

## Kensington Center (Berlin TOD) Plan – Public Meeting #1

October 27, 2016 6:30 – 8:00PM

Berlin, CT Town Hall Council Chambers

### Meeting Summary

Welcome and introduction by Chris Edge, Economic Development Director, Town of Berlin. The consultant team led by CivicMoxie was represented by Susan Silberberg, principal at CivicMoxie, Val Ferro from Good Earth Advisors, and Tom Corso from AMS Consulting.

CivicMoxie gave a brief Powerpoint presentation that included an overview of the goals for the Kensington Center TOD Plan, which are to create a vibrant Kensington Center that takes full advantage of its location at the train station by:

- Improving and encouraging connectivity between the train station with the surrounding neighborhoods;
- Increasing sustainability –better use of existing infrastructure while preserving natural resources;
- Create healthier communities –for walking, biking, etc;
- Expand housing opportunities; and
- Increase job opportunities and support existing + new businesses

...through Town policies, zoning, new development, and programming. There was also a summary of current market conditions with preliminary thoughts on market demand.

### Breakout Notes

Meeting attendees were then asked to go around the room, look at aerial maps and photos of the downtowns of four different towns that have been mentioned as nice places by Berlin residents and business owners, and of Berlin Kensington Center. Attendees were asked to answer the questions below.

#### Glastonbury

WHAT THINGS DO YOU LIKE ABOUT THIS TOWN CENTER?

- How it has expanded over the years.
- Density of bars and restaurants.

- Walkability
- Has choices.
- Restaurants!!
- Historic Buildings
- Green space – the use of a square business/commercial space
- Good restaurant choices
- It's beautiful and attracts people

WHAT THINGS DO YOU NOT LIKE ABOUT THIS TOWN CENTER?

- Over-developed
  - Traffic congestion
  - Disjointed
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## Southington

WHAT THINGS DO YOU LIKE ABOUT THIS TOWN CENTER?

- Green and music/restaurants
- Walking trails
- Green area downtown aids in outdoor activities
- Town green – great parking off Main
- The Green
- Restaurants and stores
- Arts center in a re-purposed building
- Old buildings
- Barnes Museum!
- Festivals
- Good use of existing buildings
- Apple Harvest!

WHAT THINGS DO YOU NOT LIKE ABOUT THIS TOWN CENTER?

- Look of “oldness”
  - Closes early, no night life or lack of
  - Little night life, lack of apartments
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## Middletown

WHAT THINGS DO YOU **LIKE** ABOUT THIS TOWN CENTER?

- Wide Main Street/river
- Good restaurants
- Seems to survive the test of time
- Good use of linear space
- It's a restaurant destination
- Cars and people co-exist
- Uses corporate to succeed—Middletown Hospital
- Restaurants, offices
- Keeping the historical buildings
- Great restaurants!
- They didn't destroy their old buildings, even have a museum on Main St.

WHAT THINGS DO YOU **NOT LIKE** ABOUT THIS TOWN CENTER?

- Crime
  - They should do more with the river front
  - Main Street is nice, the rest not so much
  - Route 9 congestion
  - Traffic is bad
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## West Hartford

WHAT THINGS DO YOU **LIKE** ABOUT THIS TOWN CENTER?

- Community Events- outdoors
- Healthy eating and lifestyle
- Well-built condos downtown
- Holds property values
- Outside eating
- Old buildings
- Walkability
- Saved old town hall building – re-purposed
- Green space – community space – street trees
- Mix of residential, retail, office, open space
- Public parking areas
- Walkability, restaurants, vibrancy
- Upscale and beautiful-

WHAT THINGS DO YOU NOT LIKE ABOUT THIS TOWN CENTER?

- Congested/bottleneck of traffic
  - Destroyed Masonic Building
  - Blue Back Sq. – like Disneyland (artificial, not authentic)
  - Limited parking
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WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT BERLIN?

- Geographic location and access to highways
- The potential and opportunity that we have
- Parks, golf course, public spaces.
- Central location
- The town's interest to finally improve downtown
- Train station
- Historical society museum
- Historic buildings
- Train station!!!
- Open space

WHAT DO YOU LIKE LEAST ABOUT BERLIN?

- Lack of retail and restaurants
- Need healthier restaurants/low calorie yes!!
- 99% of image comes from Berlin Turnpike, yet it only represents 1% of Berlin
- We don't have an attractive (or distinct) main road.
- Too much/many industrial buildings on the Avenue
- No anchor institutions
- Naysayers
- No enough interesting restaurants
- Chaotic development
- Too much negativity
- Railroad bisects enter
- Hodge-podge development
- Too many pizza places and nail salons