

MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning Spring 2003
11.439 Revitalizing Urban Main Streets

Field Trip to Mission Hill and Egleston Square Main Street Districts
14 February 2003

Team 1: Traffic/Pedestrian Activity/Transit

In your tour of the District, keep the following questions in mind (and please add your own!):

Traffic

1. How fast is vehicular traffic on the streets of the District?
2. What percentage of the traffic appears to be through-traffic (as opposed to local traffic to local destinations)?
3. Is there adequate parking along the street?
4. Are the spaces metered or regulated in some way?
5. Is there a time limit for non-metered spaces? What is it?
6. Do you see meter maids or police monitoring parking?

Pedestrian Activity

7. Do you feel comfortable as a pedestrian in the District?
8. Are crosswalks clearly marked? Are there pedestrian crossing lights?
9. Are there benches and other places for pedestrians to rest?
10. Are there buildings, storefronts, activities that give interest to the pedestrian experience?
11. Are the sidewalks wide enough for a walk with a friend?
12. If you were in a wheelchair or pushing a stroller, could you navigate from one block to another?

Transit

13. How far are bus and train lines from the core of the District?
14. Are transit stops clearly labeled?
15. Are there shelters for bus stops? Benches?
16. What are the pedestrian connections to bus and transit stops?
17. Is there commercial activity in or connected to the bus and transit stops?

General

18. Define the core of the District. Why is this the core?
19. What do you perceive as the two or three greatest challenges facing the District?
20. Define the image of the District in 2-3 sentences. What elements of the District create this image?
21. If you could only do one thing to improve the physical quality of the District, what would it be?
22. How could the commercial aspect of the District be improved?

23. What connections do you see between economic development and the physical characteristics of the District?

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Team 2: Commercial Activity

In your tour of the District, keep the following questions in mind (and please add your own!):

Level of Commercial Activity

1. As you walk down the street, does commercial area appear vibrant?
2. Are storefronts occupied? How many vacant spaces are there?
3. Does there appear to be enough parking for the commercial establishments?
4. What is your impression of storefronts and displays in the District?

Business Mix

5. What percentage of activity is retail (convenience vs. comparison)? service?
6. What concentrations of the same or related businesses exist?
7. What and where are the anchor or destination businesses that brings many people?
8. Is the district divided spatially by type of uses or businesses?
9. From your observations, how would you describe the market/clientele for this District?
10. How would you describe the District's economic role?

Development Opportunities

11. Are there vacant or underutilized sites in the District?
12. What would you propose for these sites?
13. Are their undesirable or problematic uses in the District?
14. What is the typical size of retail stores? What range of sizes exists?

Pedestrian Activity

15. Do you feel comfortable as a pedestrian in the District?
16. Are the District and commercial activities visually interesting?

General

17. Define the core of the District. Why is this the core?
18. What do you perceive as the two or three greatest challenges facing the District?
19. Define the image of the District in 2-3 sentences. What elements of the District create this image?
20. If you could only do one thing to improve the physical quality of the District, what would it be?
21. How could the commercial aspect of the District be improved?
22. What connections do you see between economic development and the physical characteristics of the District?

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Team 3: Architecture/Urban Design

In your tour of the District, keep the following questions in mind (and please add your own!):

Architectural Styles and Quality/Condition of Buildings

1. What are the predominant building materials?
2. Do the buildings appear to be of a consistent style or are they varied?
3. In general, what is the condition of the buildings?

Land Uses

4. Does it look as though people live and work in the District?
5. What percentage of activity appears to be retail (convince or comparison)? Service? Vacant?
6. Does there appear to be enough parking for the commercial establishments?
7. Are there any parks in the District? What is their condition?
8. How are the open space, parks, and vacant lots used?

Streetscape, Street Furniture, Signage

9. What is the condition of the sidewalks? Are they wide enough to comfortably walk with a friend?
10. Are there places to sit? Are there bike racks?
11. Describe the kinds of signage in the District. What works well, what doesn't?
12. Are there streetlights in the District? How far apart are they spaced? How high?

Vacant Lots and Buildings

13. Can you propose uses for any vacant lots (perfect place for a small park? Commercial development? Community garden?)?
14. Where are the vacant buildings in the District? What is their condition?

General

15. Define the core of the District. Why is this the core?
16. What do you perceive as the two or three greatest challenges facing the District?
17. Define the image of the District in 2-3 sentences. What elements of the District create this image?
18. If you could only do one thing to improve the physical quality of the District, what would it be?
19. How could the commercial aspect of the District be improved?
20. What connections do you see between economic development and the physical characteristics of the District?

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Team 4: District Image/Clues/People

In your tour of the District, keep the following questions in mind (and please add your own!):

District Image/Clues

1. What is your initial impression of the District?
2. What contributes to this impression?
3. Define the image of the District in 2-3 sentences. What elements of the District create this image? Please prepare a photo narrative for this question.
4. How does this image compare to the surrounding areas?
5. How would you describe the District's economic role?

People

6. Describe the people who live/work/shop here.

General

7. If you could only do one thing to improve the physical quality of the District, what would it be?
8. How could the commercial aspect of the District be improved?
9. Define the core of the District. Why is this the core?
10. What do you perceive as the two or three greatest challenges facing the District?
11. If you could only do one thing to improve the physical quality of the District, what would it be?
12. How could the commercial aspect of the District be improved?
13. What connections do you see between economic development and the physical characteristics of the District?