Stoughton *Wisconsin*

PUBLIC INPUT MEETING SUMMARY

The City of Stoughton and the City's Redevelopment Authority is currently developing a Downtown Economic Strategy. On October 1st, 2019 the Downtown Revitalization Subcommittee of the RDA hosted an Open House at the Legeret in downtown Stoughton. Based on sign-in sheets, approximately 50 members of the community participated. There where several stations where the community gave feedback on items such as parking, downtown events, streetscape, business mix, etc. The following report summarizes the public input received at the meeting.

A resident reviews the station instruction sheet.

Community members discuss the contents of the vision boards.

Residents gather for the first public input meeting.

VALUES BOARD

The Values Board consisted of eight characteristics that describe the essence of Downtown Stoughton. Community members were given 2 green dots to place on terms they felt best represented downtown. There were 111 dots placed in total. The term Vibrant had the most selections with 27% (30 dots), followed by Sustainable with 19% (21 dots) and Historic with 15% (17 dots). Growth was the next highest with 14% (16 dots).

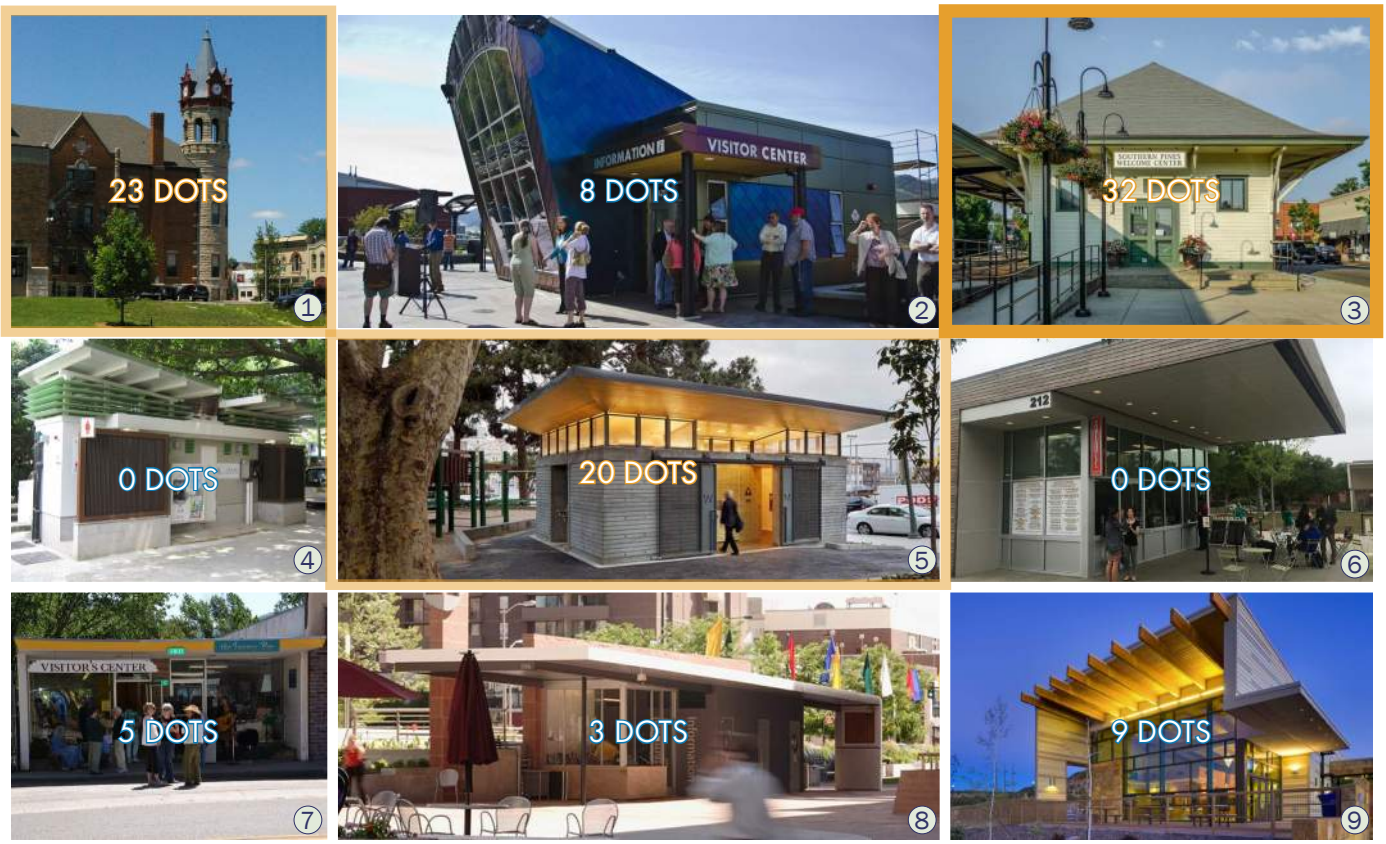
Participants were given an opportunity to provide additional comments on the board using post-it notes or directly on the board. Walkability and bikability were popular comments. Under Livable, a resident commented "walkable and bikable," while under the Sustainable category, one comment was to "decrease car traffic in favor of being walkable and bikable." For the Growth category, one response was to "work with Internet providers to bring improved Internet for downtown businesses and community."

VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY

The Visual Preference Survey included eight themed image boards with precedent images of projects, places, and amenities that could be used as inspiration or talking points for the redevelopment plan in downtown. Community members were given 2 green dots per board. They were instructed to place dots on images they felt strongly represented what they would like to see in Downtown Stoughton. Below is a summary of each board, indicating the top three images chosen per board. The visual preference survey results include pages 3-10.

Welcome Center & Public Facilities

There were 100 total dots placed on this board. The images with the highest number of dots were image 3 (30%), image 1 (23%), and image 5 (20%). A note on image 7 described how the corner of main and 4th street should be used as a welcoming corner with signs, lights.



WELCOME CENTER & PUBLIC FACILITIES

Stoughton Wisconsin

Comment:

Image 3 represents a reuse of an iconic existing, historic structure. Pedestrian scale lighting, large signage, and universal access promote the welcoming character of the preferred image.

Streetscape / Artscape

There were 111 total dots placed on this board. The images with the highest number of dots were image 4 (35%), image 3 (28%), and image 6 (23%). Image 4 received the third highest number of dots compared to all other boards with 39. Comments described having a major welcoming avenue from 4th street to the riverfront, and having a street of murals.

STREETSCAPE / ARTSCAPE

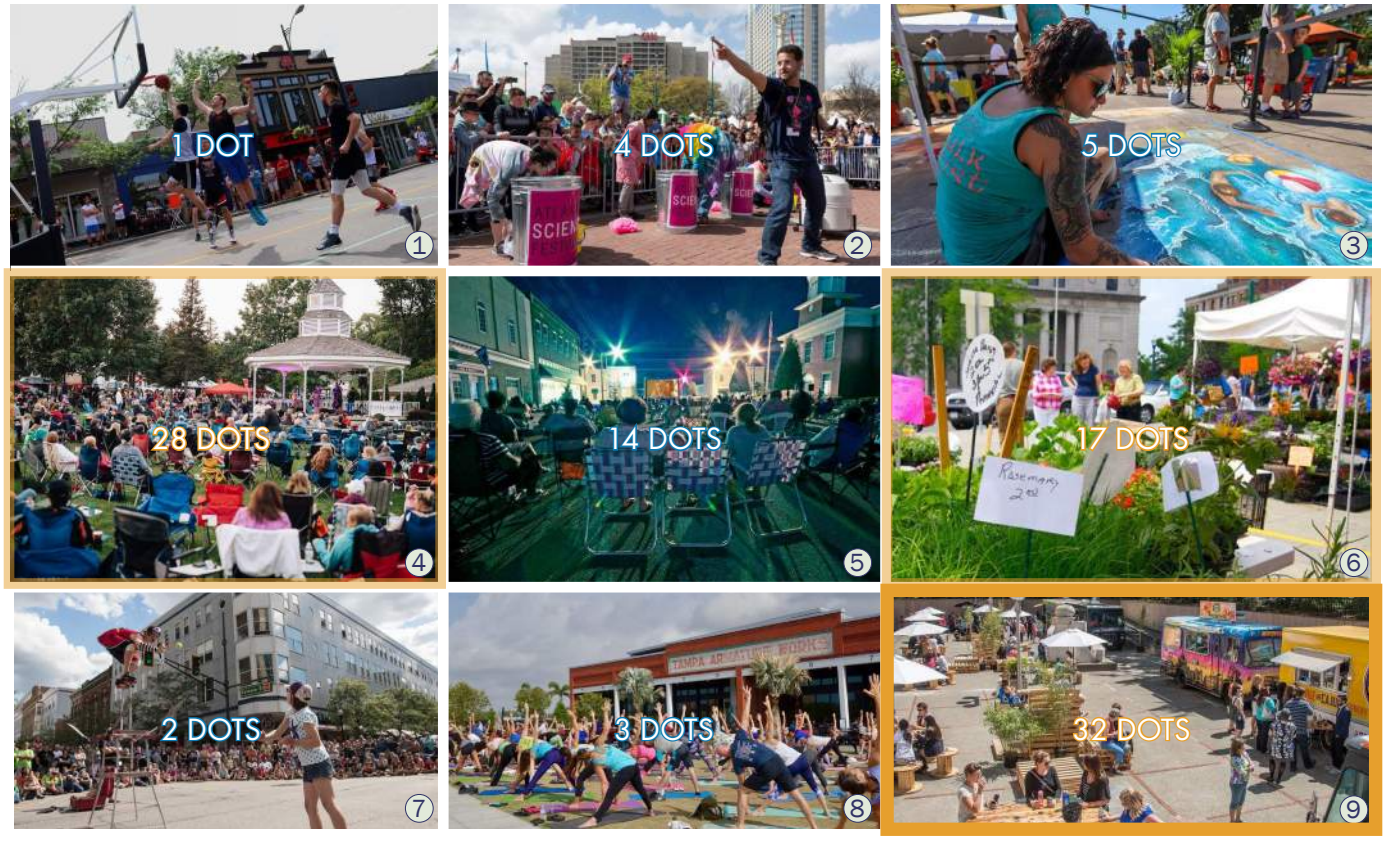
Stoughton Wisconsin

Comment:

The style of art in image 4 is individual and unique, unlike painted cows or painted Bucky's. The intent is a consistent pattern of art but of eclectic expressions, where possible. Often these pieces are not readily apparent or visible.

Events

There were 109 total dots placed on this board. The images with the highest number of dots were image 9 (30%), image 4 (26%), and image 6 (16%). Comments included having well promoted events, more signature events, more kids events, incorporating businesses into events, and having a regular food truck space. A note was made on image 5 to provide free outdoor summer movies.



EVENTS

Stoughton Wisconsin

Comment:

