

**The Middleton Central Business District  
Parking and Traffic Study**

**Advisory Committee Meeting  
March 13, 2007**

**A Summary of the Key Points and Ideas  
That Emerged from the Meeting**

## **Introduction**

This concise report is a summary of the first committee meeting of the Middleton Central Business District Parking and Traffic Study. The meeting was held on March 13, 2007 at the Middleton Public Library on Broad Street. In attendance were the mayor, members of the common council, the advisory board, professional staff and approximately fifteen citizens. The first order of business was to select Gerry Daly as the chair of the advisory committee. This was followed by introductions and the purpose of the project.

The purpose of the project is to determine the optional uses of the federal funds that Middleton received to improve the parking and vehicular/pedestrian movement through the City's Central Business District both in the short and long term. The advisory committee's purpose would be to provide guidance to the City and the consultants from a citizen's perspective. There will be three mayor public meetings. The first is to elicit ideas that may be of interest to the City. The second would be to evaluate and rank the ideas. While the third would be to detail the alternatives and present them in a manner that would help the City to implement them.

## **Discussion**

John Mullin then opened the meeting to the committee and public to gain their insights into a twenty-year futuristic look of where the City should be headed. His guidance was that, for this meeting and time, we were not constrained by money but wanted to think innovatively. The following key points/ideas emerged:

### **A. On the Character of Downtown**

1. While Downtown has improved tremendously over the past decade, it is still fragile and requires careful attention.
2. Downtown is a place for multiple publics that use its facilities throughout the day (16 hour day).
3. Downtown is not simply a shopping or governmental center, it is also a cluster of neighborhoods. It should support neighborhood functions in a manner similar to Burlington's Church Street.
4. Downtown is more of a mosaic than a cohesive place.

5. There is a desire to increase the retail presence in downtown. Ideas ranged from an in town mall to village scale, small shops.
6. There is great support in filling underused properties in the downtown but little obvious consensus as to increased densities.
7. Downtown is a place of uniqueness, specialty and cachet: It needs to be different.
8. Downtown has a tremendous opportunity to expand its market rate residential base.
9. Downtown's architecture and historic and cultural character must be protected.
10. Downtown should embrace the design principles of the "New Urbanism".
11. "Med's and Ed's" are critical to Downtown: Both the hospital and the university are crucial players in its future.
12. Downtown should have a village character while still serving as the hub of the City.

#### **B. On Connections**

1. Main Street should be extended to the south and the zoning should be modified to enlarge retail activity.
2. Middleton's harbor/water front is a treasure: It needs to be connected to Main Street.
3. Bike/Pedestrian trails connecting downtown to the university and waterfront would add great value.

#### **C. On Route Nine**

1. Route Nine blocks access from the Central Business District to the River: We now have the opportunity to evaluate whether to create a tunnel or lower it so that there is easy access.
2. All lights need to be removed from Route Nine.
3. Route Nine needs to have early connection to Route 66.

#### **D. On Main Street**

1. It is an extremely wide avenue with many safety issues. As the population ages, there will be more safety concerns.
2. Pedestrian control approaches have not been optimal.
3. The angle parking arrangement, with the rise of SUV's, is becoming more problematic.
4. "Flow Through" and commuter traffic should be separated from Main Street.
5. Main Street should function as the inter-modal hub with auto, rail, bicycle, pedestrian, bus and possibly ferry and trolley connections.

#### **E. On Rail**

1. The Rail line has considerable potential beyond the moving of freight.
2. The City should become involved in the Metro-North expansion discussions.
3. The Old Saybrook-Hartford line has potential as an Amtrak commuter connection (It connects at both ends to the North East Corridor trains).

#### **F. On Parking**

1. Parking must be based upon the build out.
2. There is significant concern over the building of a mammoth parking garage. Moreover, design is important.
3. Parking for multiple publics is important.
4. Parking must be integrated into "inter-modal thinking".
5. The parking needs of residents is just as crucial as office workers and retail customers.
6. The future plans of the hospital and university must be integrated into the parking/traffic plan.

### **G. Unique Ideas**

1. The City should examine the use of ferries to more people, freight and motor vehicles across the River.
2. The City should consider the possibility of a trolley loop system that would link the entire downtown area.

### **Conclusions**

The meeting ended at approximately 8:45. The consultants will next evaluate the ideas and present them to the advisory committee for further refinement.