

DOWNTOWN
REVITALIZATION &
ECONOMIC
ASSISTANCE FOR
MISSOURI

OCTOBER 2009

FOCUS GROUP REPORT

FINAL RESULTS

Farmington, Missouri



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| <u>SECTION</u> | <u>PAGE</u> |
|--|-------------|
| I. FINAL REPORT | 1 |
| A. Questions Posed to Business Groups..... | 1 |
| B. Questions Posed to General Groups | 2 |
| C. The Farmington Area..... | 4 |
| D. Downtown Farmington: Describing the Present | 5 |
| E. Downtown Farmington: Looking to the Future | 7 |
| F. Key Points..... | 9 |
| II. DOWNTOWN BUSINESS OWNERS DISCUSSION TRANSCRIPT..... | 13 |
| III. LOCAL GOVERNMENT, CITY STAFF, AND OFFICIALS DISCUSSION TRANSCRIPT | 27 |
| IV. NEW RESIDENTS DISCUSSION TRANSCRIPT..... | 41 |
| V. LONG TIME RESIDENTS DISCUSSION TRANSCRIPT | 57 |

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SECTION I

FINAL REPORT

As part of the research for the DREAM Initiative, UNICOM-ARC conducted four focus groups in Farmington, Missouri. The purpose of these groups was to learn more about the priorities of the Farmington community in regard to Downtown. The four groups included the following: 1) Downtown business owners, 2) local government, City staff, and officials, 3) new residents, and 4) long time residents. Participants of all four groups are from a variety of backgrounds.

This report summarizes responses to posed questions of all focus group members. Attached are the complete transcripts of the four meetings. Names and other identifying remarks are omitted.

A. QUESTIONS POSED TO THE BUSINESS GROUPS:

The following questions were included in the business group discussion guide:

General Questions about Farmington

01. Generally speaking, how would you describe this area to a visitor? Would you say things are moving in the right or wrong direction?
02. What are the main shopping areas for residents? From how far away do people come or go to do their regular shopping (groceries, household items)?
03. What about dining and entertainment options? What are popular choices for local residents? When friends or relatives visit, where do you take them?

Downtown Specific Questions

04. Generally speaking, would you say that Downtown Farmington is headed in the right direction or wrong direction? Why?
05. Why did you choose to locate your business or make an investment in property Downtown (or not in Downtown, for other business owners)?
06. From what you hear from your customers, how user friendly is Downtown? Are business hours and locations convenient? Is there enough parking and is it convenient? Is it easy for people to find what they're looking for?
07. Is there any residential living in Downtown? Is there a demand or need for more housing Downtown? What kind of housing – rental, condominiums, single family housing, etc.? Who would be the target for that housing, students, elderly, etc.?
08. How do you communicate to your customers about information about what's going on Downtown (about shopping, special events, other entertainment and recreation) or with your own business? What is communication like between business (or business groups) and the City's administration and elected officials?

Questions Regarding the Future of Downtown

09. As you know, the City is in the process of developing a Strategic Plan for Downtown Farmington. We'd like to ask you what direction you would like the Downtown to take in a few different areas over the next few years. What...
 - Additional/types of businesses would you like to see Downtown?
 - Dining and entertainment?
 - Parks and outdoor recreation?
10. Now, we would like to talk about the look and feel of Downtown. Do you think there needs to be improvements in the following areas?
 - Street repair?
 - Landscaping/beautification?
 - Green space?
 - Building repairs, renovation, upgrades?
11. Of all the potential improvements we've just talked about, what do you think the highest priorities should be for the City?
12. What could the City administration or elected officials do to help your business thrive or keep your property values strong over the next few years?
13. Would you be willing to support a special business district in which an additional sales tax would be collected that would provide services specifically for Downtown?

B. QUESTIONS POSED TO THE GENERAL GROUPS:

The following questions were included in the discussion guide to the general groups:

General Questions about Farmington

01. Generally speaking, how would you describe this area to a visitor? Would you say things are moving in the right or wrong direction?
02. What are the main shopping areas for residents? From how far away do people come or go to do their regular shopping (groceries, household items)?
03. What about dining and entertainment options? What are popular choices for local residents? When friends or relatives visit from out of town, where do you take them?
04. What kinds of recreation are popular with local residents? What kinds of opportunities are there to participate in these activities in Farmington?

Downtown Specific Questions

05. Generally speaking, would you say that Downtown Farmington is headed in the right direction or wrong direction? Why?
06. What are the major reasons you visit Downtown? How often do you visit Downtown Farmington? Is there anything that you used to do Downtown but now do elsewhere or vice versa? Why?
07. How user friendly is Downtown? Are business hours and locations convenient? Is there enough parking and is it convenient? Is it easy for people to find what they're looking for?
08. How do local residents and visitors get information about what's going on Downtown (about shopping, special events, other entertainment and recreation)?
09. Is there any residential living in Downtown? Is there a demand or need for more housing Downtown? What kind of housing – rental, condominiums, single family housing, etc.? Who would be the target for that housing, students, elderly, etc.?

Questions Regarding the Future of Downtown

10. As you know, the City is in the process of developing a Strategic Plan for Downtown Farmington. We'd like to ask you what direction you would like the Downtown to take in a few different areas over the next few years. What...
 - Additional/types of businesses would you like to see Downtown?
 - Dining and entertainment?
 - Parks and recreation?
11. Now we would like to talk about the look and feel of Downtown. Do you think there needs to be improvements in the following areas?
 - Street repair?
 - Landscaping/beautification?
 - Green space?
 - Building repairs, renovations, upgrades?
12. Of all the potential improvements we've just talked about, what do you think the highest priorities should be for the City?
13. What downtowns or areas of other communities would you most like Farmington to resemble?

C. THE FARMINGTON AREA

Generally speaking, how would you describe this area to a visitor? Would you say things are moving in the right or wrong direction?

The groups described Farmington as a friendly and welcoming town with a good education system, good healthcare, and excellent access to the amenities of St. Louis. According to participants, Farmington is an attractive small town with the services of a big city.

Participants felt Farmington is moving in the right direction. Over the past few years, Downtown has improved tremendously. The City has begun to make aesthetic improvements to Downtown and some new businesses have opened. On the outskirts of town, along the highway by Wal-Mart, more large chain stores are considering opening new locations. Nearby wineries have been successful and caused the region to see an increase in tourism. The participants regarded the increase in tourism as an opportunity for Downtown Farmington.

What are the main shopping areas for residents? From how far away do people come to do their regular shopping (groceries, household items)?

Farmington residents do much of their everyday shopping in Farmington, particularly at Wal-Mart. However, most residents travel to St. Louis County to shop for clothing, specialty groceries, and for a larger variety of things than Farmington currently provides. Participants said they try to shop in Farmington, especially Downtown, when they can.

The participants stated that many local Farmington businesses have only 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekday hours. Such limited business hours creates a situation in which it is inconvenient for working residents to shop in Farmington, even if they try to support local business.

What about dining, entertainment, and recreation options? What are popular choices for local residents? When friends or relatives visit from out of town, where do you take them?

There are a number of restaurants in Farmington, including both chain restaurants and locally owned restaurants: Mexican, Chinese, fast food, casual dining, family dining, and high-end dining. 12 West, a higher-end restaurant Downtown, is a favorite and could easily become a destination for visitors. 12 West provides good food, good atmosphere, and live music on the weekends. Specialty food options include a donut shop, a tea room, and a coffee shop.

Participants thought overall that a little more variety in dining options would be welcome, as well as outdoor seating. Many residents visit St. Louis for a wider variety, or they combine dining with shopping trips to those areas.

Regarding recreation, participants noted Downtown has a park and a skate park. Recreation found in the Farmington region includes parks, a civic center, a water park, and other outdoor recreation opportunities.

For entertainment, participants noted a movie theater, some live theater, some live music, a few annual festivals, the skate park, the water park, shopping, and the nearby wineries. Participants felt that while there is a selection of activities in Farmington, there is a need for more entertainment. Specifically participants noted an updated movie theater, more live music, more fine and performing arts, more specialty shopping, and activities that appeal to younger people.

D. DOWNTOWN FARMINGTON: DESCRIBING THE PRESENT

Generally speaking, would you say that Downtown Farmington is headed in the right direction or wrong direction? Why?

The groups felt positive about the direction of Downtown Farmington. They especially liked the City's efforts to beautify Downtown with the Columbia Street streetscape. Participants expressed that it should be a priority to extend the streetscape along Liberty Street as well.

Priorities for helping Downtown Farmington move further in the right direction included adding more retail and entertainment options, focusing on the aesthetics of Liberty Street, repairing old buildings, improving signage and wayfinding, improving lighting of parking lots, relaxing code enforcement to encourage historical building rehabilitations, and finding incentives to assist development and business Downtown.

Business Owners: Why did you choose to locate your business or make an investment in property Downtown (or not in Downtown, for other business owners)?

