



Krasl Art Fair Outreach Summary

On the weekend of July 13 and 14, 2019, thousands of residents and visitors attended the Krasl Art Fair, the art center's annual festival and art show. As part of this event, members of the St. Joseph Downtown Vision project team conducted outreach on Saturday, July 13. The City of St. Joseph set up a tent along Broad Street between Lake Boulevard and State Street to perform public engagement and speak with passing event goers about the future of Downtown St. Joseph. For this event, the project team set up an interactive exercise that asked residents to post comments on two poster boards asking what they do and do not want to see in Downtown. This not only helped to gather feedback but created a colorful visual that allowed individuals to read through other resident's ideas for the future of Downtown. During the event, members of the project team engaged with over 200 individuals, collecting 115 responses as part of the exercise as well as through the distribution of survey postcards. The input received will be used together with the feedback and analysis of existing conditions from previous steps of the planning process to guide the development of the Downtown Master Plan.

Summary of Feedback

Overall, participants at the Krasl Art Fair were positive, placing the majority of their comments on the board asking what they would like to see in Downtown, as opposed to what they do not want to see. The most frequent topic was parking, which was discussed in 20 different comments. Residents wished to see more parking Downtown, including a parking garage and improvements to make parking easier and quicker, such as meter parking with free permits given to residents. While many individuals identified parking issues, some noted that events like Krasl Art Fair can't be compared with regular weekends of the year due to the large influx of visitors. Additionally, when reading the boards, many residents agreed with the need for more parking but noted the lack of space to create more.

Other popular items participants wished to see in Downtown included more restaurants and eating options, activities for kids, more public art, and new retail and shopping options. Participants were very positive about existing restaurants, but discussed the need for more options, particularly casual and quick food options similar to Jimmy John's. Respondents regularly praised the Krasl Art Fair and other existing events and festivals, but also indicated they would like to see even more throughout the year. The Venetian Festival was a particularly popular talking point, with participants split in their reaction—some wished to see it return while others were glad it was cancelled, expressing that it had become too rowdy and disorderly. Most agreed; however, that when it first started it was a valuable event.

The poster board focusing on what participants did not want to see did not receive many comments, thus there was no consensus for what should be avoided in Downtown. However, many of the comments had a common theme; that the City should be careful to preserve what is currently working for Downtown and avoid overdeveloping or overcrowding the area. Examples of this theme were comments from individuals who did not want to see new development Downtown; did not want chain restaurants or stores that would threaten local businesses; and did not want additional events in Downtown until there was parking to accommodate visitors.