Image 9 is a representation of a densely spaced outdoor food truck area in a converted parking lot. Through the use of recycled industrial equipment, makeshift seating areas, and potted plants – along with the backdrop of colorful trucks – the space becomes inviting and visually interesting.

Signage & Wayfinding

There were 101 total dots placed on this board. The images with the highest number of dots were image 5 (32%), image 9 (18%), and image 4 (14%). There were two comments about incorporating the history of Stoughton into the signage or kiosks, including its historic buildings.

SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING

Stoughton Wisconsin

Comment:

The downtown kiosk in image 5 utilizes color, history, and a mix of materials to create a dynamic, functional wayfinding signage pallet. The simple, contrasting colors used in the map are clear and precise, allowing users to quickly engage the sign, and find their destination.

Business & Dining

There were 108 total dots placed on this board. The images with the highest number of dots were image 3 (38%), image 4 (22%), and image 5 (16%). Image 3 had the second highest number of dots compared to all other boards with 41. Comments included having more al fresco dining, a mix of businesses, the value of outside dining and Venice spaces, as well as having a hotel close to downtown. One community member wrote "Our downtown is unique and we should make sure it doesn't look like everywhere else. We should play up the river, opera house and existing buildings with all their personality."

BUSINESS & DINING

Stoughton Wisconsin

Comment:

Image 3 is an example of a warmly lit indoor/outdoor dining patio. The overhead festoon lighting helps enclose the space, while also drawing the sheltered portion to the outside. The addition of movable seating allows users to adjust the space as needed for group size and function, which helps create character.

Art & Gateway

There were 103 total dots placed on this board. The images with the highest number of dots were image 2 (34%), image 6 (19%), and image 8 (14%). Comments included ensuring art installations were appropriate to the area, community and heritage. Additional comments discussed having gathering spaces with art installations, having more contemporary art, and having a bandstand near the river. One community member indicated they did not like anything on the board, but agreed with the need for more art.

