

Downtown Business Improvement District

Public Input Summary

Executive Summary

From January 21st through February 8th, City staff engaged downtown stakeholders using a variety of methods in order to gauge public sentiment regarding needs of the Downtown Greensboro Business Improvement District (BID) for FY16-17. From the feedback received, there were several outcomes and activities that were identified by stakeholders as most important. Key points from the stakeholder feedback are described below.

- The three most important outcomes selected that BID funded activities and projects should support were: (1) reducing the vacant building rate, (2) increasing business activity, and (3) reducing the crime rate.
- The program areas identified as most important based on weighted ranking were in order from most to least needed: (1) Marketing, (2) Economic Development, (3) Events, (4) Planning and Development, and (5) Public Space Management
- The activities that greater > 50% of respondents marked as high need were marketing downtown (58%), recruiting new businesses (56%), and supporting existing businesses (52%).
- The following services all were rated by 25% or less of respondents as a high need and placed last or next to last in the program area category by weighted ranking: (1) develop and administer business grant programs, (2) develop and administer property improvement grant programs, (3) provide research and analysis for downtown interests, (4) administer public art programs, and (5) support existing events with funding. This feedback in general indicates that these activities may not be priority activities to be supported through BID funding.
- There may be general public misinformation as to how BID funds are used and what constitutes an enhanced level of service. Some services that are presently provided through expenditures of BID funds did not score as high need in the assessment. It is possible that participants are actually satisfied with the current BID funding for services in these areas such as event support, sanitation, and park maintenance services and thus did not feel additional services above the current enhanced level were necessary. There is a likely marketing and education need moving forward that more accurately communicates how BID funds are spent.

Participation

Staff received feedback from a total of 121 participants:

- 10 Drop-in meeting attendees
- 111 Responses to the on-line survey

Public Engagement Strategies

Staff engaged Downtown BID stakeholders to solicit feedback on service needs for FY16-17 in a number of ways. These included:

- Direct mail
- Media
- Public meeting
- Survey
- Website

Direct Mail

A postcard including the meeting date and location, website, and QR code to access the survey electronically was mailed to 578 property owners and 565 non-owner occupants within the BID.

Media

Press materials were prepared and distributed to local media outlets and shared through City of Greensboro social media.

Public Meeting

Staff held one public drop in meeting on February 4th from 4-7pm at the Melvin Municipal Office Building at 300 W. Washington St.

Survey

The survey was open for 19 days, beginning on January 21st. The survey received 121 responses.

Website

A website was created to house materials related to the proposal and serve as a portal for the on-line survey. The website can be found at: www.greensboro-nc.gov/DowntownBID. The website will continue to be updated as the process moves through the public hearing process.

Feedback

A standard set of questions were developed to allow feedback to be collected both electronically through the SurveyMonkey application and in person at the drop-in meeting. Staff also received additional open-ended comments for (1) most desired outcomes and (2) additional activities to consider funding. These comments have been incorporated into the summary of feedback below. Participation in the survey was voluntary and self selecting, and the results should not be interpreted as a statistically valid representation of impacted stakeholders. 90 to 121 participants answered survey questions with some skipping. The highest needs identified under each question are highlighted in yellow.

Q1. Responder Breakdown (121 responses received)

103 (85%) identified as BID residents, business owners or property owners

18 (15%) identified as other

Q2. 3 Most Important Outcomes BID funded activities and projects should support (107 responses received)

Ranking by % of Q2 respondents choosing each outcome

- 1) Reduce vacant building rate 1) 76%
- 2) Increase business activity 2) 75%
- 3) Reduce crime rate 3) 46%
- 4) Reduce panhandling activity 4) 39%
- 5) Increase property values 5) 36%
- 6) Increase sales revenue 6) 28%
- 7) Increase tourism 7) 22%

Other desired outcomes that activities and projects should support:

Increase quantity of residents Downtown
Not support youth curfews or other policy that removes or reduced people's presence from BID
Quit having the same tired old members as a part of process
Reduce corruption
Increase the vibrancy of downtown through events, more restaurants and bars and a better streetscape.
no need for BID
BID needs to be abolished!
prepare for expansion
PARKING!--change direction of meters to reduce glare
Increase the number of downtown residents
We desperately need more visible community policing
Management issues special to downtown Greensboro
Attracting other Greensboro residents to come downtown for shopping, dining, and entertainment.
Increased owner occupied residential.