The business owners cited a love of historic Downtown and the small-town feel as the major reasons they located their businesses Downtown or invested in buildings. The participants indicated, at different points in the discussion, that new businesses might be attracted in the future if the City focuses on marketing the Downtown area. They also felt the City could assist by providing information about grants and loans, relaxing code enforcement for renovating historic buildings, and improving the aesthetics of Liberty Street.

General Public: What are the major reasons you visit Downtown? How often do you visit Downtown Farmington? Is there anything that you used to do Downtown but now do elsewhere or vice versa? Why?

The groups mentioned a number of reasons for visiting Downtown, including festivals, restaurants, retail shopping, banks, the Courthouse, the post office, and other professional businesses. Participants thought residents typically only visit Downtown during weekday business hours, with the exception of some restaurants, as most businesses are not open during the evenings or weekends.

How user friendly is Downtown? Are business hours and locations convenient? Is there enough parking and is it convenient? Is it easy for people to find what they're looking for?

The participants had a few major concerns about user-friendliness, including business hours, a perceived parking problem, navigation, and the perception of safety.

The business hours in Downtown, according to the participants, are a major problem, especially regarding evenings and weekends. Most of the stores are only open from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. on weekdays, which makes it impossible for people who have jobs with a regular weekday schedule to shop. The stores that are open on weekends are only open for a few hours, which is sometimes inconvenient for residents, and certainly discourages the idea of Farmington as a destination for weekend travelers.

Parking was a concern for some participants, though others felt there is ample parking Downtown. The groups explained that many people perceive parking to be a problem if they cannot find a parking spot directly in front of the store they wish to visit, although they may be willing to walk a much greater distance within the Wal-Mart parking lot. Participants felt that if all of the storefronts were populated with shops and businesses, the walk from a parking space to a business may seem shorter. Furthermore, if the parking lots in the rear of buildings were better lit with clear signage, drivers would find ample parking near the businesses they wish to visit.

Better signage, according to participants, would help draw people Downtown from the highway. Additionally, signage within Downtown to help people find parking and navigate to important attractions would be an improvement.

Safety, specifically the perception of safety, was a concern. Groups thought better lighting and sidewalks on Liberty Street would provide a safer feel, as the aesthetics of an area contribute to people's perception of safety. Furthermore, since there are a number of group homes within walking distance of Downtown, there are transient people loitering as well. This situation can make some residents feel unsafe and deters visitors. More businesses, and a larger crowd of all types of people, might help pedestrians feel safer.

How do local residents and visitors get information about what's going on Downtown (about shopping, special events, other entertainment and recreation)?

Groups mentioned sources such as the radio, the newspaper, the Chamber of Commerce, the Internet, the tourist center in the Factory, and word-of-mouth as ways they get information about Downtown business and events. Most participants felt that word-of-mouth was the predominant way that they received their information and that other avenues were not as effective. They suggested that Downtown could be marketed better to both residents and visitors.

Is there any residential living in Downtown? Is there a demand or need for more housing Downtown? What kind of housing – rental, condominiums, single family housing, etc.? Who would be the target for that housing, students, elderly, etc.?

There is some residential living in Downtown Farmington, and the groups felt that there would be a demand for upper floor living, particularly high quality rentals and condominiums, if the buildings could be appropriately rehabilitated. Participants felt code enforcement was an issue, since it is currently cost-prohibitive to renovate many of the upper floor living spaces. Participants expressed that more residents Downtown would create a bigger customer base for all Downtown businesses and upper floor spaces would provide an ideal housing option for some Downtown business owners.

E. DOWNTOWN FARMINGTON: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

As you know, the City is in the process of developing a Strategic Plan for Downtown. We'd like to ask you what direction you would like the Downtown to take in some different areas over the next few years. What additional types of businesses would you like to see Downtown? Dining and entertainment? Parks and recreation?

The participants suggested a variety of new businesses Downtown, focusing on independently owned specialty-type shops, restaurants, and entertainment, rather than larger chains. For retail, they suggested more men's, women's, and children's clothing, a shoe store, a bookstore, a candy shop, an ice cream shop and soda fountain, gift shops, art galleries and shops, and a wine tasting and souvenir shop for winery visitors. For food, they suggested a grocery store and restaurants with live music, outdoor seating, and longer business hours. For entertainment, the groups suggested an updated movie theater, an arcade or another option for teenagers, music performances on the courthouse steps, more live theater, a club that plays a variety of different types of music, any family entertainment, and other classy adult entertainment for nights and weekends. The retail should not focus on competing with Wal-Mart, but should instead focus on offering unique options for both residents and tourists with discretionary income.

The participants felt that more second-story residential space would appeal to young professionals, business owners, and retired couples, and would keep the residents shopping, dining, and spending their money Downtown.

One of the groups also suggested a shuttle that would bring people to and from the wineries and into Downtown Farmington. They felt that a shuttle for visitors of the wineries in the region might help promote Farmington as a viable tourist option. It would increase Farmington's visibility as far as the wineries are concerned, and it would also increase safety, since fewer people would be driving drunk to and from the wineries.

The groups, overall, felt that the Downtown's purpose is not to compete with large chain stores like Wal-Mart, the stores that are coming in near Wal-Mart, or even the malls in South St. Louis County; it is to offer a unique experience to customers, to offer interesting things that will make residents and tourists want to spend time Downtown, and to make Farmington a quaint, historic, interesting destination. For this, the groups felt strongly that small business should be encouraged, and the City should find ways to make it easier for building owners to fix up their buildings into usable retail and office spaces.

Now we would like to talk about the look and feel of Downtown. Do you think there needs to be improvements in the following areas: street repair, landscaping/beautification, green space, and building repairs, renovations, and upgrades?

When asked about the look and feel of Downtown, participants felt that improving Liberty Street, to match the aesthetic improvements on Columbia Street, was a high priority. Streets, sidewalks, and lighting on Liberty Street would help connect it as an aesthetic part of Downtown and would make people feel safer.

Participants noted another top priority should be building repair and renovation. The groups felt that the City is holding historic buildings to new building standards and making it nearly impossible to renovate a building. They suggested that the City revisit its codes to revise the restrictions for historic buildings, which would make people more willing to invest Downtown.

Other priorities included improving lighting in the parking lots, signage directing people to the parking lots, signage directing people into Downtown Farmington and to specific businesses, and a brochure with a map of all the businesses Downtown to help people navigate.

Of all the potential improvements we've just talked about, what do you think the highest priorities should be for the City?

The groups identified as the highest priorities relaxing code enforcement on historic buildings, building repair and renovation, improving the aesthetics of Liberty Street, and bringing new business Downtown.

Business Owners: What could the City do to help your business thrive or keep your property values strong over the next few years?

The business owners felt that the City could, in addition to all other improvements, make building repair and renovation less of a challenge and market Downtown to residents and to potential visitors from St. Louis and from other surrounding areas.

Business Owners: Would you be willing to support a Special Business District in which an additional sales tax would be collected that would provide services specifically for Downtown?

The business owners were divided on whether they would support a special business district with an additional tax. They were concerned that an additional sales tax would deter people from shopping Downtown, but they recognized that other communities have done this successfully.

General Public: What downtowns or areas of other communities would you most *like* Farmington to resemble?

The participants mentioned a few downtowns or city areas whose mix of businesses, aesthetics, or marketing they admired: St. Genevieve, Missouri; Washington, Missouri; Hermann, Missouri; Branson, Missouri; Prairieville, Missouri; St. Joseph, Missouri; St. Charles, Missouri; Kirkwood, Missouri; the Central West End in St. Louis City; the University City Loop in St. Louis County; the Downtown Loft District in St. Louis City; St. Charles, Illinois; Naperville, Illinois; Paducah, Kentucky; and Boulder, Colorado.

F. KEY POINTS

Key points about the Farmington area:

- ◆ Farmington is a friendly, welcoming town, a good place to raise a family, with good schools, good healthcare, and excellent access to the amenities of St. Louis.
- ◆ Farmington is moving in the right direction and Downtown is improving. Nearby wineries are bringing traffic to the region, and new stores are locating near the Wal-Mart.
- ◆ Farmington residents try to do their everyday shopping in Farmington, particularly at Wal-Mart, but many residents travel to St. Louis County for a larger variety.
- ◆ Many local Farmington businesses have limited weekday hours, which makes it inconvenient for a working resident to shop in Farmington.
- ◆ Dining options include both chain restaurants and locally owned restaurants: Mexican, Chinese, fast food, casual dining, family dining, high-end dining, a donut shop, a tea room, and a coffee shop.
- ◆ Many residents visit St. Louis for a wider variety of dining as well as for shopping.
- ◆ The participants overall felt that more variety in dining options would be welcome, as well as outdoor seating.
- ◆ Farmington has many recreational opportunities, including parks, a civic center, a skate park, a water park, and many other outdoor recreation opportunities in the region.
- ◆ For entertainment, Farmington has live theater, live music, annual festivals, the skate park, the water park, Downtown shopping, and nearby wineries.
- ◆ Participants felt that there is a need for more entertainment options, including an updated movie theater, more live music, more fine and performing arts, more specialty shopping, and options for young people.