ART / GATEWAY

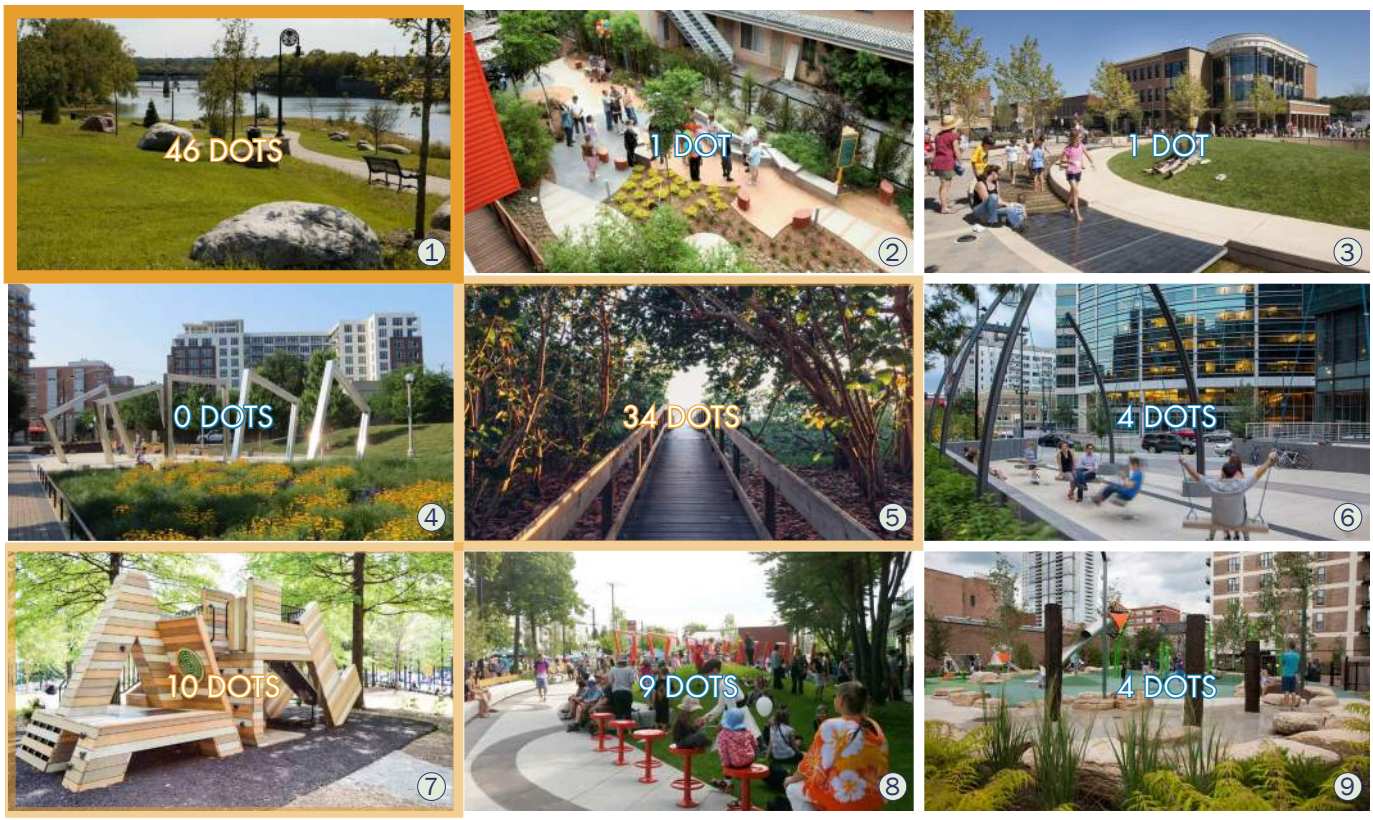
Stoughton Wisconsin

Comment:

The overhead downtown gateway sign in image 2 is an example of a design that is complemented by it's purpose and surrounding aesthetic. A sign highlighting a historic avenue should use clean and purposeful geometry that draws from the history of the area.

Parks & Open Spaces

There were 109 total dots placed on this board. The images with the highest number of dots were image 1 (42%), image 5 (31%), and image 7 (9%). Image 1 had the highest number of dots, 46, compared to all other boards. Comments included utilizing the riverway, more open gathering spaces, and dog friendly spaces.



PARKS & OPEN SPACES

Stoughton Wisconsin

Comment:

Image 1 illustrates a riverfront open space that isn't overly designed and provides an equal mix of vegetation, natural features, and pedestrian amenities to provide interest throughout the space. The path follows the natural curvature of the river which is smooth and organic, instead of arbitrarily directing users on an unconventional route.

Parking

There were 75 total dots placed on this board. The images with the highest number of dots were image 7 (45%), image 9 (33%), and image 8 (20%). There were several comments about limiting parking tickets and providing more free and extended (2+ hour) parking. Other residents commented about adding more bicycle parking and E.V. charging. One respondent didn't see parking as a priority, rather making the downtown more walkable and connected with the regional bike path system.

PARKING

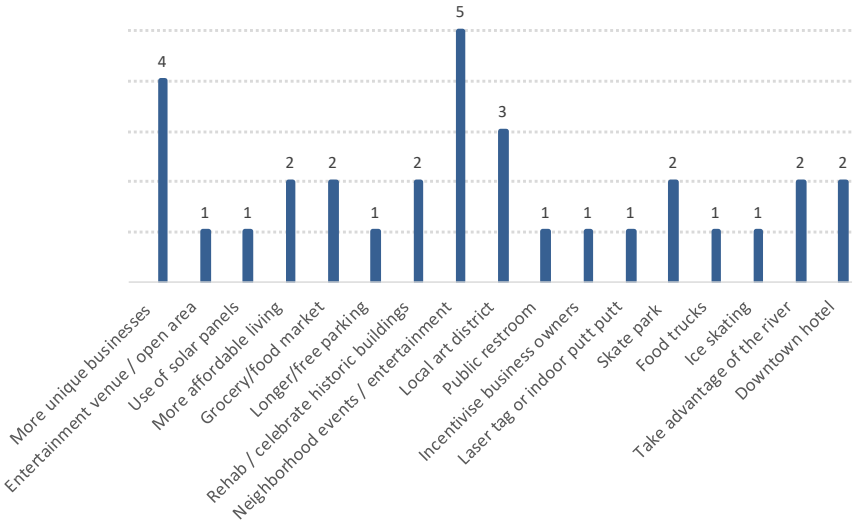
Stoughton Wisconsin

Comment:

