



Stakeholder Groups

Staff worked with community organizations to set up various meetings, focus groups and open houses to connect with stakeholders related to the potential project goals:

- to obtain insights from stakeholder groups on potential for achieving community goals
- learn about how redevelopment activities will either aid or hinder current initiatives/goals of these stakeholders
- learn about specific space, resource and design needs that should be considered in the RFP if these goals were to be achieved
- identify opportunities for additional partners- determine if willing/interested

Arts & Cultural Organizations

WHO:

- Arts Alliance Members
- Centre Foundation
- Discovery Space
- Schlow Library
- PSU & State Theaters
- Artists

WHAT:

In what ways could a redevelopment project compliment your organizations?

What elements are needed to strengthen arts & culture downtown?

Insights:

- Interest & support for a space that can be shared by multiple organizations
- Desire for space to be flexible to be used for a variety of classes, small performances, working space and gallery/display needs could be most successful; outdoor component is desirable
- Multiple goals could be achieved by incorporating a live-work model with units dedicated to artists (local or traveling) with studio and display space in the lower levels of the building
- Missions of these organizations align with “maker spaces”- space provides resource for artists as well as entrepreneurs
- Management entity and decision about ownership structure will be necessary consideration for success of space
- Potential exists for grant funding sources for planning or management

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WHAT:

In what ways could a redevelopment project compliment your organizations?

What elements are needed to strengthen arts & culture downtown?

Impacts on Redevelopment Planning:

- Need to continue discussions to identify management structure and ownership of such a space; no single entity ready to partner until this element is determined
- Best opportunity to meet this goal in redevelopment plan:
 - Approx. 5,000 sq.ft. to compliment children's science museum that could be used part time by Discovery Space, part time by other organizations
 - Purposes for space could range from arts camps & workshops to exhibit & display space
 - Outdoor gathering space could increase demand/ attractiveness of these amenities

Entrepreneurial Groups

WHO:

- Centre Region Entrepreneurs Network (CREN)
- New Leaf Initiative (NL)
- Women's Network Group (WiNG's)

WHAT:

If downtown is to become a place where entrepreneurship and small businesses can thrive, then...?

Insights:

- New Leaf should be on the ground floor to create more community presence and synergy
- Addressing barriers to startups-- not about lack of space per say, but about cost of outfitting, length of leases, and other zoning/code restrictions on use of properties
- Larger, Class A office spaces are hard to come by in downtown
- Large, architecturally unique buildings for adaptive reuse also hard to come by in downtown
- Supporting entrepreneurship and wage-sustaining jobs is dependent on excellent quality of life, including professional housing, retail and dining diversity, and "third places"
- Need spaces with more social component to create "sticky" community

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WHAT:

If downtown is to become a place where entrepreneurship and small businesses can thrive, then...?

Impacts on Redevelopment Planning:

- Implementation of downtown plan goals for housing, retail diversity, and public realm improvements will support desirability of downtown for employees of new/existing companies
- One new building won't be the solution; reinvestment and reuse of existing building stock in and near downtown presents opportunities
- Best opportunity to meet this goal in redevelopment plan:
 - space in a new building should be designed for utmost flexibility rather than "purpose build," which renders space too expensive to adapt to new uses; i.e. "vanilla box" to promote maximum flexibility for attraction of initial and future tenants
 - Outdoor gathering space could increase demand/attractiveness of these amenities

County-wide Housing Staff

WHO:

- Centre County Planning & Adult Services staff
- Borough Housing Staff
- CRPA Housing Staff
- Temporary Housing Foundation Director (THF)

WHAT:

What housing types could be successful in this part of downtown and are there resources available that can be used as a tool to close gaps?

Insights:

- Not necessarily a location for family units; could be open to graduate students, professionals and empty-nesters
- If target market is specific, need to focus on the supporting services/uses that would make the housing attractive- consider what is available in downtown currently (i.e. family housing- daycare, graduate students- 24 hour coffee shop, etc)
- Addison Court (age-restricted housing) difficult to fill; loss of Senior Center impacts downtown's attractiveness for senior housing
- Single occupancy and/or transitional housing not appropriate due to critical need for co-located support services
- Any addition of non-undergraduate student housing helps add "rungs to the ladder" of housing choices, inventory which can have a positive impact the entire county

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WHAT:

What housing types could be successful in this part of downtown and are there resources available that can be used as a tool to close gaps?

