

Community Input -Downtown Holiday Café

Meeting Summary

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On December 18th community members were invited to provide their perspective on the developing Downtown Vibrancy Plan. The process used for this meeting is a modified version of the World Café Model. This process was selected for its energetic and conversational style that builds on the natural cross pollinizing and idea sharing that happens among groups of individuals who are provided the opportunity to focus their best thinking. The Public Input process was successful in a number of ways as allowed community members to:

- Become familiar with the Downtown Vibrancy Plan
- Provide significant input that will be incorporated in the final outcomes
- Provide clear vision and values that were greatly needed to develop, maintain and sustain a Vibrant Downtown.

At the Holiday Café, participants were seated at round tables and provided four questions for which they were allotted 20 minutes. A scribe captured the information and presented it to the group. Participants were then asked to change tables and sit with others they had not yet met. Once introductions were made, the group tackled the next question.

Summaries of answers to the questions are as follows:

Question 1: What is it you most like about Downtown Salinas?

A number of very positive responses were provided to this question including multiple references to walking or walkability and positive comments about businesses and restaurants. Downtown history including historic buildings and architecture were mention as were the Maya Cinema, movies and theaters. Special events

including the farmers market were named as well as art projects and the Steinbeck Center.

Participants also see the downtown as the center of our city preferring the hometown and homegrown quality of downtown businesses. Several comments also spoke of the need for new buildings to be integrated with existing historic design and the importance of transit systems and parking to downtown.

Question 2: What are the five things you would change about Downtown Salinas?

Public safety in downtown is a top concern. This is referenced in a number of ways from addressing lighting concerns to mentions of panhandling and homelessness and an increased police presence. Several references were made to improved ambience and aesthetics in downtown including cleaning and repair of sidewalks along with landscaping, seating, better signs, public restrooms and bicycle facilities.

Younger members of the participant group made several comments that there were very few nighttime activities in downtown that would attract people including live music. Others spoke of the need for merchants to stay open later to serve visitors who might come in the evening and some spoke of providing all services in a way that made them attractive to the Hispanic community.

Improving traffic flow including the elimination of one-way traffic was mentioned as was improved pedestrian walkways, directional signage and adequate parking. Locating housing downtown was also seen as important as well as providing the kind of services that would support people living in the downtown area. City government was seen as both helping and hindering the process of making the changes that are needed in the downtown area.

