

Comments/Questions on report of Downtown Advisory Committee

COMMENTS FROM MEETING

Monday, March 28, 2005 5:30 p.m. @ KACP Office
Downtown Stakeholders primary audience

- Document needs to reflect inclusiveness of Old City and Jackson Ave. in retail revitalization.
- What is the County's involvement in this report and the implementation?
- We need neighborhood representation on the implementation team.
- KTSC and downtown stakeholders need to be represented on implementation team
- Enlarge area to include Summit to Main and Gay to Henley.
- Should be a balance of private/public/government buildings.
- Add action item re: special event component, cultural, historical
- Better P.R. about available downtown parking.
- What is the schedule for revisiting the document?
- Downtown Director- great idea!
- Will there be involvement with the University?
- Don't lose focus- stay proactive with historic preservation and salvage program
- Will the air rights above the transit center be included in priority projects?
- Could the downtown area develop into a Theatre District?
- Urban design guidelines should be prescriptive not restrictive.
- Organizational structure- what kind of authority will this person (Downtown Director) have?
Will this organizational structure be another hurdle in the decision-making process?
- Will there be a budget recommendation to implement this civic vision in the upcoming budget?
- Will the Downtown Advisory Committee continue to do work once this report is submitted to the Mayor?
- Eminent domain- is it possible through this process to create some policy powers?

COMMENTS FROM MEETING

Monday, April 4, 2005 5:30 p.m. @ KACP Offices
Neighborhood Stakeholders primary audience

- New Home Federal Building- opportunity to get density into downtown. Don't replace the 5-story building with a 3-story. Don't suburbanize downtown.
- Design Standard Review Commission- consider architectural and financial concerns, allow things to evolve, consider historic character. HZC has some elements needed for the design commission review structure- add business interests. Have these 2 entities take ownership of codified design standards.
- Downtown Director should be an intellectual advocate for downtown concepts and ideals, not someone "intellectually neutered" or tied to political whim, yet tied into politics.
- National Main Street Program is a good source for a manager of downtown. Use this program to help detail the job description.
- Asheville, NC Department of Development is in a storefront office - maybe we should not bury this person in the City County Building.
- We need to coordinate Downtown and Community Development more closely. This is critical to tying neighborhoods together.
- Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods have a dependent relationship- not just a synergy.
- Downtown should be defined as an urban center, not just CBID. Parkridge needs to be included. Consider using TIFs in Parkridge and Mechanicsville.
- Was there a market study done to support the Crandall-Arambula plan?

- Has the city gone door-to-door to talk to small businesses to take their pulse?
- Who reads the comments that are submitted?
- Have the needs of downtown residents been assessed? Perhaps a downtown school in collaboration with U.T. (KCC possible location?)
- Downtown (place) vs. Urban (character). Strategic imperative to change the negative connotation of "urban".
- Consider taking the final civic vision document into the schools as a teaching tool.
- Encourage creative solutions to problems. Set high goals and objectives. The city is too good at saying what we cannot do. Don't put the solutions in concrete.
- This draft is an optimistic document- I like it.
- The Downtown Director needs to be out there on the street and be a practical visionary. We need to build from the inside out.
- Gay St. should include the stretch from the south of Gay St. Bridge to Emory Place. We need to connect the north end the way we are connecting south.
- We need banners on light poles all the way to Emory Place.
- Gay St. can play a larger role in connectivity.
- I-40 row fencing under overpasses needs to be addressed. Trash gets caught and the lighting is poor.
- What can be done to decentralize the homeless concentration?
- Main St. Program had a component of education about the homeless in Knoxville.
- Homelessness issue has impact on connectivity of neighborhoods along North Gay.
- Good urban design should not need a variance- it should be the norm for development.
- Promote smart infill with respect to setbacks, etc.
- Wayfinding signs have outdated information.