Q3. Importance of Economic Development Services (90 responses)

<u>Overall weighted ranking of each deliverable</u>	<u>High need (2nd)</u>
1) Support existing businesses	52%
2) Recruit new businesses	56%
3) Increase downtown tourism	28%
4) Develop and administer property improvement grant programs	25%
5) Develop and administer business grant programs	14.61%

Q4. Importance of Communication Services (90 responses)

<u>Overall weighted ranking of each key deliverable</u>	<u>High need (1st)</u>
1) Market Downtown	58%
2) Advocate for downtown interests	48%
3) Communicate with Stakeholders	49%

Q5. Planning & Development Services (91 responses)

<u>Overall weighted ranking of each key deliverable</u>	<u>High need (4th)</u>
1) Plan and implement streetscape improvement	30%
2) Support the preservation of historic structures	37%
3) Plan and implement capital projects	22%
4) Provide research and analysis for downtown interests	20%

Q6. Public Space Management Services (91 responses)

<u>Overall weighted ranking of each key deliverable</u>	<u>High need (5th)</u>
1) Provide beautification/appearance enhancements	26%
2) Provide enhanced public safety services	30%
3) Provide lighting enhancements	26%
4) Provide enhanced sanitation services	16%
5) Provide enhanced park maintenance services	26%
6) Administer public art programs	15%

Q7. Event Services (90 Responses)

<u>Overall weighted ranking of each key deliverable</u>	<u>High need (3rd)</u>
1) Market and promote cultural programs and events in downtown	41%
2) Support existing events with management services	21%
3) Produce new downtown events	29%
4) Support existing events with funding	24%

Q8. Additional needs to be considered by the City

The responses to Q8 are provided in table form below and are categorized by the listed BID funded activity with which they are most aligned. Several responses were categorized as “BID funds management suggestion” because the content didn’t directly reference a need, but instead indicated a preference for how funds are managed moving forward.

Comment	Aligned Activity
<p>One of the worst ideas in recent downtown Greensboro history was the transformation of the MLK parking lot on Elm into a paid lot. This does not promote economic growth downtown. In fact it does quite the opposite. I happen to live across from this lot (I park in a private lot), but all day I get to see patrons of downtown restaurants, stores and events get ticketed. If there is a faster way to ensure people don't frequent downtown Greensboro I simply don't know what it is. I'm sure at it's root the city made this move as to not compete with the paid lot located behind Barnhardt St. I don't view this as a wise decision and have seen the negative impact it's forced upon Southside and other surrounding downtown areas.</p>	<p>Advocate for downtown interests</p>
<p>--Help businesses find parking for employees --Help negotiate with DOT regarding the excessive ticketing of downtown patrons which has destroyed business for many of us. Maybe we can encourage the city to allow for free parking (and publicize it) to help bring back the hundreds of patrons who no longer come downtown for fear of getting ticketed. The price of parking and the price of tickets has increased so much, it is a deterrent for many people.</p>	<p>Advocate for downtown interests</p>
<p>Try to balance the reality of homeless population in downtown with the needs of the general population of Greensboro to use the downtown area</p>	<p>Advocate for downtown interests</p>
<p>I have heard people say that there is plenty of parking. I disagree. I think that property owners should have priority parking, especially those around the fountain.</p>	<p>Advocate for downtown interests</p>
<p>Encourage the formation and support the work of district merchant associations and resident associations within the downtown area. The downtown area contains a very large number of businesses and residents. Needs in one part of downtown are very different from another. District groups can better direct improvement efforts in their area.</p>	<p>Advocate for downtown interests</p>

Expansion and enforcement of building maintenance codes. If necessary, condemn and take over vacant and decrepit buildings and sell them to individuals who will invest and improve properties.	Advocate for downtown interests
During special events provide alternate parking for people who work and go to school in the BID	Advocate for downtown interests
Help encourage the city to stop having events that block off the same areas of downtown for days at a time or 3 Saturdays in a row (festivals, 5ks). When a retail business or a restaurant loses a day or a weekend of business, it causes great strain, and we never get that back. It often means we lose money, owners don't get paid that month, or even worse are forced to loan money to the business to keep it afloat. And when it happens in July, then in September, then October had downtown hosting 5ks every weekend, businesses can't survive.	Advocate for downtown interests
I think the city should own the safety and panhandling issues and not out of the BID tax.	BID funds management suggestion
I marked 'no need' for enhancements on sanitation, lighting, and beautification, because I feel that the city is doing a great job right now. There is a big need for these services, but no need to enhance what is currently being done.	BID funds management suggestion
Get rid of the chosen one Zack Matheny	BID funds management suggestion
All services, facilities, functions, etc should be free from cronyism, and corruption.	BID funds management suggestion
Cancel the MSD! No need for XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX. he makes us look like fools	BID funds management suggestion
ABOLISH THE BID! The law clearly states that the BID needs to provide services above and beyond what the city provides. all of the activities can be taken on by city staff	BID funds management suggestion
To this point, it appears that the focus of the BID has been on South Elm to the exclusion of other areas within the BID. While So. Elm is an important focus; to include more of downtown would add value to the overall appearance and attractiveness of the entire BID.	BID funds management suggestion