Key points about Downtown Farmington in the present:

- ◆ The groups felt positive about the direction of Downtown Farmington regarding attracting new business and beautifying Downtown, but felt that Downtown would move further in the right direction by focusing on adding to the aesthetic improvements that have been installed on Columbia Street. Groups also felt that attracting new business, and making building repair and renovation easier and more accessible were top priorities.
- ◆ The Business Owner Group cited a love of historic Downtown and the small-town feel as the major reasons they located their businesses Downtown or invested in buildings.

- ◆ The Business Owner group also felt that new businesses might be attracted in the future if the City focuses on marketing Downtown, provides information about grants and loans to renovate old buildings and to start new businesses, relaxes code enforcement for renovating historic buildings, and improves the aesthetics of Liberty Street.
- ◆ The groups mentioned a number of reasons that they visit Downtown, including festivals, restaurants, retail shopping, banks, the courthouse, the post office, and other professional businesses.
- ◆ The participants had a few major concerns about user-friendliness, including business hours, a perceived parking problem, navigation, and the perception of safety.
- ◆ Business hours Downtown are inconvenient for most people, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. on weekdays, which makes it impossible for people who have jobs with a regular weekday schedule to patronize these businesses.
- ◆ Though there is ample parking Downtown, residents perceive that there is not enough. Groups thought that better signage directing vehicles to parking, more shops to make the walk feel shorter, and better lighting in the existing lots would help dispel this perception.
- ◆ Better signage directing City visitors to Downtown, according to participants, would help draw people Downtown from the highways. Better signage to the parking lots and then to major attractions in Downtown would help people find what they are looking for.
- ◆ Better lighting on Liberty Street, more businesses, and more pedestrians Downtown would help the Downtown feel safer. The Streetscape improvements installed on Columbia Street should be continued along Liberty Street.
- ◆ People get information about Downtown Farmington from the radio, the newspaper, the Chamber of Commerce, the Internet, the tourist center in the Factory, and word-of-mouth. The participants felt word-of-mouth was the primary way they get information, and the participants felt that the City could do more to market Downtown to residents and tourists.
- ◆ There is some residential living in Downtown Farmington, and the participants felt that there would be a demand for upper floor living, particularly nice rentals and condominiums, if the buildings could be appropriately rehabilitated.
- ◆ More residents Downtown would create a bigger customer base for Downtown businesses, and upper floor units would be a great housing option for some Downtown business owners.

Key points about the future of Downtown Farmington:

- ◆ The participants suggested a variety of new businesses Downtown, focusing on independently owned specialty-type shops, restaurants, and entertainment, rather than larger chains.

- ◆ Participants suggested more clothing options, a shoe store, a bookstore, a candy shop, an ice cream shop and soda fountain, gift shops, art galleries and shops, and a wine tasting and souvenir shop would be good additions to the Downtown business mix.
- ◆ Participants also suggested a grocery store and more restaurants with live music and outdoor seating to improve Downtown. They also noted that all businesses should have longer business hours.
- ◆ For entertainment, participants suggested an updated movie theater, an arcade or another option for teenagers, music performances on the Courthouse steps, more live theater, a club that plays a variety of different types of music, any family entertainment, and other classy adult entertainment for nights and weekends.
- ◆ The participants felt that upper floor residential space would appeal to young professionals, business owners, and retired couples. They thought that increased residents would tend to do their shopping, dining, and other spending Downtown.
- ◆ A shuttle to bring people to and from the regional wineries and Downtown Farmington would be a welcome addition and help people see Downtown as a destination.
- ◆ The participants agreed that Downtown's purpose is not to compete with large chain stores like Wal-Mart, the stores that are coming in near Wal-Mart, or even the malls in South St. Louis County; it is to offer a unique experience to customers, to offer interesting things that will make residents and tourists want to spend time Downtown, and to make Farmington a quaint, historic, interesting destination.
- ◆ The groups felt strongly that small business should be encouraged, and the City should find ways to make it easier for building owners to fix up their buildings into usable retail and office spaces.
- ◆ High priorities were placed on relaxing code enforcement on historic buildings, building repair and renovation, improving the aesthetics of Liberty Street, signage and navigation, and bringing new business Downtown.
- ◆ The business owners felt that the City could, in addition to all other improvements, make building repair and renovation less of a challenge and market Downtown to residents and to potential visitors from St. Louis and from other surrounding areas.
- ◆ The business owners were concerned that a Special Business District sales tax would deter people from shopping Downtown, but they recognized that other communities have used this incentive method successfully.
- ◆ The participants mentioned a few downtowns or city areas whose mix of businesses, aesthetics, or marketing they admired: St. Genevieve, Missouri; Washington, Missouri; Hermann, Missouri; Branson, Missouri; Prairieville, Missouri; St. Joseph, Missouri; St. Charles, Missouri; Kirkwood, Missouri; the Central West End in St. Louis City; the University City Loop in St. Louis County; the Downtown Loft District in St. Louis City; St. Charles, Illinois; Naperville, Illinois; Paducah, Kentucky; and Boulder, Colorado.

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SECTION II

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS OWNERS DISCUSSION TRANSCRIPT

Moderator: *Tell me a little bit about your community.*

Very good school districts. Very progressive.

High concentration of State businesses and offices. (noise, unintelligible.)

I think there's a lot of people that live here and work in St. Louis. It's such a nice community, and the schools are good.

It's grown a lot in the last 10, 15 years.

Moderator: *What's the population?*

It's about 13,000, but it's 20,000 day population.

I used to live here and commute out of state, and I think we have a unique blend of upscale experience including the local vineyards and the Downtown shopping, which has grown over the past 5 years, and it offers something for everyone that the surrounding communities aren't able to offer.

We're really still a small town with just about everything big cities offer. We're the market center for healthcare, jobs, trade, shopping. We serve about a 30 mile radius.

There's the water park and the state park for younger teens.

We're blessed to have a business community that is willing to donate to the community, whether it be for Country Days, or new businesses that give their time and money for the greater good.

Country Days is our largest festival. It's in June.

Five full days of family fun activities for everyone.

We have music concerts and food and arts and crafts and a pageant and talent show.

And the small businesses sponsor it, and we're able to bring in entertainment that...(electronic noise, unintelligible.)

On an average year, it's 30- 40,000 people for the festival. This year, we had about 10,000 for the concert alone.

Moderator: Let's talk about shopping. Is there enough shopping in Farmington?

There are definitely things we're lacking.

And we're close enough to St. Louis that you can get there in an hour. We need a grocery store.

We know there's some of the entertainment shopping that we're always going to miss. Like the mall.

I don't shop at malls, and I try to buy within Farmington, but we have done some informal studies over the years, and a major percentage of people shop locally during the week and shop at Cape or St. Louis on the weekends. We're about halfway between the two. Those are the two places people tend to go for recreational shopping.

Moderator: Do you stay here for groceries?

We need a higher-end grocery store.

We can buy food here, but something that has more organic choices, vegetables, fish.

Vanilla beans and...

Wal-Mart has vanilla beans.

Capers.

We could use some higher-end.

There was talk of a Schnucks coming in, and it hasn't developed yet. That's just what I hear. That has to be taken with a grain of salt.

Moderator: Are there other kinds of stores you're lacking?

We need clothing stores.

(Unanimous agreement.)

Everybody wants a Target.

Target is more interesting than Wal-Mart.

We are definitely lacking in all sorts of clothing, men's, women's, kids.

We have a JC Penney, Wal-Mart, Maurice's, Glick's, and Fashion Bug. That's it.

There is a children's boutique, too.

People are looking for that kind of thing, because I've been adding more accessories, and that's been good.

Moderator: Do you have enough restaurants in town?

We have a lot of fast food. We have a quality issue.

We need upscale fine-dining establishments, and we need family places like Applebee's type of place.

We have a Colton's coming in.

The food is very good.

There's very few individually owned restaurants. Most are chains.

They just opened one in Washington.

(many people talking at once.)

I think it's sad that we've had a number of individually owned restaurants, but they pick locations that aren't beneficial to their businesses. If there were more assistance and that sort of thing, these businesses would do better. Like Bailey's...they were on the highway.

There used to be no highway access to it.

And there was that place that was between here and...that steak place. Bailey's. And Pad Thai is good, but it's way out there. It is by the Mexican restaurant, but...

We have a couple upscale places. 12 West and the Firehouse.

The Firehouse isn't upscale. But 12 West is.

They're both local.

The country club.

We've got plenty of chains, but we don't have much local flair.

The barbecue place. But you can't get a beer with your barbecue. And it's far away. It's right off the highway. And it feels like fast food, not like a place with local flavor.

Moderator: What do people do for fun?

(many people talking at once, unintelligible.)

Movies.

We have a bowling alley that has a video arcade. There's lots to do for outdoor type people, parks and conversation and lots of things to do in the summertime.

