Advisory Committee Meeting #3 Notes | *8/4/2022*

Attendees

Advisory Committee Members:

☑ Mark Borenstein — *Land Use Attorney at Bowditch & Dewey, LLP, Worcester Resident*

☑ Roberta Brien — *Worcester Business Development Corporation, Vice President of Projects*

☑ Lynn Cheney — *Business Owner – Maker on Main, Worcester Resident*

☑ Germán Chiriboga — *University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School, Program Director, Worcester Resident*

☐ Alyssa Corazzini — *Worcester Resident*

☑ Amanda Gregoire — *Massachusetts Development Finance Agency, Vice President of Real Estate Services, Worcester Resident*

☑ Sujatha Krishnan — *Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, Deputy Director*

☑ Albert LaValley — *Worcester Planning Board, Chair, Worcester Resident*

☐ Joyce Mandell — *Urban Planning Partnership, Worcester Resident*

☑ Amie Shei — *The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts, President and CEO*

☑ Casey Starr — *Main South Community Development Corporation, Director of Community Initiatives, Worcester Resident*

☑ Suzanne Wood — *University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School, Sustainability Manager*

☑ Ulysses Youngblood — *Business Owner – Major Bloom, Worcester Resident*

City Staff (Worcester Planning & Regulatory Services Division):

☑ Stephen Rolle — *Assistant Chief Development Officer*

☑ Michelle Smith — *Chief Planner*

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Consultant Team (Utile):

☑	Tim Love	*Principal-in-Charge*
☑	Zoë Mueller	*Project Manager & Urban Planner*
☑	Serena Galleshaw	*Urban Planner*
☑	Rahi Patel	*Urban Planner*
☑	Guillermo Creamer, Jr.	*Community Organizer*

Agenda

1. **Initial Engagement Outcomes**
    a. Themes: Spring Citywide Survey
    b. Engagement by the Numbers
    c. Input Synthesis Method
    d. Themes: Workshop & Comment Cards
    e. In the Community: What Guillermo is Learning
2. **Upcoming/Remaining Engagement**
    a. Working Groups
    b. Listening Tour + Pop-Up Events
    c. Focus Groups
3. **Place Types & TOD Framework workshop**
    a. (Miro workshop to refine district boundaries etc.)
4. **Next Steps**

Meeting Notes

I. Initial Engagement Outcomes

- Serena provided the Committee with a recap of the spring citywide survey results, public workshops, and other outreach events.
- Guillermo provided the Committee with an overview of the themes he heard the most in his conversations with community members and local organizations.
    - #### A. Comments from Committee Members:
        - **Question/Comment/Suggestion:** Interesting and important work. I'm curious if the planning team is confident that they've captured a representative sample of residents or if there are groups you still need to connect with.
            - **Planning Team Response:** We have some groups that still need to be reached out to in more detail. We're still creating connections with the

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African community and the AAPI community. This is also something we'll address when we discuss upcoming engagement

- **Question/Comment/Suggestion:** Transit is a difficult problem to solve but so many colleges have reciprocal classes. Before COVID, this was a huge problem- getting students from campus to campus. Colleges used their own shuttles so it became an exclusive and limited way for students to get around town. Increasing connections with campuses is a huge opportunity to improve transit connections and ridership.
- **Question/Comment/Suggestion:** I'm wondering how trash is going to fit into one of the categories in the plan. The trash pickup is supposed to be DPW. Businesses are required to care for trash cans and residents are forced to pay for disposal of trash on their own. Trash management needs to be addressed and I'm wondering
  - **Planning Team Response:** The jurisdictional issue of maintaining trash cans is surprisingly common in cities. This is especially true in commercial centers. We can tackle this as part of our place-based approach to this project since they clearly have implications for the use of public space. We can at least recommend some solutions to address this issue. Of course, trash accumulation has a number of causes that go beyond the scope of the plan- but we can certainly lay a groundwork.
- **Question/Comment/Suggestion:** In my neighborhood, when we have a trash can people take trash from their apartments and place it next to the trash cans. Trash cans for residents would be logistically easier to pick up it seems.
- **Question/Comment/Suggestion:** One of the great strengths we have is collaboration between the non-profits and the city. When Guillermo says that some nonprofits get a lot of attention from the city, what do you mean by that?
  - **Planning Team Response:** There are a lot of nonprofits doing great work that could receive more attention, validation, and public support from the city.

