

DRAFT Meeting Summary

**Town of Plattsburgh Smart Growth Plan
Meeting #2 Visual Preference and Mapping Exercise
July 18, 2018
Town of Plattsburgh, Town Offices**

Present:

Eileen Allen, Buck Bobbin, Michele Buckminster, Trevor Cole, Tom Frey, Shelise Marbut, Tim Palmer, Allen Reese, Terry Senecal, Scott Stoddard, Malana Tamer, Thomas Wood, Chris Round (Chazen), Paul Cummings (Chazen), Ethan Gaddy (Chazen)

Topics Covered:

- Opening remarks from Chazen
- Introductions by all present
- Reviewed agenda and meeting minutes from May 2018 kick-off meeting
- Committee reviewed draft vision statement
 - Statement needs to include words regarding “natural and authentic”
 - There should be some mention of the view of the lake and mountains; mention the natural beauty of the area
 - Committee can review and make comments on vision statement going forward.
- Review of “What Makes Great Places”
- Discussion of transect and street grid presentation
- Review of committee’s walk audit. Key planning concepts that arose often within the study location were:
 - Feeling out of place as a non-motorist/ pedestrian
 - Car centric, destination driven development
 - Lack of non-commercial places to dwell, no places of leisure
 - No public art, cultural events, institutions
 - Desire to see electric utilities underground
 - There was positive feedback in locations where sidewalks exist, but there is still a lack of bike facilities. Also the location of existing sidewalks were too close to the road, with no vegetative buffer or physical barrier
 - Desire for housing opportunities, few/no options to live in the focus area
 - Disjointed development patterns and aesthetics
 - Snow removal may be an issue with some sidewalk designs
- Visual Preference Survey
 - The committee reviewed a series of images portraying different types, styles and densities of development. Attendees were given clickers that allowed them to vote on which image they preferred.
 - The visual preference survey displayed images of:
 - Single family homes:

- Committee was asked to consider what density of single family home would be appropriate for the project area. Respondents favored relatively dense neighborhoods with houses closer to the street. The image of large lot sub-urban development had some support and an image of a very dense neighborhood was not popular. Respondents mentioned that increasing density in the project area is a technique to make more efficient use of land.
- 2-4 family homes:
 - Respondents preferred a well-built multi-family unit that included balconies and landscaping. Some respondents preferred units that were side-by-side (shared wall) as opposed to upstairs/downstairs unit.
- Multi-family homes:
 - Respondents liked examples that appeared more custom and detailed. Flat and cookie-cutter designs were not popular.
 - Some committee members noted that higher buildings could offer views of Lake Champlain.
 - Taller buildings are required to be fully sprinklered, which would drive up prices.
 - Accessibility is an important consideration. A few years ago Plattsburgh was highly ranked as a place to retire. When designing housing the needs of an aging population and those with disabilities must be considered.
- Apartments:
 - Committee member notes that due to the weather, garages were highly desirable.
 - Four story buildings might be too tall in many areas, if they are located closer to a commercial core they could work.
 - High density housing needs to be considered and should complement the City's redevelopment efforts.
- Alternative housing:
 - There are already some examples of alternative housing in Plattsburgh (Treadwell Mills).
 - A large portion of the population lives in single-wides or mobile homes. Many of these predate the federal Mobile Home Construction and Safety Standards Act of 1974.
 - Pending sales of mobile home parks may displace many people. Housing solutions should be explored.
- Commercial development:
 - All respondents favored a two-story building with an interesting roof line (e.g. peaked or hipped roofs), sidewalks, vegetation, screened parking.
 - "Not too much city and a little county"

- Pure “New Urban” building styles seemed to prescriptive
- Mixed-use/ Downtown buildings:
 - Three and four-story buildings with varied rooflines were preferred.
 - Committee noted that snow and ice removal and build-up would need to be considered.
 - One example building with a high (nearly 100%) fenestration was too urban, and out of place.
- Industrial/ Warehouse buildings:
 - The committee preferred a building with more windows, sidewalks and trees.
 - Committee noted that some developers are building higher quality products that should be used as examples.
 - Corrugated sheet metal and Morton buildings are least desirable.
 - Industrial/warehousing buildings need to be flexible and accommodate alternative uses.
- Highway design:
 - Committee preferred roads that included walking and biking amenities and street trees (more ‘Complete Streets’)
 - There was a brief discussion about buried utilities. It is expensive to do, but attractive when complete.
- Local road design:
 - Smaller roads with sidewalks were preferred.
 - The smallest, most ‘alternative’ example provided was not deemed feasible because of snow and ice removal.
- Mapping exercise
 - Committee members spent 45 minutes on two mapping exercises. There were set up on two different tables. Participants split into two groups and spent equal amounts of time at each station.
 - The first map displayed a bird’s eye view of the project area. Committee members were given 4 different colored markers. Each color indicated a different type of land use/building (urban core, mixed use, commercial/neighborhood and special district). Participants were instructed to locate and stack the markers to reflect desired densities (1 layer indicated low density, 2 layers medium density and 3 layers higher density). (The results are being compiled by Chazen).
 - The second table displayed an identical birds eye view of the project area. The map was covered by a transparent sheet of plastic that the participants were instructed to identify potential transportation linkages by using dry erase markers. (The results are being compiled by Chazen).

Next Steps

1. Draft a digital version of mapping exercises results and circulate to committee for review.
2. Committee to provide any updated names/organizations for stakeholder outreach.
3. Engage with stakeholders and property owners that were identified by the committee and within the study area.
4. Revise mapping based on stakeholder and property owner input.
5. Obtain committee feedback on revised map.
6. Establish a time and place for public workshop and related public outreach. Potentially in September or October

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