We have a water park, and the civic center is good for entertainment.

There's no nightlife, though.

There's definitely no nightlife Downtown.

On the weekends and the nights, Downtown is done.

(agreement.)

When 12 West has people playing music, it's busy. It's hard to find parking. But that's only on the weekend.

A couple years ago, they were talking about closing off a portion of Jefferson Street. Something like that could work.

A pedestrian mall.

That was a neat plan.

I think that would be fantastic.

Have you ever seen that plan before? That's a neat plan.

(agreement.)

Moderator: You've told me about your community. Do you think Downtown is heading in the right or wrong direction?

It's definitely improving.

There have been some nice renovations, too. The Coffee House.

I just put a new store in my building, and that's awesome, but catty corner to me, that building's going to fall down. It's going to kill someone.

(agreement.)

Parking is limited.

And the city, a year ago, was enforcing a city ordinance that said you couldn't park in front of something near a stop sign, and I lost a spot. It took away a spot from those old people. And cars and semis fly through that stop sign. And the cops say they ticket people, but they don't.

And they won't enforce 2-hour parking.

And the police run the stop signs.

(agreement.)

One day, a city truck went through. I called his supervisor. One day, this old lady got hit. It was pouring down rain, and she lay in the road, and I've called the police, and they won't do anything about it. It happens all day long. My customers watch these big trucks roll through the stop sign.

I've been hit there.

How do they miss a four-way stop? It's in the middle of town.

The one-way streets is a huge issue, too. In front of my store, I see people going the wrong way everyday.

There's so many one-way streets, and people drive on the wrong sides of the one-way streets and the two-way streets. It's confusing.

I think generally, though, Downtown has improved a lot. A lot of buildings have been renovated from horrible, unusable eyesores. There's still work to be done, but I think it's better than it was.

(many people talking at once.)

...develop some type of program to encourage people to renovate.

(agreement.)

It's one of those vicious circles. I wouldn't want to live in a second-floor flat Downtown, because it's difficult to renovate.

It is very difficult to renovate those. When we redid our building, we had such stringent criteria to meet. It's very cost-prohibitive.

They are working to make changes, though...

(unintelligible, many people talking at once.)

I think in the past, it has been a huge issue.

They are adopting more reasonable standards, now.

Several people did stand up and say they couldn't do anything because the codes were so strict.

Moderator: Are there people living on second stories Downtown?

Some.

And if they do, they're in bad shape. The rent is cheap.

They're bad, a lot of them.

Even on some of the streets off Columbia, there's more low-income type housing.

Run-down.

Smaller homes bought out to be rented out, and they don't take care of them.

We have a great deal of group homes and halfway houses in Downtown, and it's not great for people walking around. And those people come to my office at the Chamber everyday. They stay for an hour sitting in my lobby. The group homes are definitely an issue, because those people use the businesses' bathrooms. We tell them our bathrooms are out of order now. Because we have to clean up after them.

And it's also a safety concern, because one of the homes is a sexual predator home, and they can come and go as they please.

And a lot of people let kids go to the park alone.

Most of them do not come and see me all the time, only one or two.

(side conversations about people from group homes. Many agreeing that group homes are a challenge and agreeing about worrying about sexual predators who live in the group homes.)

Moderator: For those of you who own businesses Downtown, why did you choose Downtown?

I just love Downtown. I'm a big fan of that environment.

I agree.

And for the kind of business I have, it's the kind of business you find in Downtowns. We're all within walking distance.

Another thing about the DREAM initiative, they talk about the tax credits, and I think it's really difficult for a person that's not familiar with historic tax credits to get them, because they're so time intensive. A lot of buildings are eligible for tax credits because of the historic courthouse district. A lot of people don't know about the tax credits. If there were information on how to get those, and help them abide by those rules, you'd probably see more people renovating those buildings.

Moderator: How user friendly is Downtown? How about parking?

Parking is bad.

I think there's more of a perception that there's no parking. The public parking lots are empty all the time.

And they don't know how to parallel park.

From my perception of living elsewhere, we don't have a parking issue. We don't have meters. Now, the courthouse takes up a lot of parking, because the employees park on the Square all day, and the two-hour parking is not enforced...the police says that they can write tickets, but because they work at the courthouse, they aren't enforced.

(agreement. Side conversations.)

I do think there's plenty of parking, but people don't want to walk more than two blocks.

But they won't complain if they have to park at the end of the lot at Wal-Mart. And I don't like to parallel park on the left side of one-way streets. If we changed the parking to angled on one side, shift the lanes over, people could just back in and out instead of parallel parking.

Yeah.

We just recently added wayfinding signs for parking. Does that help?

I don't know if it helps, but it looks beautiful.

I look in other towns, and I think we have some of the best. I think we need more, and I think we're planning to do more, and more benches...

Moderator: What else needs improvement?

(electronic noise, interference, unintelligible.)

I think the people who own businesses on Liberty Street, they feel like the Downtown stepchildren.

Are there pots of flowers on Liberty Street?

Yeah.

Columbia Street has the sidewalks.

Liberty is the backside of the pretty buildings.

There are things we could do.

The lampposts and matching sidewalks, and signage, that would help on Liberty. Make Liberty look a little more like Columbia Street.

I've often wondered, I've been to other communities, and they had committees that made codes for signage, awnings, and all that for new businesses. Is there a standard?

There is a sign standard. And awnings and facades, the DDA has done design recommendations, and they actually loan interest-free money to redo the façade of a building, but you do have to show them your plans before they loan you money.

Awesome.

(agreement.)

Maybe where it comes in is, I see a lot of secondhand shops, and they're not really redesigning.

And even someone coming in and putting up a neon flashing sign, that's a shame that that is allowed to happen.

There is a neon sign in Downtown Farmington.

Moderator: How are business hours?

Not convenient.

People say that nothing's open down here.

I've tried staying open, and people don't show. I rarely shut my door at 5, and sometimes people are happy that I'm open.

But it can't be one business that's open after 5. One business staying open late isn't doing any good. Everybody has to decide.

Even if we did it on one day, like on a Thursday, like at Christmastime, but if you don't really get the word out and cooperate, it falls flat. And we are getting more touristy for the weekends, but most people aren't open on Sundays. I'm not going to open on Sundays if I'm the only one there. I think we're missing the boat.

It's just us and 12 West.

You go to St. Gen, and it's hopping on the weekend and at night.

They have a nice bar atmosphere. There's pubs and music and all that.

And all the shops are open on Sundays.

A lot of antique malls around, they're open on Sunday.

I go shop on Sundays. We pick a town to go to. I think we could really benefit, but we have to get people on board. I don't know how, but I think it's something we should look into.

Moderator: Can you drink Downtown?

You can. I can only speak for myself, but for me to stick around, there needs to be a fun neighborhood place to hang out and have a cocktail, and maybe have music.

Lunch outside, maybe.

What's the rule on alcohol outside?

So you can't walk down the street with a drink. Can you sit outside Firehouse at a table, though?

Yes, because we have an awning there.

And to actually have alcohol outside is not that difficult. The ordinance was changed.

We tried to do that for Country Days, and our parking lot is privately owned, but we didn't request it in time apparently. I assumed that as long as we were on private property, we were okay.

You're at the whim of City Council.

Since that ordinance, though, they've been very generous.

We have done beer...

We had to get permission.

(many people talking at once.)

...liquor licenses are different from event licenses...

Moderator: Does Downtown advertise as a whole to the community, or individually?

Individually. But we want to get some of the Downtown business owners and try to start. We want to cooperate more to highlight the specialty businesses.

What the wine people are doing, they've got the wine trail, and they have a joint map, and if you go to any of their websites, you can click on their map, and I went on a Route to Vin event to St. Gen, and they had a chocolate walk for all the stores that wanted to participate in their downtown. St. Gen has that advantage of having the tourism tax, and they have a concentrated effort on that kind of thing.

We don't have a CBB or matching state dollars. We don't have the same opportunities they have.

Moderator: Do you think you would support a Special Business District tax?

When you say more tax, people lobby who are anti-taxes.

I think we have a Downtown development association board, and part of what we do, we don't have a full-time person to put balls in motion, so that's what we're lacking.

There's a group of 10 people who do everything here.

We try to do Fall Festival, and we kind of pull it off, but it's like a 3-legged dog, and it's hard to get people involved.

You're wearing out the same people.

I have found that if I want something done, I'd rather do it myself.

The DDA doesn't have a director to make things happen.

(agreement.)

For the Downtown tax, we go frequently to Gravois Bluffs, and they have an extra tax, and I still go there.

I returned all my stuff in Washington after I found out there was an additional tax.

I think people look at sales tax differently.

If we had a way to coordinate our efforts...I spend money on advertising, and if there were something really cool out there, we could all pool our money together and do one specific marketing campaign. That's what we're lacking.

Would this be a city-wide tax?

If you could assess a special sales tax, an eighth of a percent or something, that could go toward Downtown marketing, but it won't be much.