The parking design in image 7 represents street side angled parking adjacent to a widened sidewalk for bigger groups and more leisurely movement. There is a nice vegetated barrier between the cars and the sidewalk which helps separate an undesirable element from the sidewalk and storefronts.

VISION BOARD

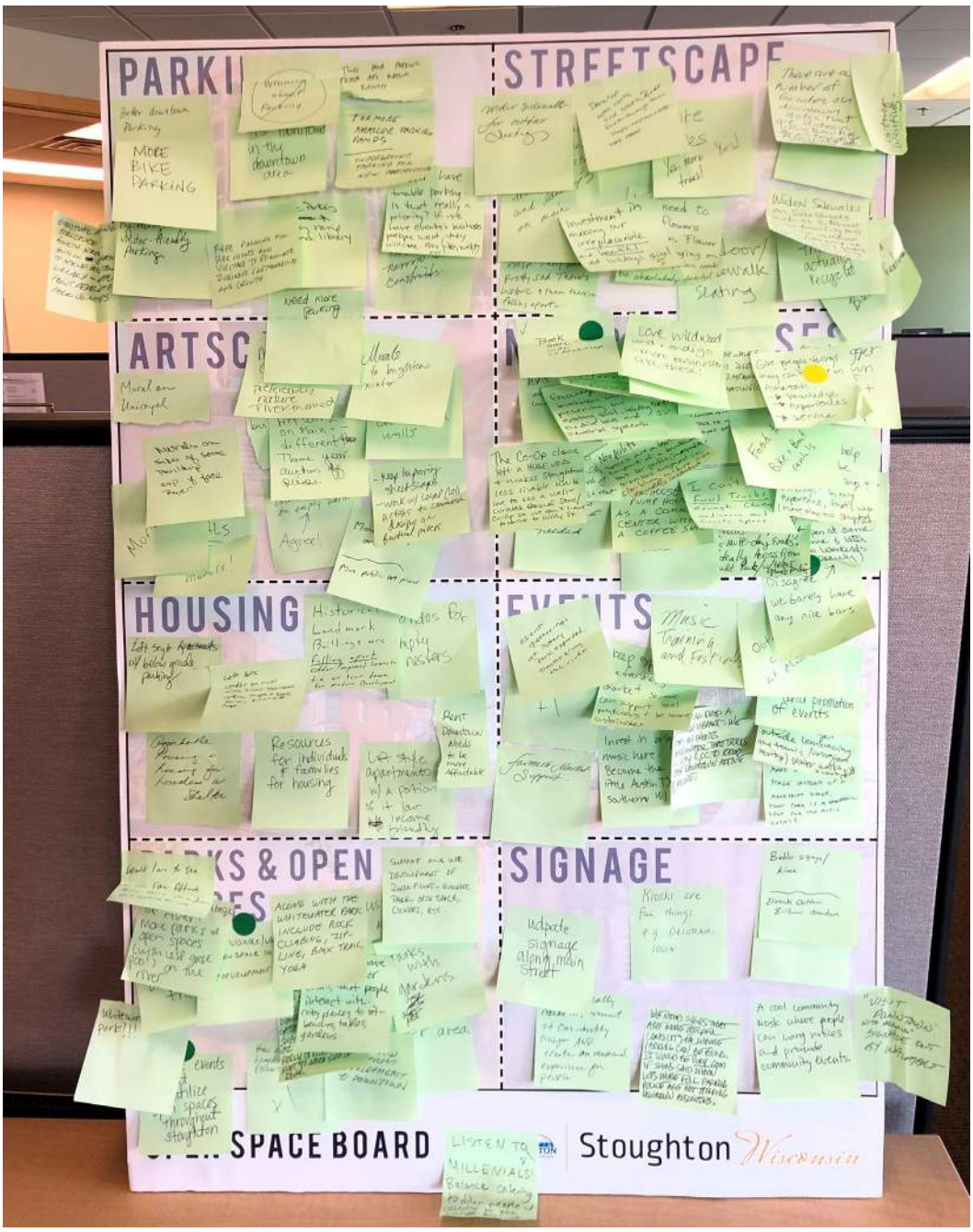
The Vision Board consisted of six themes that may be represented in the redevelopment plan. Residents were given 1 green dot to place on the theme they felt should be part of the downtown redevelopment. With 57 total dots, New Businesses recorded the most dots with 34 (60%), followed by Events with 11 dots (19%).