COMMENTS FROM EMAILS

"First, I would just like to comment that it's about time a realistic, progressive, and well thought out vision and plan for revitalizing the downtown has been started. It's basically impossible to read the maps but the outline is descriptive enough to understand most of the details and the thought process behind the plan. Secondly, I'd like to convey, as hopefully many others will, that you can not overestimate enough the importance of ample FREE parking. I've traveled to many cities around the country, and the most successful downtown revitalizations had abundant free parking. With the potential for waterfront development, tie-in with the University, and the Market Square renovations, there's absolutely no reason Knoxville can not develop one of top "downtowns" in the US. Thank you for letting me share my opinion."

"The one thing that stands out the most will be #9 on the Guide Principles. Improving the parking somehow has to happen someday. This issue is talked about WAY more than any others. I do have an idea...can we build a parking garage (centrally located) with 50 levels? Can parking be for free in this garage? We don't have the space to build OUT, we need to look at building UP. I do however see a problem, if there is a garage with free parking, it will "always" be the first garage full. Will this reduce the price of the other garages? and LOTS? Humm...kind of spattered food for thought....there is my opinion for the year....thank you for listening"

1. wow, it sounds terrific! 2. it would be great to have more about the implementation of the "action." 3. priority #1 and #2 seem to be in line with the CBID's core mission "to enhance downtown's existing assets and bring more people to Downtown Knoxville to work, shop, live and play. The CBID ensures the downtown area is constantly renewed and improved, so that it continues to be an asset to future generations." - has it been studied what might have

prevented these "projects, programs and activities" from becoming a reality previously? 4. listed as "projects in progress" what is the status of 8 and 36 market square? also what about 26? 5. the importance of someone to coordinate the redevelopment process was stated clearly in the 2001 KCDC plan. how will the implementation of this strategy differ?

I regret that I was unable to attend the meeting geared toward Downtown Stakeholders held on March 28 as I am currently out of town, but appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Downtown Improvement Strategy report. In reading the report, I find that the 100 Block of Gay Street is included as both a primary pedestrian corridor as well as a primary retail corridor. As a resident of the 100 Block, I was somewhat surprised to find that the report lists "100 Gay Street Block Renovations" as a completed project. I recognize that significant improvements have been made on the north end of this block, but hardly consider the remainder to have been renovated. This block of Gay Street has seen a significant amount of investment both by private interest, and the City. And yet, it's appearance is strongly out of character with the remaining streetscape of Gay. Lighting on most of Gay Street utilizes decorative streetlights, whereas the 100 Block is lit by tall interstate style lighting. Additionally, while the remainder of Gay street boasts planters that beautify the street and litter baskets for incidental trash, the 100 Block lacks such amenities. Priority #1 of the report urges a Gay Street / Market Square Retail Strategy. This strategy, however, once again excludes the 100 Block from consideration. As I was told by City Engineering that the current use of parking meters on the 100 Block was meant to encourage retail, I find it curious that further attention is not paid to the area. Sidewalks are crumbling on this block. Please consider additional improvements to the 100 Block as part of the priorities for this strategy. Gay Street does not stop at Summit Hill. Please bring the 100 Block up to the standard set by the remainder of Gay throughout downtown.

To whom it may concern, Please consider helping Three Rivers Market/Knoxville Community Food Cooperative, a long established local whole foods grocery store owned by THE COMMUNITY, to relocate near or in the downtown area. I am confident it would not only bring in more foot traffic to the area but also help sustain the local economy. With your help our co-op could serve all of the area with quality foods and a good healthy place to visit. In turn it would bring in more people and business to the area. I understand the board of directors are working feverously to obtain retail space so please consider helping them as they restructure for a more sustainable community.

"Is there any chance Home Federal would at least add a floor or two to their new building? It would seem to be good development strategy; banks are supposed to know about that. (But Home Federal once turned us down for a mortgage because our proposed house was too modern, so maybe not.) A related issue is plans for their façade facing Market. I am sure it needs work, but recall it as a good piece of early modernism. It would be yet another shame if this was dryvitized with more of the traditional-lite that is infecting all of west Knox. "

In the organizational structure, I would like to recommend that an organization that represents neighborhoods be included as part of the Implementation team. I would like to suggest that The Center for Neighborhood Development (CND) be considered for that neighborhood representation. Dinner Shows Shopping, free parking and its very HICKISH to have parking on the main street.