



Market Square Day

June 8, 2024



Market Square Master Plan



Market Square Day June 8, 2024

On Saturday June 8, 2024, BETA Group, the landscape architecture and planning consultants for the Market Square Master Plan, participated in the Market Square day festivities and had a booth to collect public input. In April, BETA Group held a public meeting where they gathered public input for the master plan and Market Square day offered another opportunity for visitors and residents to offer their insight on what they would like to see for the future of Market Square. Attendees participated in voting stations where they were able to express their preferences on future improvements, drawing their ideas on a model of Market Square, and participate in the Market Square Master Plan survey. Compiled in this booklet are the results from this event as well as meeting notes taken by BETA Group.



Market Square Day - Public Feedback

Notes - Attendee Comments Summary
June 8, 2024



Visioning

- Many residents were for closing down the area to pedestrians only.
- Possibly closing down certain parts of Congress Street ie: from Daniel Street to Fleet Street and allowing flow of traffic to go from Market Street to Pleasant Street.
- Retractable bollards could be used for temporary street closure.
- Additional benches/ seating that do not have to be associated with restaurants.
- "More elements for children in the square such as sidewalk/ yard games."
- Lighting that does not shine into adjacent apartments / dark sky compliant.
- "Community dinner with tables in the street."
- "Areas of covered walkways for those who primarily walk to get around."
- Portsmouth is very dog friendly so adding dog amenities would be desirable as well.
- If road is closed, whether it be permanently or seasonally, it would be nice to have fire pits in the square.
- "Market Square could be more 'park like' with additional trees/ shade."
- Encourage businesses to stay open later.
- Encourage art exhibits.
- "Re-imagine old state house."
- "Enhance opportunities for social connection."
- "More year-round activities. Saking rink"
- "Reinvent Elm St?"
- "Outdoor music and lighting!"



Vehicular Circulation & Safety

- Could a one-way traffic pattern go through Market Street and Pleasant Street if Congress is closed to vehicles?
- Possible scenario could be to close the square to traffic only a certain times of the day.
- Deliveries will still need access. In the case of street closure, maybe deliveries could be granted special access through a gate with key fob.
- Although the current vehicular pattern through the square is a little confusing, it also forces individuals to drive more slowly.
- "There are not enough accessible parking spaces."
- If parking is removed, how does this hurt or help the businesses?
- "Could Congress go back to a 2-way street?"
- Pleasant street doesn't need 2 turning lanes. This could be one lane to improve safety and minimize confusion when entering Market Square from Pleasant Street.
- Restrict parking time limits for on-street parking.
- Close Congress Street to Fleet Street for pedestrians only and then open it in the winter to vehicles.
- "Create a pass through by using Deer St. Or by making State St. A two-way street."
- Encourage use of parking garages / satellite lots.
- Make traffic from Market St. go up Daniel St.
- Closure of Daniel St. Between Market Square and Penhallow St.
- Concerns about closing the streets.
- "Fire and Rescue access is necessary."
- "What is the safest parking orientation?"

Precedents

- Many people who visited the tent brought up the design of European communities with plaza type spaces where either cars were able to go through during certain hours, or were completely closed down to vehicular traffic.
- Church Street in Burlington, VT was referenced a lot and people wish for Market Square to be able to move in a similar direction.
- In Japan, a visitor informed us there is an area where a road is closed down from 12-4pm everyday for pedestrian only markets.
- Reference to Quebec City.
- "Aix-en-Provence in southern France has a desirable town center model."
- "Merrimack Outlets has covered walkways."
- "Japanese city of Sendi - all weather walkable thanks to atrium style covered streets."

Pedestrian Circulation & Safety

- While Vehicles can be to blame for some of the safety issues in the square, people noted that pedestrians also do not look before crossing or are focused on their phones creating dangerous situations for both them and vehicular movement.
- "Sidewalks need to be wider near the corner of Jumpin' Jay's."
- "Crosswalks need improvement."
- "Widen the sidewalks and sacrifice some parking spaces."