II. Upcoming/Remaining Engagement
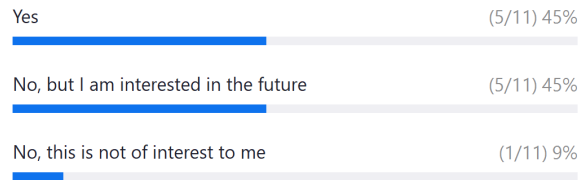
A. Working Groups

- Zoë polled the committee members on their plans to participate in the working groups.
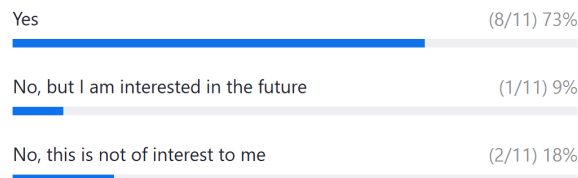
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1. HOUSING: Are you planning to attend the meeting on Monday, August 15th from 5:30pm-7:30pm? (Single Choice) *

11/11 (100%) answered

Yes	(5/11) 45%
No, but I am interested in the future	(5/11) 45%
No, this is not of interest to me	(1/11) 9%

2. ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY: Are you planning to attend the meeting on Wednesday, August 15th from 8am-10am? (Single Choice) *

11/11 (100%) answered

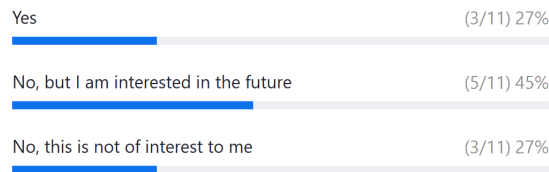|	
Yes	(8/11) 73%
No, but I am interested in the future	(1/11) 9%
No, this is not of interest to me	(2/11) 18%

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3. TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY: Are you planning to attend the meeting on Thursday, August 18th from 5:30pm-7:30pm? (Single Choice) *

11/11 (100%) answered

Yes	(3/11) 27%
No, but I am interested in the future	(5/11) 45%
No, this is not of interest to me	(3/11) 27%

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B. **Listening Tour Pop-Up Events**
   - Serena gave the Committee a brief overview of the listening tour events

C. **Listening Tour Focus Groups**
   - Serena gave the Committee a brief overview of the focus group events

D. **Comments from Committee Members:**
   - **Question/Comment/Suggestion:**
     - Black community– Black Families Together, The Village, Our Story Entertainment
     - Youth– Youth Grow, City's Youth Council
     - Main South Business Asstn.– Predominantly Latino business association
     - African community– ACE, African Cultural Center
   - **Question/Comment/Suggestion:**

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- Separating college students from high school students may be more effective than lumping 13-25 year olds together
- Starting with Clark U. may yield more participation because they have an active planning department

III. Place Types & TOD Framework Workshop

- Zoë presented the place types map, including a methodology for the creation of the different place types across Worcester. The map was created through a combination of land use analysis, urban form analysis, and a transit capacity and potential analysis.

A. Comments from Committee Members:

- **Question/Comment/Suggestion:** Main South is not in an accurate position, Casey can recommend refinements to the location (Easy reminder: railroad tracks separate main south and south worcester)
  - **Planning Team Response:**
- **Question/Comment/Suggestion:** Add June St corridor east of Worcester State. Columbus Park is also a commercial node with a lot of potential.
- **Comment:** Sujatha clarified that the WRTA ridership data are from counters on buses which must be calibrated 2-3 times per year per federal regulations. These counters function even when the system is not collecting fares.
- **Comment:** There was a shuttle, Route 10, that used to connect all college campuses. However, ridership was very low. Colleges partnered with companies like Uber to provide discounted rides. So there may be potential to explore fixed-route campus service, but the demand has been historically low. CMRPC and WRTA have also explored the idea of small, neighborhood hubs to facilitate transfers.
- **Comment:** It might be worth exploring potential transit ridership. A lot of institutions have zip code commuting data for employees. That could help us discover unmet demand for transit service.
  - **Planning Team Response:** A lot of that will definitely sit with WRTA's service planning but we can bring those ideas to the forefront of the public discussion so that there is support for that planning when it happens.
- **Comment:** How do we compare with other cities our size in terms of ridership?
  - **Planning Team Response:** We can look at Providence as a guide. RIPTA is currently rethinking downtown service. Compared to systems with high ridership per capita, WRTA funding is very small. This will require state funding and support.
- **Comment:** In the health equity group for the city, we tried to connect ridership and employment data to understand how people will need to get to vaccination sites. Transferring at Union Station is confusing and causes delays. Investigating how we can ease transfers would be beneficial.
  - **Planning Team Response:** There is definitely a place to rethink the radial design of the system.
- **Comment:** WRTA is switching to a mobile fare payment system, which will give us great origin-destination data. Right now we can't see the flows of people

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through the system very well. They're hoping to have the system by January 1, 2023. However, a fare free program would make this data collection impossible so it remains to be seen if we will have this detailed data access.

- ○ **Comment:** Main Middle is a little controversial in the city. Defining any neighborhood anywhere is controversial. Newton Square should also be added, as that has a strong significance to the Jewish community. Tatnuck Sq should also be its own neighborhood. Green Island should also be added to the map. Quinsigamond Village is another defined neighborhood (sometimes referred to as College Hill). Indian Lake should also be added. It has a new amazon facility and the community is focused on bike/ped infrastructure. Burncoat and Great Brook Valley should also be added.

IV.   **Next Steps**

  A. **Next Advisory Committee Meeting**
  - The Committee will meet next on September 1st.
  B. **Worcester Now Report**