

# Perceptions of the Downtown

Downtown Exploratory Committee, 4.21.15

*Committee members spoke in pairs for two minutes with three other committee members about the question, “**What do you believe about downtown?**” Then the group discussed what they’d heard from their partners, resulting in this list of perceptions about the downtown and a second list of potential roles the committee could play in addressing the perceptions through their work.*

## Perceptions

- *There is a negative local opinion of the downtown.*
- *There is a lack of vibrancy.*
- *There is a lack of unity (in the activities, spaces available to the public).*
- *There is no energy place or gathering space where people can gather or that creates a draw or excitement*
- *My experience of the downtown over many years shows it’s getting worse.*
- *Demographics: who is it serving now and who does it need to serve?*
- *Identity is unclear. Each business draws its own people rather than the area drawing people.*
- *There are stereotypes about the downtown.*
- *Lack of a singular destination to bring people into the downtown.*
- *Parking is a concern for people who don’t come very often.*
- *Perception vs. Reality: what people think is not necessarily what is.*
- *The river is an overlooked asset of downtown.*
- *There is a need to increase the number of residents in the downtown.*
- *There is a lack of variety in the activities available downtown.*
- *There is a perception that safety is a concern in the downtown.*
- *Local residents are willing to drive other places to get the activities they want and don’t find here.*
- *We don’t see a diverse group using the downtown.*
- *There is a lack of definition to the downtown. People don’t all agree on where it is.*

## Potential roles for this committee

- *The downtown should create activities that bring users.*
- *What are we wanting to see?*
- *We can’t be other places or copy other places we like.*
- *The work of this committee should change perceptions of the downtown.*
- *Could we define areas of focus for our work?*
- *Could we engage Latino, Hmong, African-American, and other under-represented downtown users in this work?*