free parking on the street
- Identification of need to encourage downtown employees to use garages rather than on-street parking spaces
- Desire for better signage and marketing of parking garages
- General support for extending enforcement hours/days to encourage turnover

## | Supporting Future Downtown Investment

- Overall support for maintained investment in the downtown area after the Downtown Development Authority's (DDA) Tax Increment Financing (TIF) authority expires
- Desire for evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of TIF
  - Was TIF revenue-neutral?
  - Did TIF investment encourage additional private investment?
- Identification of the importance of investment for downtown vibrancy; desire to expand investment beyond Old Town (River District, North College)
- Support for investment in downtown public spaces in particular (alleys, plazas, etc.)
- Suggestions to create an overlay of several special districts for funding (BID, GID, etc.)