

## Wabash Avenue Visioning Study

PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #2

August 16, 2023

### **PARTICIPANTS:**

- Josh Alsip, Director of Community Engagement Terre Haute Chamber
- Maitri Desai, City Planner, City of Terre Haute
- Marcus Maurer, City Engineer, City of Terre Haute
- Tennille Wanner – Terre Haute Convention Center
- Todd Nation – Terre Haute City Council, Downtown Business Owner (provided feedback via email)
- Nick Jahn, VS Engineering
- Ron Taylor, TSWDG
- Scott Siefker, TSWDG

### **Meeting Goal:**

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss project branding strategy and facilitate a group Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threat (SWOW) analysis.

### **Meeting Summary:**

#### 1. Branding Discussion

A general discussion regarding the project branding was facilitated, with emphasis on how the branding could be used throughout both the design, construction/implementation and post-construction periods. A review of the additional project outreach elements, including the project website, mobile display and other collateral materials, was discussed and how the brand would impact those project components.

#### 2. Wabash Avenue SWOT Analysis

The design team facilitated a Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) discussion with the steering committee members. Material was provided to members who were not present at the meeting, and those that provided responses have been included in the summary below.

##### **01. Strengths**

Strengths are internal, positive attributes of the corridor and the properties immediately adjacent to the roadway. These are things that are largely within our control. Identified strengths regarding the Wabash Avenue Corridor:

- *Access (I-70, US 41)*
- *ISU Proximity*
- *Wide Streets*

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- *Hospitality sector*
  - *Opportunities for all ages*
  - *Downtown residents*
  - *Parking availability – affordable & good locations*
  - *Existing parking garages*
  - *Safe community*
  - *Restaurants – 19/20 existing restaurants & bars*
  - *Convention Center*
  - *Museums – accessible & inexpensive*
  - *Health of downtown*
  - *Strong historical character*
  - *Proximity to public transit*
  - *Ability to function within transportation grid*
  - *Connection to Wabash River*
  - *Sports tourism*
  - *The Mill Amphitheater*
  - *Downtown Terre Haute Organization*
  - *Renewed investment in downtown*
  - *Wide right of way*
  - *Walkable district*
  - *New hotel & Larry Bird Museum*
  - *Variety of existing development*
  - *Tourism for different age groups*
  - *C8 and C9 zoning*
  - *Farrington’s Grove adjacent*
  - *Specialty retail (ie: Corey’s Shoes, General Nutrition Center, Wabash Cigar Store)*
  - *UAP Clinic and medical services/offices*
  - *Government campus adjacent*

## **02. Weaknesses**

Weaknesses are negative factors that detract from the corridor’s strengths. These are issues that we might need to improve on for the corridor’s design recommendations to be successful. Identified weaknesses as related to the Wabash Avenue corridor:

- *Parking perception*
- *Lack of ground floor retail*
- *Crows – mess during winter, approx.. November – March*
- *Missing or demolished building “holes”*
- *Lack of electrical for events or programming*
- *Ability to protect from inclement elements/weather*
- *Hometown signage*
- *Lack of crowd generating activities – concerts at ISU*
- *Lack of walkable hotel rooms – currently have around 200, need 400*
- *Under utilization of mixed-use development*
- *Passive and lazy street frontage*

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- *Empty buildings with owners unwilling to sell or reinvest in buildings*
  - *Aging infrastructure*
  - *Lack of diversity in retail or local businesses*
  - *Parking lots, offices with blank frontage and no activity*
  - *Outdoor areas are weather dependent*
  - *Business access to Wabash Ave.*
  - *Poor pedestrian across US 41 to Government Campus*
  - *CSX Railroad Tracks*
  - *I-70 emergency detour route through downtown*

### **03. Opportunities**

Opportunities are external factors that are likely to contribute to the ultimate success of the project. Identified opportunities as related to the Wabash Avenue corridor:

- *Need for infrastructure improvement*
- *Opportunity to create unique character*
- *Brewery District – opportunity for new housing/residential*
- *Residential TIF in northern part of Farrington’s Grove*
- *Ohio Street Underpass*
- *Convert one-way streets to two-way streets*
- *Help Terre Haute Children’s Museum develop outdoor space in Phase 1*
- *Increase bike/trail connectivity*
- *Coordination with long-term control*
- *Street use by adjacent businesses*
- *Proposed hotel(s)*
- *Festivals*
- *The Mill*
- *Casino & tourism growth*
- *ISU adjacent*
- *Renewed interest in downtown living*
- *Riverfront adjacent*
- *Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA)*
- *Capitalize on tourism*
- *Public-Private Partnerships – ISU, Rose Hulman, St. Mary’s, CIB*
- *Theater*
- *Coordination with other major infrastructure projects*
- *Retail college grads*
- *River development synergies and connectivity*

### **04. Threats**

Threats are external factors that we have no control over. WE can work to develop contingency plans for dealing with these items if they occur. Identified threats as related to the Wabash Avenue corridor:

- *Changing leadership / priorities*
- *Poor plan buy-in from stakeholders*

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- *Plans get shelved / not funded*
  - *Utility cuts*
  - *Overall project funding issues*
  - Declining per capita income
  - Chain restaurants / retail competition
  - Aging buildings – maintenance and upkeep
  - Ability to fund operation and maintenance of recommendations / design treatment
  - Movement of development towards casino and away from downtown
  - Declining college enrollment – less foot traffic
  - Comprehensive Plan / Land Use Plan needs updated to support corridor goals
  - Marketing funding long-term
  - Local businesses buy-in and support

### 3. Questions & Next Steps

The design team will begin to craft the branding and engagement strategy as well as document the existing site inventory thorough photographic and mapping study of the corridor. Branding options will be sent out to the committee for review and then invitation provided for the Business Owner meeting.

Upcoming Committee Meetings & Engagement Opportunities:

- Business & Property Owner Meeting #1 – September 28, 2023