Moderator: Lets look to the future of Downtown. Do you envision more of a tourist destination or a place for residents?

Both. I think we could do both.

Wineries do a great job bringing tourism. We should consider working with the wineries. If they have a shop, maybe, that represents all the wineries, we could promote the Downtown and the wineries. And we should hire somebody to house something like that.

I think if we start out working towards being a tourism area, we could grow it into a more residential place. It's a vicious circle. I can't get the basic services I need right now Downtown, but if we build Downtown up for tourists, there's a chance people will be more inclined to live Downtown.

My brother lives in Paducah, and they took all their old buildings and made big condos, and they don't have a grocery store downtown yet, but they're having one put in downtown now because there's a demand.

Someone's got to invest.

These small towns, many have done things like that. We should study them.

(noise, unintelligible)...Surely there's a grant or program out there that we can offer something similar to help people renovate the interior of the buildings, not just the outside. (microphone dragging, background noise.)

Moderator: What other types of businesses would you like to see?

Nightlife. Entertainment options.

We need recreational activity. We have the coffee shop, but we need things to do on the weekends and in the evenings.

I live Downtown, and I love to walk with the girls, but there's nothing to walk to. I relate to what you're saying.

There are a lot of people that you don't want to walk around, though.

That's what I was trying to allude to earlier. One day my car battery went out, and me and my daughter had to walk home, and I was actually kind of accosted by this guy, and I can take care of myself, but it was uncomfortable. You do have to worry about it.

Moderator: What other businesses?

A grocery store, a pharmacy. Ice cream soda fountain type thing.

Cards and different stuff.

Like an old time general store, maybe. That would be the perfect feel for like a Mercantile type store, with like the hard candy and the knick-knacks.

(many people talking at once.)

My girls used to walk down to get ice cream after school, but the kids can't do that anymore, because there's nowhere to buy snacks.

Casey's is about the only place.

Other than boutique shopping.

(many people talking at once.)

A clothing store.

But Farmington's not that big. If there's only 10 shirts, you don't want to be wearing the same clothes as everyone else. A small store won't work.

I can't buy a shirt to wear to work in Farmington.

That sort of thing.

We'd need a bigger selection, because you can't have everyone wearing the same clothes.

(agreement.)

Moderator: *Earlier, you mentioned restaurants.*

That's my idea of entertainment. Upscale restaurants with entertainment. Something that I can do on a date with my wife.

I don't think people that live in Farmington support their Downtown businesses. That's the way I feel. The restaurant does fine, we're small, but I go to Applebee's and it's packed every night of the week. I'd be nervous to open a restaurant here. Our place is never packed, and neither is 12 West. We'd love to have new restaurant, but what's the point if you can't get people in.

I applaud you for doing retail Downtown, because I'd be scared to open retail or restaurant Downtown.

Do a nice park with a gazebo, with concerts, and you could sit out on a patio and drink a beer at one of the restaurants.

It might put it more in people's minds to go Downtown.

You have to work at success. Even big cities like Norfolk, they have that beautiful town, but they still had to market it aggressively. They had to implement Party in the Park. You have to market it together, as a package effort. So that it puts it in people's minds.

It's the same people that work Downtown and visit Downtown, you know, and it's a small percentage of the actual population. A lot of people have the perception that Downtown is too expensive. You have to get people over that.

And we could get people in from surrounding areas, too, who come to Applebee's. They might not know about Downtown.

I see a lot of the same faces Downtown, which is great, but we need more people to draw into that.

I think it's people's perception that there's not enough to draw them Downtown.

They totally bypass Downtown.

There's signs up 221, I'd go to the mall, because that's what I see signs of. How do we capture all those people?

A lot of people don't want to visit people they don't know. You know Applebee's, and you know Wal-Mart.

Moderator: *We've talked about businesses. Let's talk about the look of Downtown. What needs to change?*

It needs to look historic.

The same standards.

If that building comes down across from the bank, who knows what they'll build there?

We need to have historic guidelines for new construction.

There's a lot of other buildings...the building next to me is not in very good shape. The buildings will come down, and when they do, we need guidelines for new construction. And they need to be enforced.

If they're in the process of easing standards for safety...

I don't think they're easing safety standards. They're just making it more reasonable.

If you're in an old building, and the doorway's only 20 inches wide, but new code says it needs to be 24, that's not a safety issue. What am I supposed to do about that?

When I tried to change my building, they wanted me to hire an engineer to change how much fresh air I was bringing into my building, and that was over \$20,000. Only because I was in the historic district did I get a pass on that. It made no sense in a building that old. It's not something you can comply with. Had they not given me that pass, the retail store would not be there right now. Thank god the City was able to do that, but it was a struggle to get to that point. It was very stressful.

There are a lot of blighted buildings Downtown that need attention. Some are occupied and some are not.

And if they don't change the use of the building, they don't have to comply.

We had a contract on the building with the Chinese restaurant, and the City has a lien on it until someone ensures that it's safe. All the stucco would have to come off to check it. We...I can't believe I did it. Their living conditions, upstairs, are horrific. The building is useless. Nobody can buy the building, and it's an eyesore, and it's a slum. I can't believe there's even a restaurant in there that passes health code.

(agreement.)

That building, they were able to put people living up there without meeting any regulations, and poor _____ had to go through crap to live in her building.

(many people talking at once.)

Moderator: *Thank you very much.*

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SECTION III

LOCAL GOVERNMENT, CITY STAFF, AND OFFICIALS DISCUSSION TRANSCRIPT

Moderator: *Tell me a little bit about Farmington.*

That's an easy question.

We've got a jewel.

I think it's pristine. I think it's the ideal place to raise a family.

It's really scenic. It's a very scenic area compared to...

It's 60 miles from all the good stuff and a million from all the bad.

Safe.

It's a nice place to grow up, then go out and see the world, and come back here to raise a family. Good schools, very community-minded, people know each other.

Low crime rate.

Moderator: *Where do people shop?*

Here, and to St. Louis.

And Cape.

I think they do that a lot less than they used to, especially with fuel and all that.

I do a lot here.

Moderator: *Do people come here to shop?*

Oh my, yes.

Yes.

(unanimous agreement.)

It's really time sensitive, because you can go to Wal-Mart and know everyone in there, and at another time of day, they're all people coming from all over.

Same thing with restaurants.

(agreement.)

One other description is that it's a regional center for medical and employment, and then they shop here.

You can see the same people at Ryan's, the movies, and Wal-Mart.

And we've had people visit from Boston, and they were amazed that we have restaurants like 12 West and have some fine food.

Moderator: What are your dining and entertainment options?

Fast food, Pasta House, Applebee's.

Firehouse, Pad Thai, Chinese food.

Mexican.

Two barbecue places.

3 or 4 Mexican restaurants.

And White Castle.

(laughter.)

There's more to do than there used to be.

Bowling, movie theater, water park, civic center, skate park.

Theater.

State parks around here.

Softball.

Good cultural events of different kinds.

Centene Center plus the college do play events.

We have local theater, too.

Some stuff right Downtown.

Moderator: Do you think your Downtown is headed in the right or wrong direction?

Right.

Absolutely.

I don't think there are any finer downtown areas. I think the City has done a marvelous job. Other neighboring downtowns are dead, and this one's just gorgeous.

Moderator: Why do you go Downtown?

I work there.

I eat there.

I eat, antique.

Coffee shop.

Churches.

County Courthouse is there.

I think the Downtown is in transition. It's not going backwards, but it used to be retail, and now it's more financial and governmental. There also used to be more people that live down there.

That's pretty typical. Farmington's maintained a good anchor there, though. And things are good down there. There's so much going on down there.

Christmas parade.

Concerts in the park.

(agreement.)

Moderator: Are there things you used to do Downtown that you don't anymore?

Cruise.

You can't buy clothing or shoes Downtown, which would be nice down there.

We used to have a grocery store.

(many people talking at once.)

We got some specialty shops down there.

There's some vintage items.

We need to find some niche retailers who can do well down there.

(agreement.)

We forgot about the Bauhaus. It was a wonderful coffee house.

There were people that had some really nice apartments above the businesses.

I was just going to say that the challenge for Downtown is that it's done at 5, other than the restaurants. I can't shop until after 5 because I work, and they close up shop. Even if we had like a first Friday where businesses would stay open late, and people could get used to it...

And parking.

Parking is not bad.

If we had more going on, though...

For retail, though...

We did a parking analysis a few years ago, and we took our Downtown to scale with the Wal-Mart parking lot just to demonstrate that they have no problem walking 300 feet at Wal-Mart, why would you have a problem Downtown? We need wayfinder signs.

Moderator: Is Downtown user friendly?

We need to improve parking, and pedestrian things.

Sidewalks were done in the eighties on Columbia.

We need to do the sidewalks on Liberty Street.

And bury the utilities.

I've heard complaints that the signage Downtown is confusing.

Street signs?

Yeah.

And the one-ways and things.

