



CANTON

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE #1 SUMMARY

Purpose:	Public Open House #1
Date and Time:	May 30, 2024, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Location:	Canton Justice Court Room, 60 Main Street, Canton, NY 13617

Station #1. Project Overview

Discussion

This public open house-style session included interactive activity stations which provided an overview of the NY Forward Process, Area Boundary, Existing Conditions, Goals, Vision, Opportunities and Challenges, and where to find further information. A New York State Department of State (DOS) representative and MJ Engineering and Land Surveying team members were available to answer questions and discuss ideas with the public. Attendees were provided with a participant guide for the following activity stations.

- **Station #1 - Project Overview:** The what, why, who and how of NY Forward
- **Station #2 – Downtown Profile:** Highlights of existing conditions
- **Station #3 – Downtown Vision & Goals:** Use the sticky notes to share what you want Downtown Canton to look like in 5-7 years.
- **Station #4 – Challenges & Opportunities:** Share your concerns for Canton and identify opportunities.
- **Station #5 – Take the Survey:** Take the online downtown survey!
- **Station #6 – Other Thoughts and Ideas:** Have more to share? Write it down at this station!
- **Station #7 – Call for Projects:** The open call for projects is coming soon. Get information about the steps to propose a project for funding consideration.
- **Station #8 – Kids Table:** This is a place for kids to be creative and share their ideas.

Station #2. Downtown Profile

Discussion

This station provided an overview of Canton's demographics, growth trends, income, education, and employment. Village population, population growth, and age group percentages were displayed in tables and graphs. Income, education, and employment data was also displayed in tables and graphs, accompanied by a brief narrative highlighting notable data.

Seven (7) maps were displayed at this station:

- The median age of residents is 23.1 years old largely due to the University population living within the Village, and 13% of Canton's population is 65 or older
- The population is 7,174, most of which are renters, and the population has increased since 2000
- Most Canton residents are employed by educational services (32.8%)
- The next largest group of residents are employed by local, state, and federal government (21.8%)
- The boundary of the Village of Canton NY Forward is centered between Park Place and Gouverneur Street, focusing on the primary business corridor in the downtown area. It encompasses the Canton Park, portions of the Grasses River, and Heritage and Willow Island Park

Station #3. Downtown Vision & Goals

Discussion

The Draft Downtown Vision station provided an opportunity for participants to share their Vision for what they want Downtown to look like in 5-7 years.

Common themes included:

- Eliminate vacant storefronts
- Add local and regional public art and art galleries (could be interactive too)
- Green spaces, community gardens and family-friendly outdoor spaces need to be added
- More family-friendly places and feel - places for children and families to meet and shop
- No CFC
- More local businesses (restaurants, delis, etc.) and retail options
- Places where people can go to meet and visit without having to spend money or drink alcohol
- More pedestrians walking around town - can be accomplished by better signage/maps and continuous sidewalks

Ideas expressed through this exercise include (in no particular order):

- Centrally located bus stops/shelters – more people riding the bus – less traffic
- Interactive public art
- Better way finding/signage and encourage/promote parking further away and walking
- No vacant storefronts (mentioned twice)
- More local/regional art galleries
- More clothing stores, children's clothing store
- More non-alcohol or substance-related places for people to meet, sit and visit
- More 3rd spaces, places to meet, do work, hang out without always having to spend money
- More gardens/green spaces and outdoor spaces for children and people of all ages

Station #3. Downtown Vision & Goals

Discussion

- Accessible storefronts and sidewalks that don't end!
- Multiple retail options
- The catholic church rings its bells every hour starting at 8 AM. We have a little child that is awakened by this. I would love to see the volume turned down and it ring at noon only.
- Less sprawl
- More public art
- No CFC (two people agreed with this)
- More jobs
- More healthy eating sit down areas
- Green spaces
- More restaurants, delis, public meeting spaces
- More use of solar panels, maybe a rooftop public garden space
- Community gardens
- More people walking around/ enjoying downtown amenities
- More non-SLU community events, especially on weekends

Map Comments:

- Outdoor Mural sponsored by Canton Yoga Loft, as a community coloring book project off Miner Street
- Behind the outdoor mural is green space which is a pocket park or village land
- Will updated flood maps change? May make it risky to build along Riverside Drive
- Sidewalks improved to accommodate wheelchairs along Riverside Drive
- Complete Streets sidewalk, bike path, and crosswalk improvements were done on Riverside Drive
- There is an existing bus stop on Riverside Drive
- Bus Route 69: SUNY and campus, Save-A-Lot, Liberty Apartments, West Gate Apartments
- Potential bus stop off Prentice Lane
- Pedestrian access to Main Street through an alley that goes from Prentice Lane to Main Street (where the potential bus stop would be)
- There is a potential bus pull-off on Main Street, but concerns with parking impacts exist here
- Existing bus stop on Judson Street

Station #4. Challenges & Opportunities

Discussion

This station encouraged participants to share their insights about challenges and opportunities for the Downtown.