Several comments were recorded on this board. The most common suggestion was to have more neighborhood events to bring the community and surrounding area to downtown Stoughton. The next most common suggestion was attracting more businesses to the city such as coffee shops and book stores. Another common idea was to turn the area into a local art district, incentivizing business owners to rent space for art installations, or increasing the presence of murals, sculptures, and art live-work opportunities.

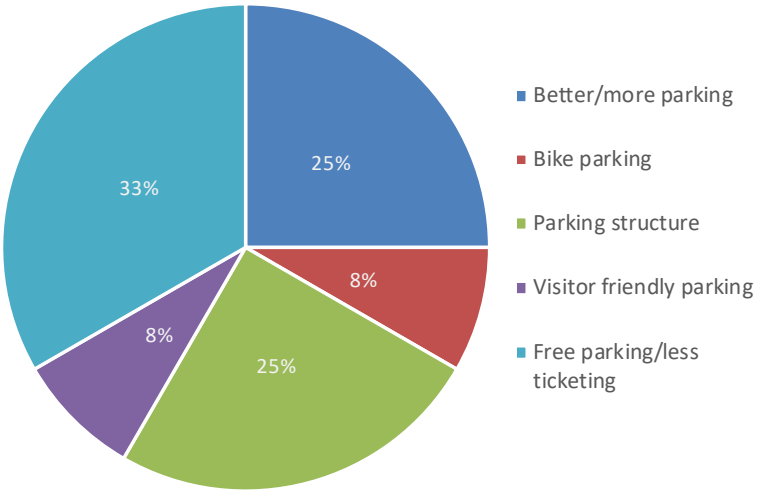
OPEN SPACE BOARD

The Open Space Board was an opportunity to write in comments about subjects or themes residents saw throughout the night, or that they felt were missed. There were eight categories for residents to place comments or ideas on the board. The following pages will provide a summary of the comments received in each category.



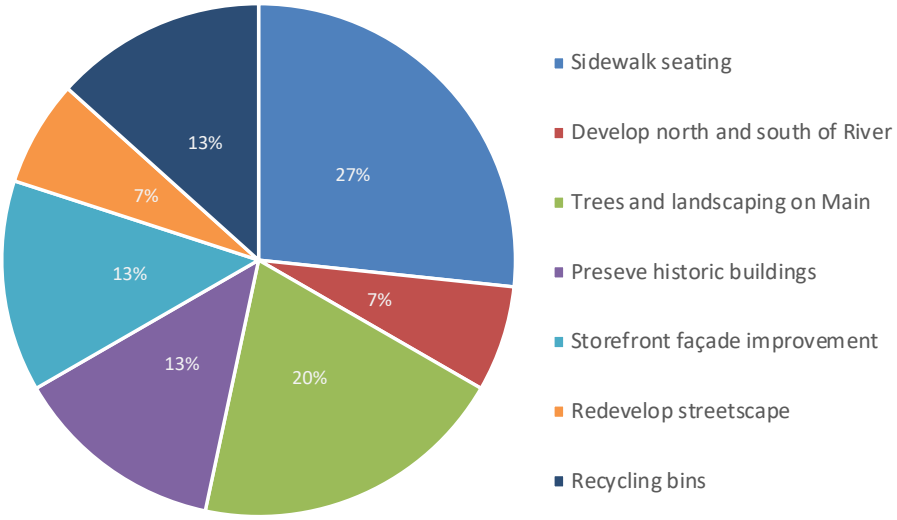
Parking

The comments for parking were specific to roughly 5 themes; free parking/less ticketing, better/more parking, more bike parking, having a downtown parking structure, and more visitor friendly parking. Free parking/ less ticketing was the most common idea with 4 notes, followed by better/more parking with 3 notes. However, though most comments centered on improving parking, a few residents disagreed with the need. One resident said "stop whining about parking," while another wrote, "I never have trouble parking. Is this really a priority? If we have events and businesses people want, they will come..."