To improve that, we're looking at eliminating the State Highway signs on it, and we did a traffic study Downtown.

I like the new white signs.

We need more of those.

They need to be spread out further, too.

I think the one-way streets work.

I don't know.

3:00, when school gets out...

Everybody wants to go down Columbia, but if you made it 2-way, you'd have traffic jams.

Yeah.

Someone brought up delivery trucks, too. If delivery trucks have to stop, then everything's jammed.

(agreement.)

Sidewalks on Liberty, we automatically think of Columbia, but just doing that simple thing making Liberty looking the same would expand Downtown.

It's the backs of buildings, though.

If you had the right streetscape, though...

You could double-front some of those buildings, with the right streetscape on Liberty.

And the parking lots with doors in the back.

If the owners had some help...

Does Liberty have the same lights and all?

No, it's different.

It's a different feel.

You've got a lot of charm on this street, and then you round the corner, and you're off the track.

In the eighties, we planned to do Liberty, but then the feds cut back on the money.

And we were going to put bricks around the Courthouse.

We're committed now. We're going to repave all of Liberty in 2014, and we have to have everything else done by then.

And we have to look at East Liberty, too, with all the businesses. The storefronts are really old, but if we refurbished those, we could attract new businesses.

There's an old plan that goes way back... the idea was to have another entrance into Downtown, which would create another main drag.

If there were some easier ways to get Downtown, it would draw more traffic.

The one-way streets make pedestrian traffic dangerous.

Moderator: What else would make it more user friendly?

For visitors... a couple weeks ago, there were a few Middle Eastern people by the courthouse, and there was no one around, and it was a Saturday. I told them if they went to the Factory, there's a visitors center, but we either need a more visible visitors center, or we need better signage.

You really have to kind of hunt for it.

On Columbia.

I think those are the only ones.

Something directs them on to A Street...

But there's only 2 on Columbia.

We don't have any content Downtown for tourists. We have signs on the highway that say, "Turn here for historic Farmington." If you have a group of girls that come in on Saturday afternoon, there's absolutely nothing. Nothing's open.

Some things are open until 2.

There's a restaurant in the Factory that's nice, and the coffee shop, and a couple other shops Downtown, but I don't know what their hours are.

That's always an issue with the merchants, when they talk about extended hours.

Which one is it? Are they not open because people aren't there or are people not there because they aren't open?

It would take a big marketing push to let people know.

It would be an expensive endeavor for the businesses.

Maybe we could do a First Friday thing.

And maybe special events at that time.

Moderator: How do people find out about stuff happening Downtown?

Newsletter.

Website.

The Chamber does Friday faxes and their website.

Primarily public media.

There's a nice newer Insider, and it's kind of a magazine...it sort of focuses on a topic, but it's all of 573. I really like it. I think it's very well done. It uses local people for the most part, and it's a nice, newer... we think of our papers and our radio, but this is fresher.

We need to do better with our website. Our DDA doesn't maintain a website, and we're trying to do a better job with the City. We're having ours redesigned to look more inviting.

I think that's a good point, because even having grown up here, there's lots of fun things that you miss out on and hear about later.

Moderator: Do you think there needs to be more residential spaces Downtown?

There's only a few Downtown now.

There's a couple across from us.

That owner's trying to sell.

_____ redid some.

Two problems, though... building codes made it really expensive, and we're going through that amendment now to eliminate some of those barriers, because at the end of the day, you don't have a swimming pool or a garage, so you push rent prices down... if we can eliminate the barriers, though, and get assistance for rehab, we can develop the spaces Downtown. The folks that redid the Presbyterian Children's Home did a great job, and they got funding. Another problem is that the projects will be so small that you can't put in a tax credit for it. We'll have to do something through our TIF.

(agreement.)

Moderator: Who would housing attract?

Young couples or older families. It obviously wouldn't be families with children. It's kind of an urban thing, and we're not really an urban area.

There's some niches for it, though. We could explore the place just off Columbia where we could do some condos or townhouses. If we could get some developers to look. But we're back to the problem of buildings.

If there were grocery stores, or entertainment, that would make it more attractive.

You almost need a small place to get a gallon of milk.

Casey's.

The market does that. You can get sandwiches at lunch, and meat. But I think it's not Downtown, though.

(side conversation with moderator.)

There's nothing to do Downtown other than 12 West or Bauhaus.

But you look at Kirkwood or the Loop, and there's things to do.

The Loop has a movie theater.

Our theater group does shows for about 100 people, and those people are Downtown, but we've had to do special things with the restaurants to accommodate them, but if we had more Downtown like a jazz band or something, do something that would bring some people down...

We made a trip back to the East Coast, and we stopped in Columbus, and there was a theater, and before the show, people came over to the bar. If we had something Downtown like that, even a place where you could show old movies or something, I think if we could get the right idea started, maybe even just once a month, and try to draw people down...

Think about a 12-month program, and you could advertise it ahead of time, and one month could be steel drums, and another could be jazz and blues...

We walk Downtown from our house.

We walk down too.

Do you think the group homes in the Downtown discourage people from going there?

I would not let my children down there.

We have one on Columbia?

And one on D Highway, on Washington.

They kind of wander freely. They don't bother me.

I never have a problem with them.

We get complaints from people, but only because they're not sure of these people. They don't bother anyone.

There's the old guy who smokes a pipe.

He says hi to me every day.

They're harmless.

It's the perception.

People that don't know who they are.

It is a deterrent, because we have the corrections center and the mental health unit and the sexual offense unit.

It's not just Downtown, though. There's group homes where I grew up...

That's happened everywhere. We just got back from Michigan, and it was the same thing.

They're here in the mental health center, and they stay here afterward. They're part of our community.

(many people talking at once.)

Moderator: *Let's focus on the future of Downtown. What types of businesses would you like to see Downtown, or restaurants, or parks?*

I wouldn't have pawn shops or check cashing or those things, because they put out these neon signs, and it cheapens up the area. And the pawn shop density has lowered in Downtown. For some reason, the check cashing places have moved out.

(many people talking at once about pawn shops.)

I'd like to see destination type businesses. Entertainment, a nice place to go eat. A reason to go Downtown other than during the day.

The things that are practical, 12 West makes it possible for another nice restaurant to do well. A little bike shop.

Art galleries.

The way to get Downtown back is to get art in here, because that will draw in people.

(agreement.)

There are a few of these places around town.

A place I went in New York, every storefront is a different artist, and they did great business.

We could support something like that.

The place I went in North Carolina, they had a small art community where you could watch people paint or throw a pot or do stained glass, and they had a sandwich shop, and two museums, and they had a First Friday where you could walk from place to place and have wine, and they rehabbed the buildings and got people to come back Downtown. 12 West is nice, and it's usually pretty full.

If we could get a winery tasting room Downtown or something...there's one place in St. Genevieve that showcases specialty products from Missouri...

Something like a Buffalo Wildwings or Applebee's down there...

Paducah had to lease buildings to people for like a buck a year to make what they did happen.

Some kind of space where people could do music or do something that doesn't need the Centene Center...just something where four guys can come and sing.

That's what 12 West does.

Right, but somewhere bigger where...

Rock House tried it, but...

(many people talking at once.)

Like the Bluenote or something.

You're thinking like a New Orleans kind of place?

Just somewhere where someone, a little group, they're not paid or professional, and they want to play and be heard...

(noise, unintelligible.)

Have someone cater it and someone bring wine to it, and make it a bigger draw. More than just one thing that's attracting people. Make it a bigger package.

Bluegrass and barbecue.

But it takes someone to do it.

There was Nature's Cup, and it was like that.

I'm almost afraid to go to 12 West on a Saturday, because I know it's going to be crowded...

That targeted the young group.

It's really loud, though.

We need to target different people, but it would take working with restaurants and caterers, but we could get them to commit to it.

Another barrier is the church that's right across from City Hall. The Bauhaus can't put in a line of beers because they're within 100 feet of that church. They won't get permission from the church. It's state law.

What about putting some technology Downtown?

(agreement.)

We have people who go to the coffee shop and use the Internet.

They go to the library.

But the library doesn't have coffee. That is...who's going to live Downtown? People come, you think about urban, you think about how appealing that is in certain communities, and they love that. They want a studio. They want to be able to walk down the stairs and do things. There was a time when I would've wanted to live there had there been things to do.

When you get our age again, your kids are grown, if you were close to stores and a drugstore and entertainment, that would be feasible.

You have a lot of talented musicians in Farmington who are looking for a place to get together and play music. They don't charge, they just do it because they want to play.

Wasn't there a group that would go to parking lots and play every Saturday morning?

(many people talking at once.)

We have good radio stations, and I just read an article about some community that was turning old buildings into soundstages, and we don't have huge buildings, but maybe if our radio stations came and some of those groups could come play...

Almost like an open mic.

You could do country one night...

If we could do a concert series Downtown, and close off part of Franklin Street and put a stage out there, and people could go to the coffee shop and 12 West and Bauhaus. Maybe something different each month to draw people Downtown.