Impacts on Redevelopment Planning:

- May not be the best location for more “traditional” affordable housing tax credit projects or investment of CDBG/HOME funds
- Opportunity to provide a housing product that currently exists in limited supply in the area; start small and see how market accepts
- Best opportunity to meet this goal in redevelopment plan:
 - Stay away from too narrow a “target market” by focusing on mixed-income and mixed-tenant housing in downtown
 - Rents should range from just above rates considered to be affordable through housing assistance programs up to market rate
 - Encourage provision of developer’s required inclusionary housing on-site to promote this diversity

Young Professionals

WHO:

- State College Young Professionals (SCYP)
- CBICC Gateway Group
- New Leaf Initiative
- Community Members at large
- ~90 survey participants

WHAT:

Do you have an interest in housing in downtown?
If so, what amenities are most important?

Insights:

- 85% of survey participants don't live downtown today
 - 35% tried to find housing, but couldn't find something suitable
 - 38% didn't look because they didn't believe they would find something suitable
- 27% want to live downtown; another 52% are interested if they can find the right housing stock
- Searching for living arrangements to accommodate:
 - Most likely arrangements-- a single individual or a couple (possibly with a pet)
 - Least likely arrangement-- with roommates (slightly less likely than a partner and/or kids)

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WHAT:

Do you have an interest in housing in downtown?
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Insights:

- Desired amenities in downtown housing:
 - Respondents had a split preference for renting versus owning a unit
 - 50% of respondents ranked 2+ bedrooms as one of the top 5 needs for suitable housing (versus only 23% for studio/1 bed)
 - Car parking is most highly ranked amenity (above fitness/laundry centers, bike parking and walkability)
- 60% consider \$500-800/bedroom an affordable rent, but do not want prices to be based on a per bedroom rate, since this could be cost prohibitive for the desired living arrangements
- Many comments regarding living in buildings that do not allow undergraduate tenants

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Do you have an interest in housing in downtown?
If so, what amenities are most important?

Impacts on Redevelopment Planning:

- support Downtown Plan policy for non-student housing in core area of downtown
- start with a small supply of units to test absorption rates and unit prices
- parking either on-site or off-site will be needed to be attractive for target market; may be able to provided at a lower ratio than current zoning requires and may be priced separate from residential units
- Best opportunity to meet this goal in redevelopment plan:
 - see recommendations from housing staff insights

Community Input

WHO:

Community at large through:

- Engage State College Website (38 rankings submitted)
- Community Events (35 rankings submitted)

WHAT:

Rank these goals in order from most important to least important:

- civic, arts hub
- entrepreneurial hub
- retail diversity
- professional housing
- other ideas

Insights:

- Community preference for goals based on number of times ranked as #1 or #2 most important:
 - Civic, Arts & Family Center
 - Entrepreneurial & Business Hub
 - Professional Housing
 - Retail Diversity
- “Other idea” posts supported a range of potential uses
 - Nearly half supported a community maker space idea
 - Frequent comments about a “town square” or pedestrian mall concept
 - Desire to see more and different dining/retail options, such as food trucks and fewer bars; but mixed responses to creating more retail space given current challenges with existing stock
 - Some ideas for professional, affordable, and senior housing

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- Community Events (35 rankings submitted)

WHAT:

Rank these goals in order from most important to least important:

- civic, arts hub
- entrepreneurial hub
- retail diversity
- professional housing
- other ideas

Impacts on Redevelopment Planning:

- General community support for most goals; least support for incorporating retail into project
- All focus groups generally support the idea that this part of downtown should feel like the “center” and should have a more easily accessible and usable “town square”
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- Redevelopment Area Plan (PC Role) should articulate that any of these uses are acceptable for core of downtown, but greatest emphasis on “civic” uses
- Redevelopment Proposal (RDA Role) should articulate minimum required elements (Discovery Space & FNB needs, minimum replacement parking required) and allow proposals to address additional uses that will financially & strategically support focus on civic center