<p>The relationship between the BID and the City is not always clear. The BID should help the city prioritize Capital projects but should not fund them directly. The BID should focus on cleanliness, safety, events and planning. The city needs to get input and direction from BID leadership and implement projects based on a long range growth and development plan.</p>	<p>BID funds management suggestion</p>
<p>The BID is much larger than Elm Street. Projects and services should be provided to all the property owners in the BID. Currently those on Elm Street see significant investment of BID funds, those off Elm get next to nothing.</p>	<p>BID funds management suggestion</p>
<p>Overall, I realize that the above answers all lean towards high levels of support and that this is not always possible. I do feel that the overall goal of the downtown business improvement District is to increase the number of visible people in the center city. I feel this can only be accomplished by three prong approach which includes increased visitation, increased business destinations, and increased residential population (ideally owner over renter). By accomplishing this, the center city will see an overlap of improvement markers, such as increased economic development, increased property values, and decreased crime/panhandling simply due to the presence of more people. Thus, I feel strongly that whatever entity manages BID funds, needs to direct those funds in a manner that optimizes the appeal of downtown visitation and investment.</p>	<p>BID funds management suggestion</p>
<p>The current setup with DGI has outlived its usefulness. The city should administer the money for activities that activate commercial and cultural vibrancy in the BID and not waste the money on administrative salaries. The BID tax generates significant revenue that could be used to great effectiveness in Downtown Greensboro.</p>	<p>BID funds management suggestion</p>
<p>Saving \$ from BID in a reserve fund to be used for large capital projects</p>	<p>BID funds management suggestion</p>
<p>The city should make capital improvements, assure security, and provide sanitation just as it does for every other part of the city.</p>	<p>BID funds management suggestion</p>

Better information distribution to downtown residents. I pretty much rely on "yes weekly" to find out what is happening in Greensboro. But that publication is skewed to more bars and nightclub activity rather than art, theater, food, markets, shops.	Communicate with stakeholders
Education of the ease of parking in the multitude of parking decks.	Communicate with stakeholders
Help us encourage the city and media to have positive stories about downtown instead of just reporting violence or "don't come downtown-- the streets are blocked off for Fun 4th!"	Market downtown
we need more, better, effective marketing for downtown. Now.	Market downtown
Downtown is more than just S Elm and bars. Promoting public parking, new businesses and beautification in the Northern area of downtown could really make downtown more vital. Tying it all together with the new Tanger Center and Lebauer Park is a real opportunity.	Market downtown
add tourist buses	Plan and Implement capital projects
Consider adding transportation improvement services such as a trolley or downtown shuttle like used during folk festival	Plan and implement capital projects
I heard of an idea for free Wi-Fi all over downtown; that sounds like a winner.	Plan and implement capital projects
When is Greene Street becoming a full two-way Street...cannot believe Greene Street has been allowed to be so dysfunctional for so long?	Plan and implement capital projects
Hop-on/ Hop-off Trolley to transport tourist to places of interest in downtown as well as other parts of Greensboro. Trolley could also be used for large events like Folk Festival to transport attendees from satellite parking locations. Bus stop shelters which could also be used for some trolley stops.	Plan and implement capital projects
How about a trolley down Elm Street? Or the beer pedaling contraption? We need people moving back and forth over the RR tracks that still divides downtown.	Plan and implement capital projects
Working with developers to finalize plans for land development in the central business district.	Plan and implement capital projects
Improved pedestrian, bicycle, and public transportation (i.e. Shuttle/bus trolley) is important	Plan and implement capital projects
More trees are needed on North Church near the library and Children's Museum and most other downtown streets	Plan and implement streetscape improvements

make sidewalks wider	Plan and implement streetscape improvements
Wider sidewalks for outside dining.	Plan and implement streetscape improvements
I think providing more promotional events downtown will bring more people downtown to DISCOVER what is already down there. We need things like a Hoots Flea Market (vintage junk market) What happened to the Indie craft market on First Fridays. More festivals downtown!	Produce new downtown events
More dog cleanup stations.	Provide beautification/appearance enhancements
The downtown needs to be easy to navigate in a visually appealing way.	Provide beautification/appearance enhancements
Downtown must be managed in a way that promotes and recruits new tenants and strengthens characteristics that make downtown a unique living neighborhood (arts, landscape, preservation).	Provide beautification/appearance enhancements, Support the preservation of historic structures
Panhandling is the biggest complaint we receive from our customers. It is my #1 concern. We see the same panhandlers day after day. We call the police but seldom get lasting results. It's very frustrating. We would love help dealing with this issue.	Provide enhanced public safety services
If the city doesn't have the money to provide police walking the downtown beat then the BID needs to consider hiring off duty cops. Our parks are overrun with the mentally ill and homeless. Coordinating groups to offer services to these folks may help. Center city park and S Elm do not feel safe later at night	Provide enhanced public safety services
We need one or two Greensboro Police officers, walking a beat Downtown, during the daytime business hours. (10 am to 6 pm) We need them walking, not riding a bike, Segway, car, horse or anything else. Since the late 1800's we have had Police patrolling Downtown. That was until somehow DGI decided they were needed at night to Police the rowdy drunks. When we stopped having Police officers "walking" Downtown the retailers started losing business and going out of business.	Provide enhanced public safety services
Public safety is a large issue in terms of pedestrians. Officers need to cite more reckless drivers for not giving proper right of way to foot traffic.	Provide enhanced public safety services
walkability and safety improvements	Provide enhanced public safety services
enforce turn on red or add more intersections that don't allow turn on red	Provide enhanced public safety services