Themes in challenges and concerns raised included:

- Lack of investment in local businesses from both investors and maybe colleges too
- Lack of attractions and some things that might deter visitors from stopping (i.e. vacant storefronts)
- Traffic lights/crosswalks need to be installed or improved in some areas to improve the walkability of these areas
- Isolation of students on campus, away from the downtown area is a possibility, these and other young people don't stay in Canton

Challenges identified by participants (in no particular order):

- Reasons for people to stop on Main Street
- Vacant storefronts
- Finding investors who want to stay in the area or move to the area
- Colleges may want to keep student dollars on campus. Are they supportive of promoting small business that competes for those dollars?
- Students/young people don't stay
- Low income
- High taxes
- Employee investments
- Things are spread out (especially Saint Lawrence University and SUNY Canton)
- Need a light or crosswalk between Heritage Park and Willow Island Park
- The light at Main/Park/Cort takes SO long to change for pedestrian crossings

Themes in opportunities and strengths raised included:

- Incentives to get people to stop and shop (better signs and electric vehicle charging stations are two examples)
- More accessibility without a car (bikes, E-bikes, and E-scooters)
- Supporting local businesses by lowering commercial space costs, while also attracting larger retail stores to serve the low-income population

Opportunities and strengths identified by participants include (in no particular order):

- Electric vehicle transition - provide high-speed charging near Main Street, which will encourage people to stop and shop
- Affordable commercial spaces for small businesses
- Better signage which gets people to stop and shop - highlight rear parking
- Hopefully more mixed-use buildings (store on the first floor, housing on the second floor)
- Attract retail store to serve low-income population or those without cars – groceries, drug store
- Great potential for outdoor activities on Willow Island
- More bike lanes
- Lots of parking

Station #4. Challenges & Opportunities

Discussion

- E-Bike/Scooter rentals – makes getting to parks/ colleges/ DMV/ clinic/ grocery stores easier (popular with students too)

Themes in challenges and opportunities regarding public spaces included:

- Emphasize non-car transportation by adding bike lanes to roads, bike parking spaces, E-Bike and E-Scooter rentals, adding more bus options, and improving bus shelters
- Play spaces and other options for children to make the town more family friendly
- Sustainability (using solar panels and recycling bins)
- Improve walkability and add safe sidewalks to the town
- Improve the downtown area by improving streets, eliminating vacant storefronts, and adding rooftop gardens

Challenges and opportunities regarding public spaces included (in no particular order):

- More bus options
- Recycling vs trash containers in village core
- More options for young children
- Innovative play space outdoor as part of Midtown Plaza
- Skywalks
- Signage for public parking
- Employ Complete Streets principles for all street renovations
- Bike parking spaces in downtown area
- Bike and/or E-Scooter rentals on key location – village green
- Bus shelter on plaza off Main Street
- Utilize one or more empty storefronts for college entrepreneurs
- More bike lanes clearly marked
- Solar panel cover of parking in public parking North of Main Street
- Performance Space on Willow Island: use native type of wood and natural stone
- Roof garden space somewhere in downtown area – maybe Midtown Plaza
- Enhance: public parking spaces with trees and EV charging
- Walkability
- Safe sidewalks for wheelchairs/strollers
- Lack of sheltered areas to use when it is cold or rainy
- Noise reduction needed in village park

Station #5. Take the Survey

Discussion

This station included a board enabling participants to take the online community survey which is available at www.cantonnyforward.com. Paper copies were also available upon request.



Station #6. Other Thoughts and Ideas

Discussion

This station included an opportunity for any additional thoughts and ideas. The thoughts shared are listed below:

- There is a need for a YMCA/ Boys and Girls Club, downtown would be a good spot, the library serves that need to some degree

Station #7. Call for Projects

Discussion

- Participants were able to discuss the Open Call for Projects with MJ Team members
- The submission period for projects will be open to the public for at least 4 weeks
- Applicants must complete a submission form with the required information (available online or in hard copy at accessible locations)
- Similar, parallel process for Small Project Fund

Station #8. Kids Table

Discussion

This was a place for kids to be creative and share their ideas.

Input Provided on Written Comment Cards

Discussion

In addition to gathering input via maps and station boards, participants had the opportunity to provide input on written comment forms. Below is a list of written comments received:

- Should have a “real” comment time when the public can speak out to the crowd
- Entrance to the building, public door was locked. Had to wait outside, wait for policeman to come open the handicapped door, which was not working. Building is obsolete.
- Need expansion of current map to include Canton Pavilion. The pavilion is used by people from all over including Canada, out of state brings economy to Canton’s hotels, restaurants, bus stations, ice hockey
- Pavilion needs paint, signs, better lighting, safety workings, etc.
- Expansion of map on government sheet, from bridge to underpass along Route 11. This is the main “gateway” from the South (Rt. 11) and needs enhancement. More trees along this gateway would enhance the first impression for people coming to the village of Canton.
- Thanks for listening to my ramblings on public transit! It really is okay right now, I’m just dreaming of ways to make it better.

This meeting summary conveys our understanding of the items discussed and agreements reached at this meeting. Please forward any additions, corrections and/or questions to my attention.

Submitted by:

Grace Sherburne, MJ Engineering and Land Surveying, P.C.

cc: Consultant Team, State Team, Local Planning Committee

DRAFT

