

Focus Group 3 Meeting Summary

May 28, 2024



City of Tomball

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

ABOUT THE MEETING

The third Focus Group meeting for the Tomball Comprehensive Plan was held on May 28, 2024, at Tomball City Hall. The Focus Group is made up of 17 community stakeholders representing various agencies, neighborhoods, and businesses. In addition to the Focus Group members, City staff from the Community Development Department attended the meeting. The consultant team from Freese and Nichols, Inc. (FNI) facilitated the meeting and was joined by Travis James, TXP, Inc., to discuss the economic development assessment for the Comprehensive Plan project.

The meeting began with a project update and a review of the revised vision, goals, guiding principles, and future land use map based on feedback from the previous meeting. Then, the Focus Group discussed the proposed focus areas, downtown development opportunities, and draft economic development assessment. The meeting closed with final thoughts and next steps.

Photos from the Meeting



DISCUSSION

The following notes are a transcription of the comments made during the meeting.

Vision

The draft vision statement was revised based on feedback from the Focus Group. The Focus Group provided additional comments or questions. The revised vision statement can be found in the meeting presentation and agenda packet.

Discussion Notes

- The Focus Group came to a consensus to move forward with the vision statement as presented. No additional comments were provided at this time.

Goals

The goals were revised based on feedback from the Focus Group. The Focus Group provided additional comments or questions. The revised goals can be found in the meeting presentation and agenda packet.

Discussion Notes

- The Focus Group came to a consensus to move forward with to move forward with the the revised goals. No additional comments were provided at this time.

Guiding Principles

The draft guiding principles were presented, and the Focus Group provided additional comments or questions. The draft guiding principles can be found in the meeting presentation and agenda packet.

Discussion

- Is there a timeline designated to the guiding principles?
 - A timeline is not designated for the guiding principles, but the action items under each guiding principle do. You can see how this works in the current implementation chapter in the comprehensive plan.
- What does the reference to, "partnering with regional agencies" mean?
 - This refers to working with regional entities to ensure that the recommendations of this plan can be implemented by coordinating projects or serving as funding sources.

Future Land Use

The future land use map was revised based on feedback from the focus group. The revised map was presented and the Focus Group provided additional comments or questions. The revised map can be found in the meeting presentation and agenda packet.

Discussion Notes

- What are the parameters for Medium Density Residential? What does that mean?
 - It's representative of townhomes, patio homes, duplexes, triplex, and quadplexes. Apartments are designated in High Density Residential.
- There are existing commercial developments north of Hufsmith Road. Between Snook Lane and Timber Trails Lake Place that currently designated as Rural Residential. Consider changing this area to Neighborhood Commercial or Corridor Commercial.
 - FNI will take another look before changing the designation.
- How does the map work if the zoning does not match the future land use map (FLUM)? The FLUM has not always been adhered to.
 - FNI explained that the future land use map is aspirational and should be referenced when making zoning decisions. There may be properties that do not match the land use designation, but the designation represents the general land use for the area. Each individual zoning and development decision should be made based on the context of each request.
- Should we look at designating a historic district? There are challenges to having a historic district, but if our downtown's historical character is important to us, we should consider it.

Focus Areas

Two focus areas are proposed to dedicate effort and spur improvement within specified areas of the City. The two areas, the East Downtown District and the Medical District, were presented and the Focus Group provided additional comments or questions. The boundaries and descriptions for the focus areas can be found in the meeting presentation and agenda packet.

Discussion

- East Downtown District
 - More parking is exciting.
 - Generally, the Focus Group agrees with the content presented and has no further comments.
- Medical District
 - How is parking addressed in this district?
 - Parking and sidewalks are addressed during the site plan phase. It's something that the developer will need to provide. It is not a concern in an area like this versus a redevelopment area like in downtown.

Downtown District

The draft assessment of the downtown area and recommendations were presented. The Focus Group provided additional comments or questions. The boundaries and assessment of the downtown district can be found in the meeting presentation and agenda packet.

Discussion

- Change the name to "Old Town." "Old Town Core" is confusing. It makes it seem like there is another district within downtown.
- There should be a focus on Historic preservation in Old Town.
- The Tomball Economic Development Corporation (TEDC) does not have a master plan to update all of the alley's, but there are a few alley projects that are currently partnering on. Update the analysis map to reflect existing and proposed alleys.
- The boundaries should be limited to Tyler Street on the district's south side.
- The museum property to the north should be encompassed within the boundaries. (Pine St. and Epps St.)

Economic Development

The draft economic development assessment and recommendations were provided to the Focus Group for review, and they had the opportunity to provide additional comments or questions. The draft economic development assessment can be found in the agenda packet.

Discussion

- What about having retail on the bottom and apartments above? That is something that could work in Old Town.
- The Focus Group agrees that there should be a focus on redevelopment of older properties in the City, not only in Old Town.
- Focus Group expressed that they do not like the recommendation for a hotel and large conference center because there is concern it will hinder the "small town flare."
 - Example: Fredericksburg wanted a hotel and conference center, but they finally got it and didn't want it. Why did they not want it?
- There are many hotels and event spaces within 15 minutes of Tomball. There are available options.
- In terms of economic development and pushing for a development like a hotel conference center, we should think about, "What's our purpose? Who are we trying to bring to attract?" For example, in Bryan/College Station, they focus on sports and tournaments.
- Do we let people stay in the Woodlands and travel to Tomball for a day visit?
 - I like that people visit for the day and don't stay in Tomball.
 - There are plenty of hotels nearby.
- Depending on the scale, a small boutique hotel with 15 rooms can work.
 - A good example of this is the Fredonia Hotel in downtown Nacogdoches.
- Sometimes travelers are specifically looking to stay downtown, and it's a missed opportunity.
- Maybe we can use a different language instead. Use "Venue" or "Event space" versus "conference center."
 - It's a missed opportunity if we remove the recommendation altogether.
- How do we use Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) now?
 - State law allows for HOT tax to be used on a variety of categories including marketing, arts, and historic preservation/

- Many cities use it as an incentive.
- Housing Types
 - Do you agree with the recommendation about exploring housing diversity?
 - We have a number of condos coming into the City off Business 249, including quadplex and triplex rentals.
 - Keep the recommendation, but it should be in context.
 - Remember homes for seniors
 - Eagles Trace is a senior housing development.
- The next step will be to build out these recommendations.