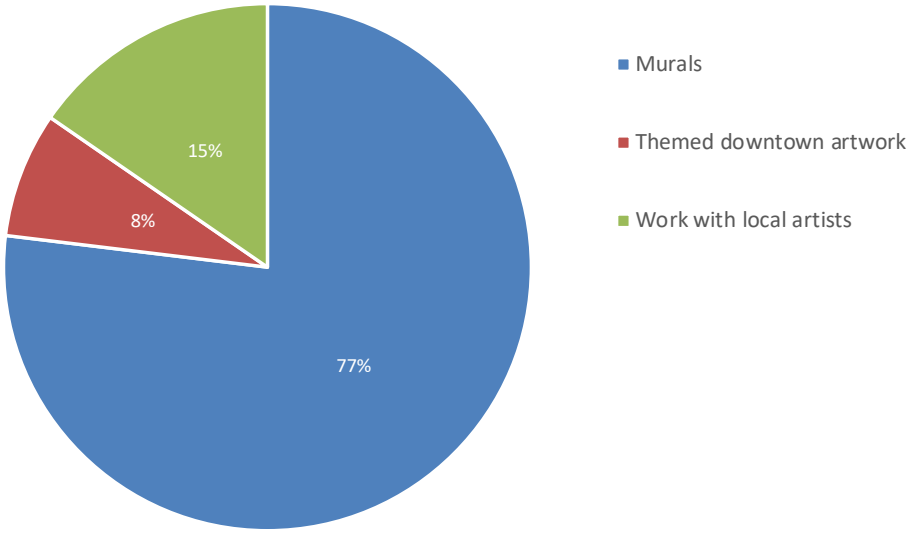
Streetscape

There were 7 distinct categories of comments received under streetscape: Having more sidewalk seating, developing north and south of river, more trees and landscaping on Main St, preserve historic buildings, storefront façade improvement, re-develop the streetscape and provide recycling bins. Installing more trees and landscaping on Main St was the most popular comment, followed by creating more sidewalk seating. One resident suggested to widen sidewalks "...for more outdoor dining/drinking. We have such long winters, it's nice to be outside when weather is good."



Artscape

There were 3 categories of comments recorded in this section; murals, themed downtown artwork, and working with local artists. Comments regarding murals were the most common type with 10 out of 13 responses expressing the desire for more murals. Comments included placing murals on all buildings, working with local artists to commission artwork, and installing themed artwork for different times of the year.



New Businesses

Responses for new businesses were ranged and varied. A few themes did materialize, including bringing in food trucks, a new grocer/co-op, and encouraging existing businesses while making sure new businesses are unique, desired, and can compete in the Internet age. One resident said, "give people what they can't get on Amazon; knowledge, experiences, and services." Another commented about the void the Co-op left, saying it, "makes Stoughton less livable. Would love to see a well curated general store/co-op so we don't have to drive to Willy St." Others commented on the hours of operations asking, "Can we help businesses be open in the evening and on Sunday's?"

The "Wordle" shown below provides another, subjective look at these open ended responses, based on the frequency of words as they appear in this theme.

Housing

Responses for housing centered on needing more lofts and condominiums, as well as providing more affordable and low income housing. One comment suggested "condos on the river with small businesses like coffee shops, bookstores, and small gift shops." Speaking about affordable housing, one community member asked for "resources for individuals and families for housing." while another said, "rent downtown needs to be more affordable."

The "Wordle" shown below provides another, subjective look at these open ended responses, based on the frequency of words as they appear in this theme.

Events

Responses for events were varied, however a few themes emerged. Residents discussed the need for more festivals, using the gazebo at Rotary Park for a stage, and the surrounding downtown parks for event spaces. Another common response was the need for an events coordinator, as one resident said "we need an events coordinator that works with the city and C.C. to keep the downtown active and alive." Other ideas that received multiple responses were to fill the vacant spaces and to continue expanding the farmers market. One community member described expanding the farmers market "so we can support local producers and be more sustainable."

The "Wordle" shown below provides another, subjective look at these open ended responses, based on the frequency of words as they appear in this theme.

Parks and Open Spaces

Many residents agreed taking advantage of the riverfront was a high priority for improving Stoughton's parks and open spaces. Some talked about providing a more dynamic experience along the river, utilizing businesses, gardens, and installations to make it more interactive. Another resident asked to "link the riverfront development to downtown."

The "Wordle" shown below provides another, subjective look at these open ended responses, based on the frequency of words as they appear in this theme.

Signage

Signage received only 8 community comments, however almost all of the comments agreed that updated signage is needed in the downtown. Many said having kiosks would be beneficial and one resident mentioned having a kiosk "where people can hang notices and promote community events." Other suggestions were to have more "helpful signage" that would indicate where parking can be found and if parking were full. Another suggestion was to eliminate downtown billboards. One resident said signage can "create an emotional experience for people."

The "Wordle" shown below provides another, subjective look at these open ended responses, based on the frequency of words as they appear in this theme.