I bet people would show up and start playing.

Have you ever heard about Fredericktown, every Friday night on the Square they started out with a small group, and it got so big, and they split to the other side of the Square. I mean, the people is everywhere, lawn chairs, what have you, and it's really neat.

They also have one of the areas on the Square that does dances. I was in the hospital with an 80 year old woman who wanted to get out before Friday night because she wanted to dance. Maybe we need to have a couple of dances.

Moderator: What other communities would you like Farmington to resemble?

I like St. Genevieve. We go down there pretty regularly because of the antiques and shops and restaurants.

Washington.

Kirkwood.

Old St. Charles.

Antiques are something we don't have.

They just opened Hunter and Gatherer.

And Ivy and Twigs.

There's that one on that side, the woman from St. Louis or something.

(many people talking at once.)

I think we need some places that are a little...I love Ivy and Twigs, but there's not a lot I'd buy because it's extremely expensive, but if we had a couple more medium specialty shops, some of the artwork that's showing at the gallery at the Factory, their art's more reasonable, and for the average income in this area, that would be a plus.

I'd like to see a bakery. The one on D Highway is nice.

I just went out there yesterday, and it was closed. It's 9 to 5.

(many people talking at once.)

They have a grocery store and have homemade bread...

Moderator: Any other cities?

Scottsdale, Arizona.

Georgetown, Colorado.

They control what colors on the buildings and the roofs, and it has such a uniform look. It's nice.

Durham, North Carolina has an extremely rigid code, and if you don't know where you're going, you're going to be lost, because the signs are this high, but it's a beautiful area. With this ordinance, to have some control about what goes Downtown so you don't have neon flashing signs and that kind of stuff, that would go a long way, but the flipside is that it could deter some people from wanting to build Downtown.

If you can get it going, it'll feed on itself.

Moderator: What do you think about the look and feel of Downtown?

With the exception of 2 or 3 buildings, our Downtown looks good.

Liberty Street needs some work.

The building right across from the Curves building, and the First Walk building...

Was it a Mexican restaurant?

Yeah.

We did a structural inspection last week on one, and it needs work.

What about the Rock House building? Didn't you say it wasn't structurally...

No, it's sound, but to get it to be a restaurant...it's on Liberty Street, and if someone renovated that, it could be a dance hall or a restaurant, anything. And he wants to sell it.

You could buy it.

He wants a lot of money.

(many people talking at once.)

It's horrendous to heat.

It could be ideal for dances for older people.

We have to think about the skate park kids, all age groups. We can't isolate it and make it like Delmar. I'm not going to take my kids to the Loop. But here, you can have a combination of things to appeal to different people.

We just need a mall. Something for everybody.

Moderator: What should be the highest priority for the City?

I think to increase traffic down there, to establish something to bring people there nights and weekends. We have people during the week, but at 5:00, they pack it up.

We need to work on Potosi Street and North Washington as gateways into the town, and we are looking at that, but when you come in and want to look, when people see Farmington, what they see is cars, because they're passing through. They come in on 32, and all they see is cars. I don't know if there's anything we can do to help, and to encourage people to take the side trip Downtown, that could be helpful.

I agree. I think it's a shame that in the evening, it's just not available to the people who live and work here. I'm also picturing...I was by the Arch on Laclède's Landing, and they had a sign with Mississippi Nights on it, and that was torn down, so signs have to be updated, but some kind of map of Downtown that has permanent structures, maybe. I don't know what we're doing now, but helping people understand what's where in Downtown Farmington, and include Liberty.

The more people know what's Downtown, like when Tipperary opened up in the Factory, I sent emails to my friends to let them know. You ask people nowadays if they know about the new coffee shop Downtown, and they don't know about it. You need to get people Downtown.

We have some big businesses. I think of the mailboxes at the colleges and the hospitals and the checks handed out every two weeks, we could get people to put advertisements and flyers in with the checks.

If you ask if they've heard of the Factory, people go "what?"

And the wineries.

Some people don't know 12 West is Downtown.

If it came from the City, it would carry more impact than directly from the businesses.

(side conversations.)

I think from a marketing standpoint, we need to be thematic. We need to create a singular identity to sell.

Everything that works out has a centralized theme that they're known as. Otherwise, it's just another collection of stuff. Is it going to be antiques, or music, or art, or theatrics?

I think it has to be some kind of niche service. Antiques don't stay open late.

How many of us walk around to all the shops around the Arch in the summertime, and they also have a lot of jazz that comes in, and it's free. You just go sit down, and it's some of the top musicians around that come in to play, and it's free, and they have people that keep this organized... certain people work on certain things to keep this going. You can go out there any Friday evening and you can stay there 'til after midnight and enjoy every minute of it. That's just a little bit of what you can do in Farmington.

Something we've kicked around a few times is some type of children's museum.

Moderator: Anything else?

Nope.

Moderator: Thank you very much.

SECTION IV

NEW RESIDENTS DISCUSSION TRANSCRIPT

Moderator: Tell me a little bit about your community.

It's got a lot of what you find in a big city in terms of shopping and amenities, but it still has that small town feel.

I would say one of the reasons we chose to pursue the business in Farmington is because it still has a vibrant Downtown, compared to most of the rural Midwest small towns.

At the risk of disagreeing, we're still lacking in shopping. There are things that are more available than in surrounding communities, but we still go to South County often.

If you go to Poplar Bluff or Piedmont or St. Gen, though, they don't have the same variety we have.

(microphone interference)... had possibilities because they kept Downtown vital, and people I met were looking to keep investing in their community. A lot of privately owned businesses here, so we haven't been hit as hard by the recessions, since we don't rely on Chrysler or something like that.

We moved into the City limits because of the support of the police department. They do enforce laws and watch out for their citizens.

We're on the verge of getting some major retail on the west side of the highway, which would help our shopping and economy quite a bit. They're talking about a million square feet of retail.

That could be a dangerous thing if we grow too much, it's a detriment to residents, and people want growth, but they're not going to let it overrun them. The town I'm from got overrun, and here, people who are in charge are aware of how not to do that.

One thing that attracted me to here is that Farmington seemed to have a plan, a good City administration that knew how to grow properly. Don't get ahead of your infrastructure, make sure things are thought out, and you don't get the sprawl without planning for it.

We are starting our comprehensive plan update process. We're keeping on top of that plan. It exists.

Being born and raised in Fredericktown, it's broken my heart to see what's happened there without a good administration, a good plan, and the thought that's required about zoning and planning. Farmington's been very smart about their zoning and planning.

I try. It's a very difficult thing to enforce zoning because of the timeframes involved. The notices, and you have to prove that they're violating the zoning code, and that's very hard.

You're doing a good job.

One of the things I'm glad to see as compared to, say, Potosi...they were so afraid of outside business that they're rolling backwards. They've got a brand new industrial park that's empty, because they're afraid that the powers that used to be would have to give up some money. And Farmington isn't like that.

(agreement.)

I think Farmington has done a pretty good job of not allowing that to happen. The decisions are in the best interest of the community.

Moderator: Do people stay in Farmington to shop?

I shop where I can here, and my friends do, but you get tired of going to Wal-Mart, and I hate to give Wal-Mart everything, and I can go to South County, make a day trip, and go to a variety of shops. If you want the variety, you have to leave town.

Absolutely.

Wal-Mart's really the only store that has more than one type of thing in town.

Or you go to Cape for some things.

I hate that drive...and I would like to see more of a variety like that, and some of the names I've heard that are coming out to the west side of town are going to be a good boost, and I don't think they'll strangle the small business.

The west side hasn't moved yet is because they have to get 3 stores to sign. Nobody's expanding.

And our city administrators are not willing to give it away. They won't give the taxes away.

I agree. You don't want to cut your own throat.

With the TIF that's gone into place on the west side, they've got money for the new power substation and the sewage treatment, all the new roads, that's all figured in. All that infrastructure money is already in place to build out there.

They just need the stores.

Moderator: What's really lacking here?

Groceries.

Yeah.

Clothing, home décor. You show up at an event and 2 other people are wearing the same thing.

Electronics.

Bookstore.

Yeah, a Barnes & Noble or something.

Oasis is wonderful, but you want a bigger selection.

I go to South County to go to the bookstore.

If you go up 55 to Lindbergh, you can get everything you want.

And restaurants.

I can sit down in a restaurant there, and nobody's smoking.

It's come up here in City Council meetings, and it's voted down.

People believe there's an invisible magic wall between smoking and nonsmoking.

As a restaurant owner, it's the individual's prerogative.

(agreement from some; disagreement from others.)

We don't have the variety where you can go somewhere nonsmoking.

If I'm going to eat, I don't want to be around it, but if I'm going to a bar, I can live with it. If I'm going to spend \$100 for a decent meal, though...

Moderator: Are there enough restaurants?

No.

You get bored with the selection.

If we have out-of-town people, we go to South County.

I think a nice Cracker Barrel would do wonders here, or a Red Lobster.

An Olive Garden.