Bicycle Circulation & Safety

- Bike lanes are desired by some residents.
- People bike over from Maine - it would be nice to be able to have bike facilities continue through to market square.
- Bike lanes could be painted a different color all together for visual clarity.
- Concerns that bike separation might not work here. Best scenario would be with vertical barriers, not paint.

Other

- The square needs better and more attractive signage.
- Maintaining the historic character and accessibility, whether the road is closed or not, is the main goal.
- "Market Square is over-priced."
- "Cannot absorb more businesses."

Public Transportation

- If Congress street is closed and Market and Pleasant Street are used for circulation, A bus could stop at the top of Congress near the church for drop offs.
- A scenario where the street is closed to cars could allow for only buses to traverse through the square.
- A trolley system that made a continuous loop could bring people to the square.





Where do you spend the most time in Market Square?



14 RESPONSES

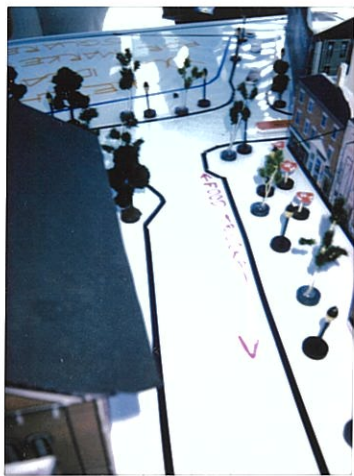
Market Square Model

Participants had the opportunity to sketch their ideas for market square on a white board that reflected a model of the downtown area. Movable pieces included outdoor dining tables, trees, lights, and vehicles.

The BETA Group team took polaroid photos of the different designs and posted them outside the tent for others to see and discuss.

Polaroid photos from participants appear on the following page.





"FOOD TRUCKS"



"OUTDOOR DINING @ CONGRESS AND FLEET"



"PEOPLE EXCLUSIVE!"



"BENCHES! TABLES! GAZEBO!"



"NO CARS!"



"CONGRESS STREET CLOSED TO VEHICLES"



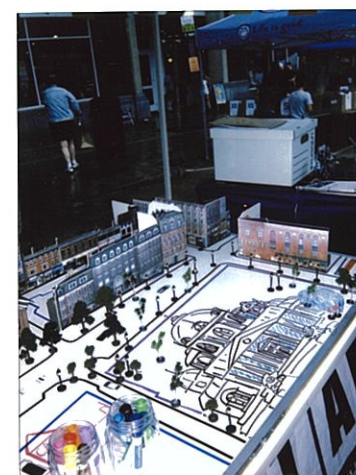
"WALKING FOR ALL OF PLEASANT STREET"



"NO CARS!"



"EXTENDED SIDEWALKS ON PLEASANT AND CONGRESS"



"CLOSE PLEASANT AND CONGRESS TO BE PEDESTRIAN ONLY"



"PEOPLE ONLY!"



"PEOPLE ONLY! BRING TREES INTO STREET"



"CLOSE CONGRESS AT DANIEL AND HAVE TRAFFIC GO FROM MARKET TO PLEASANT"



"CONGRESS SHOULD BE SINGLE LANE AND WIDEN SIDEWALKS"



Survey Summary

Total responses through 6.13.2024 - **456**

A word web is created based on most common words/ phrases used when answering the survey questions.

Question 1: What attracts you to Market Square?

41 respondents (9%) answered **people watching** for this question.



Question 2: Are there areas of Market Square where you don't feel safe or where safety can be improved?

148 respondents (33%) answered **No** for this question.





Survey Summary

A word web is created based on most common words/ phrases used when answering the survey questions.

Question 3: What would you like to see more of in Market Square?

57 respondents (13%) answered **street** for this question.



Question 4: What would you like to see less of in Market Square?

147 respondents (34%) answered **cars** for this question.





Survey Summary

A word web is created based on most common words/ phrases used when answering the survey questions.

Question 5: What changes or new amenities do you think Market Square would benefit from?