Help downtown get a police unit for downtown like we had years back so business owners are familiar with those policing downtown and we can rebuild that sense of community.	Provide enhanced public safety services
Large clubs hurt the downtown area when there is a lot of violence and shooting. More focus on being able to come downtown to eat and have a cocktail without being shot at.	Provide enhanced public safety services
There needs to be a 4 way stop at MLK and Gorrell and something done to manage speeding on GORRELL.	Provide enhanced public safety services
Cameras.	Provide enhanced public safety services
The homeless and panhandlers have driven the good people of Greensboro out of Downtown. Not a day goes by that I don't hear them in front of my store lying to people to get money. Many of my elderly customers have called me to tell me they would be going somewhere else because an overly aggressive panhandler scared them. Thanks DGI	Provide enhanced public safety services/Advocate for downtown interests
The overall cleanliness of the public sidewalks and streets is very poor.	Provide enhanced sanitation services
I have noticed that there used to be a service that would come around and make sure that there wasn't any trash on the sidewalks etc and that is no longer happening.	Provide enhanced sanitation services
Enhance lighting in downtown parking garages.	Provide lighting enhancements
Large Directional Signage (preferably near overhead stop lights) identifying Public Parking locations. Enhance lighting in downtown parking garages. Market and promote free downtown parking hours, preferably on garage signage.	Provide lighting/signage enhancements
As Downtown develops, I think there needs to be businesses that benefit many demographics such as a Movie theatre. Many families don't necessarily come downtown except to go to the Children's Museum and really how many times can one do that and not get bored. We talk about Greensboro being family oriented well let's make downtown a little more family oriented with businesses that appeal to families. There should be a better mix/balance of businesses from the run of the mill to the unique.	Recruit new businesses
Food and pharmacy retail.	Recruit new businesses
Bring in big corporations, a grocery store, banks. Bring the money to Greensboro!	Recruit new businesses

<p>Need much better convenience shopping, e.g. , drug store, groceries (even if not a supermarket), hardware - - in downtown, not just near. This is really non-existent now.</p>	<p>Recruit new businesses</p>
<p>Downtown could use a drug store.</p>	<p>Recruit new businesses</p>
<p>As a resident of DTG would like to enjoy a food store, a deli, barbershop ice cream/coffee shop, and hardware or general shop.</p>	<p>Recruit new businesses</p>
<p>The downtown area needs to be developed with an eye toward inclusivity. New business and residential developments seem targeted toward young professionals, which is an important demographic toward increasing revenue. However, there a few businesses/facilities to attract young families. There is almost nothing targeted toward children in the downtown area other than the baseball stadium. Seasonal events like the Christmas parade and July 4th concerts demonstrate that the Greensboro community at large is interested in visiting the downtown area, but there is little reason for families to visit downtown on a more regular basis other than the limited number of restaurants on Elm Street.</p>	<p>Recruit new businesses</p>
<p>We have enough bars. We need a grocery store and more retail shops.</p>	<p>Recruit new businesses</p>
<p>Downtown desperately needs a live music house that features music that will not draw a criminal element!</p>	<p>Recruit new businesses</p>
<p>I think we need to help our local pubs and restaurants more instead of hurting them.</p>	<p>Support existing businesses</p>
<p>Get out and ask the businesses and their owners how they are doing and how you can help. Listen without judgment</p>	<p>Support existing businesses</p>
<p>Downtown BID needs to support the businesses that are downtown since we are paying this extra tax "enhanced services and programming". Businesses that participate in First Friday's do so at their own expense. We should not be taxed more for providing a real experience for locals. And Greensboro should first look to those who are Downtown to service the downtown area. I have been in business in the downtown area for over 30 years and not once has the city notified me of any opportunities where my business could be utilized. That needs to change. If you have my contact info in order to tax me, the same info works to help my business grow.</p>	<p>Support existing businesses</p>

Marketing for existing businesses. Marketing for new businesses in buildings that are vacant.

Support existing businesses