LEGEND

STICKERS PLACED

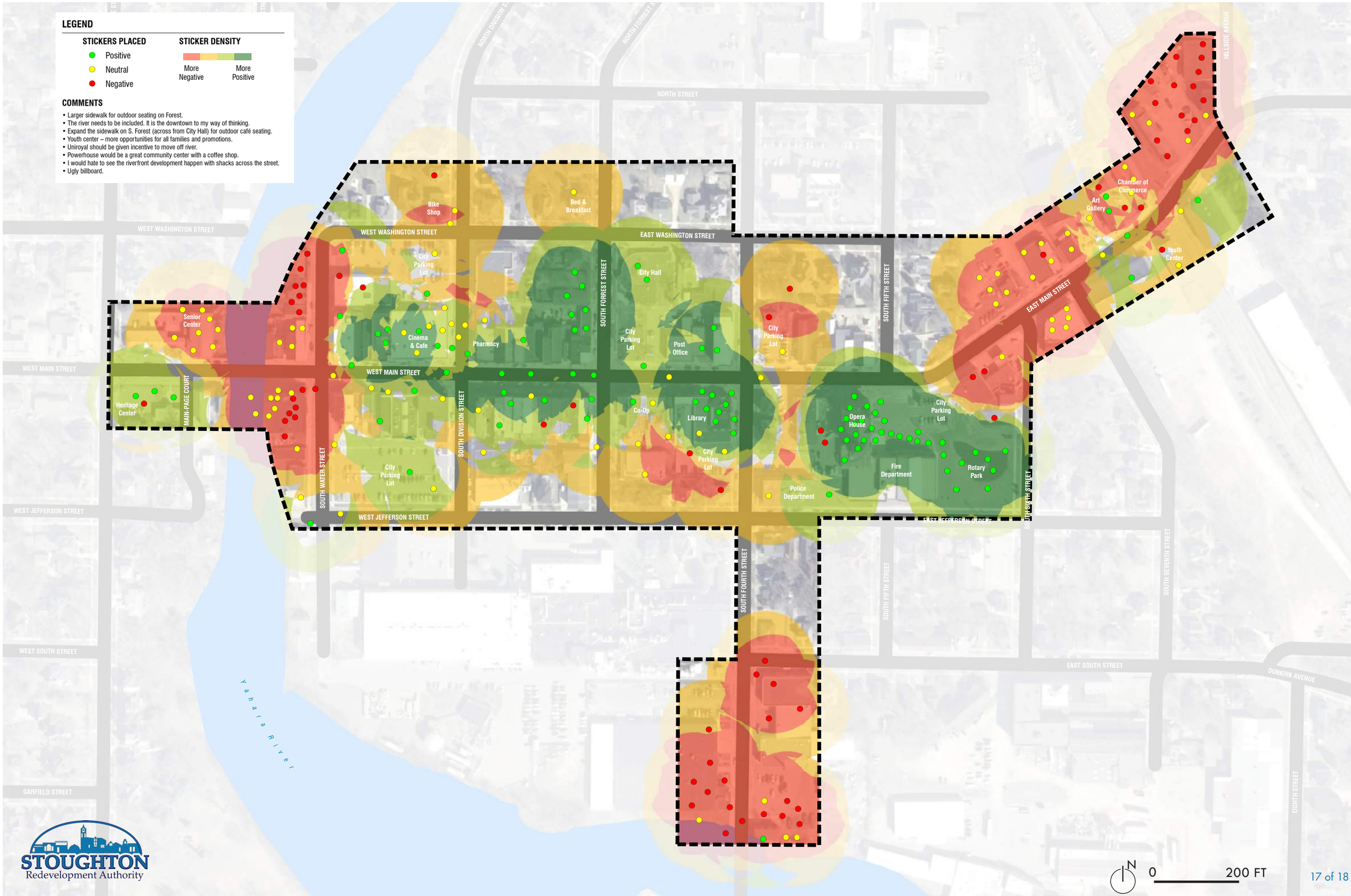
- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative

STICKER DENSITY

More Negative — More Positive

COMMENTS

- Larger sidewalk for outdoor seating on Forest.
- The river needs to be included. It is the downtown to my way of thinking.
- Expand the sidewalk on S. Forest (across from City Hall) for outdoor café seating.
- Youth center – more opportunities for all families and promotions.
- Uniroyal should be given incentive to move off river.
- Powerhouse would be a great community center with a coffee shop.
- I would hate to see the riverfront development happen with shacks across the street.
- Ugly billboard.



STOUGHTON Redevelopment Authority

1. Identify where outdoor dining should take place.
2. Identify where murals should be located.
3. Identify where a "community meal"; long-table should be held.
4. Identify 2 places you think are not safe.
5. Identify the busiest spot:

Mon - Fri
- 6am - 9am
- 9am - 5pm
- 9am - 5pm

Sat - Sun
- 8am - 10am
- 10am - 1pm
- 1pm - 6pm