

RE: Community Meeting #1

Date: August 20, 2012

Project Management Team Attendees

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Meeting Agenda

- Interactive Exercises: Community Board, Imagination Station
- Presentation: Woodstock Town Center Plan
- Interactive Exercise: Review Project Challenges and Opportunities

Meeting Summary

Last night, around **twenty-five citizens** gathered at the kick-off meeting for the Downtown Woodstock Master Plan update. The meeting began with several interactive exercises, with constituents identifying places that are important to them in Woodstock and providing their vision for the study area's future.

City officials invited the public to participate in exploring what direction the downtown should take, both in the short term and over the next twenty years through a series of community meetings, surveys and informational offerings on the web page, available at woodstockproject.wordpress.com. Joel Reed from Pond's Studio for Better Communities explained the Livable Centers Initiatives process whereby the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) provides matching funds for transportation improvements. Reed applauded Woodstock's success in securing the \$700,000 of LCI funding that helped make streetscape improvements along Main Street. This update could identify additional projects potentially eligible for further funding by ARC.

The consultant team presented results of the parking assessment study. The study aims to strike the right balance between pedestrian comfort and walkability but still accommodate the parking needed, especially during popular weekend events. Transportation expert Richard Fangmann reminded the group that "what you experience as you walk can deter or encourage you from walking further distances." The study will identify needed improvements to create a desirable walking and biking environment.

Community Input: Challenges and Opportunities

The following is a summary of the challenges and opportunities discussed by meeting attendees.

- Parking issues:
 - Angled parking is challenging for drivers
 - Business owners feel that inadequate parking is harming their businesses
 - Drivers want parking to be extremely convenient – right at their destination
 - Need better signage for parking locations
- There is a need for improved non-vehicular mobility around downtown
 - People see Greenprints trails as recreation, not an opportunity to access destinations
 - Expand bike/ped network to connect Woodstock to surrounding areas and to Woodstock Elementary
- Highway 92 and Main Street should be a gateway, linked to the downtown core, perhaps adaptive reuse
 - Future potential transit stop location (maybe bus rapid transit)
- Desired retail types: small grocery store, bed and breakfasts, office supply

In order to get oriented to the study area, community members completed an exercise where they identified their home, their favorite location, transportation improvements needed, desired businesses, and anything else they wished to see more of in the study area.

- Several meeting attendees (at least six) reside in the study area.
- The community's favorite locations in the study area were overwhelmingly the shops and restaurants downtown. Others identified the Olde Towne Animal Hospital and the former Walmart site (for its adaptive reuse potential).
- Desired transportation improvements included improving safety on Mill Street, adding streets parallel to Main Street, implementing some type of public transportation, constructing bike and pedestrian facilities, and beginning construction on the planned roundabout on Towne Lake Parkway.
- Many meeting attendees want a grocery store to locate in the study area. Others wanted to see a brew pub, kid-friendly restaurants, a boutique hotel, and a bed and breakfast.
- Overall, the community identified the need for more parking, pedestrian safety, and pocket parks/plazas.

Meeting attendees were asked to present their vision for downtown Woodstock. The following themes were widely expressed in the vision cards:

- Walkability
- Variety of retail, restaurant, and shopping options
- Community identity and aesthetics
- Roadway and vehicular safety
- Parking solutions
- Opportunities for children to play downtown

This summary constitutes the author's understanding of the items discussed and conclusions reached. If there are any errors or omissions, please notify this author in writing.