Good food at a cheap price.

It'd be nice to be able to buy a steak of salmon that isn't freeze dried and frozen.

Colton's, a nice steakhouse, is going in there.

Yeah.

Awesome.

They're supposed to be nice.

They're like Texas Roadhouse.

Moderator: What do people do for entertainment?

We're in desperate need of a decent movie theater.

I play golf. There's not much else.

Our movie theater's probably about 15 years behind the times in terms of seating and sound.

And selection.

I'd agree with that.

They're still flat on the floor. No stadium seating.

When I pull up at the door, and I see what's up there, and sometimes we'll go all the way up to Ronnie's.

You spend as much time driving as you do seeing the movie.

Moderator: Is there any other nightlife?

Not unless you want to go to a bar.

Moderator: What about recreation?

Water park.

Family fun center for bowling.

And go-carts and all that.

A wonderful park system.

Very nice parks.

I'd like to see more bicycle trails. I used to live in Edwardsville, IL, and they have about 75 miles of bicycle trails.

In Destin, they have a bicycle lane on the highway.

This isn't a bike friendly town.

We put in a grant to put in a bicycle trail...that was about a mile and a half of trail, and we didn't get the grant, but we're trying.

We're close to the bicycle trail of the state park.

That bicycle trail comes up 221?

Yeah.

I know that the Stanley Overall trail winds around Downtown and out to Ingler, but it's all one road.

The one in the park is a separate trail.

It connects to a trail in the City.

Have you ever thought about people still biking or walking, the road is so narrow, and the bike lanes would be nice.

On North Washington, those are both State roads, so we have no control over it.

Until we have an accident, and then it becomes a Farmington issue.

We don't even have police powers on them.

Yeah, you do.

You don't have maintenance on it, though.

They're turning over 221 to us.

Moderator: Let's focus on Downtown. Do you feel your Downtown is moving in the right or wrong direction?

Well, you guys don't know me, but I'm going to put this out there. Downtown Farmington, they've got to upgrade quick. My cousins came here, and I only spent 2 days here before I had to take them up to the City. Stuff don't stay open late Downtown. There's no reason for the businesses to close. At least the First Friday or once a month. The atmosphere is the rich, the "we work here, our business is here, and I'm home." If you have people from out of town, there's nothing to do. Nothing's open.

Since we opened up the coffee house, we've struggled with that. We were open until 8 at night.

My hours are later now.

Everything past 6:00, there's not a lot of reason to stay open, but that's because there's not anything else open.

They've got to promote it. When you come into Downtown, you come along to Columbia, but then it stops. I need some of those flower pots. The bank, and all of the ones along the road. I own Monique's Boutique, and I'm on Liberty. When it's lit up, everything should be lit up, from Washington all the way over to the Fire Station. It should look inviting. The trash cans say "City of Farmington," but it should have our logo, that knight. We have a knight, and he should be posted, and they don't have that. People walking their dogs around here, and I don't know about you, but they don't always clean up the poop, so get some of those things with the bags and the gloves as a hint, and a fine for not cleaning up.

Put a little sign out saying there will be a fine.

I agree that there's not a whole lot to do Downtown, and 12 West has that snooty feel, and after they're done, the whole place is done.

I was going to go next door to Synergics, and I got pregnant with the twins, and that didn't work for me, and we went around the corner, but there are some businesses that are on Liberty that should be on Columbia and vice versa.

Liberty should be treated with the same respect as Columbia. All the money has been spent on the look of Columbia, and I understand that that's the main drag, but Liberty street is like the stepchild. It's not provided the same amount of attention.

And those two streets, and Washington, that's our Downtown. The Library is ugly and back over there...it should be where you can see it. Invest in a knight. His mouth could be the drop-off box. The kids, they're doing 2 things: drugs, speeding, hanging out in the parks, having babies, getting abortions...if you guys don't start doing something for the children down here, the meth is going to stay right here. The parents don't want the kids going to the City because of the distance and because they have to drive back home. I sometimes take 6 kids up to St. Louis the whole weekend. Why am I in St. Louis or St. Charles for the whole weekend, spending money for a hotel?

Moderator: What are the main reasons people use Downtown?

Daytime business.

Employment.

The banks.

The post office, the courthouse.

That's the big traffic generator.

I own Bauhaus Kaffée, right next to the pizza guy.

And that place has drunken kids all the time.

When I was a kid, I had to go out of town for that...

(many people talking at once.)

It still needs to be cleaned up.

People will call me from Cape, and she's in Farmington, and she's at Wal-Mart, and she says she's lost. She can't seem to find our store. She went over on Liberty. She didn't know it was a one-way street. She came all the way up from Cape for some hair.

I usually have to draw a map.

I'm not thrilled about the one-way streets.

The City has done a study on that, and we're addressing it at the next meeting. The suggestion is to go back to 2-way streets. That's what the study said.

To be honest, I can count how many cars go the wrong way, and there's a lot.

Oh yeah.

It's not clearly posted.

(agreement.)

Many downtowns are like that. You go in a circle until you can figure it out. But that doesn't make it right.

They should get some of those awnings. If you go to the Delmar Loop or the Landing, they're hanging from the poles, so people know what businesses are where. It's cheap, and you can get them black, and put the little logo on there.

They did some type of signage, and I asked about being added, and they said no.

(many people talking at once.)

In their defense, they're the ones who got involved, but when it was done, the money was gone.

There's no long-range planning to sustain that.

Moderator: How user friendly is Downtown? What else is difficult other than one-way streets and signage?

I think our crosswalks are bad.

Yeah.

Good place to get hit.

Maybe a pavement change, so you can feel it.

I think where the courthouse is, they should have where people should park over there, so people that want to get to the coffee house, they can get those little buggies and run them every so often. You have more walkers, and you won't have the parking congestion, and people can see where the businesses are.

Parking is a bit of an issue. There's not a lot of it, and the lots aren't in great shape.

And people who run businesses park their cars in front of their businesses.

The ones in disrepair, are they private property?

The City doesn't own any of them. We do have leases on some of them like the one behind City Hall. The one with the fence around it is leased, and the one down by the Factory. I don't know if we maintain that.

(side conversations.)

City ordinance doesn't require that to be paved, if it's private, and we do require that of new construction now, but we can't make people fix what they already have.

Moderator: How's the lighting?

It's only on a certain strip, over there where you pay your light bill there's nothing, and the massage place, the real estate guy, the dental office.

One of my pet peeves is the light poles. If you notice, all of those nice-looking light poles are only painted up so high, and they look like crap the rest of the way up, and the explanation was that they had prisoners doing it and they feared that they'd jump off the ladder.

I understand not letting the inmates do it, but finish the job.

I painted my own light pole, and it took me 30 minutes. When you look at the light poles, they're tacky looking, and they could look nice.

When you come to where Cousins and the police station, have they thought about changing that intersection?

They'd have to if it goes to bi-directional traffic.

If you come there on a Friday at 4:00, there's a little old lady driving but not familiar with that area, and she gets where she's supposed to merge, she doesn't merge. She stops. They blow their horns behind her, and she pulls into my lot, and she just sits there and blocks the way in.

If they close down Main Street like they're talking about, between Harrison and West Columbia, that would solve a lot of that.

That's supposed to close with the new construction anyway, right?

That's part of the plan.

Phase 1 is build the building, but I don't remember the rest.

Moderator: Somebody mentioned business hours. Are the businesses open long enough?

No.

We extended our hours later...I as a customer get frustrated, but it's a ghost town at night.

You have to advertise. People need to know you're open that late. We started out from 6 am to 8 pm, and we haven't seen interest in anything past 6 pm.

First Fridays was a good idea, once a month, but to count on it every night...

When you put that First Friday together, I'll help. You got to go all out. Bring your children and make it a big event.

If we have an event in Long Park once a month, that might help a lot. Concert, entertainment.

The skate park over there, if you go there, do a show, bring coffee and refreshments, there's all kind of ways, but it's just so...

Have a little carnival show.

When you're riding into town and that sign up there with the advertisement, "Downtown Farmington is now open until 8:00." Put it up there. Let people know.

Nothing's open on weekends.

We go to St. Louis on weekends.

We're open from 8:00 until 5:00 on Saturday and Sunday.

I just noticed you were there 2 days ago, I confess.

Moderator: Do you do good weekend business?

We were waiting until after Country Days, but this last weekend was one of the biggest weekends we've ever had, and I think it's because of Country Days.

Have you seen the digital sign Lamar has?

It's expensive.

We'd like to have a billboard coming into Farmington. With the wineries...it could be the first place they stop on the way to the wineries.

(side conversations.)

Do a big trash can for canned goods, and give them a discount on their coffee if they bring some in.

Moderator: Does Downtown advertise?

Does the DDA do any of that?

Hmm...

You do it yourself.

Each one of us business owners talks about how we need a little map or a coupon book or a navigation brochure...when you have people come in and visit, you want to go to the coffee house, you want to have lunch, you want to know where the stores are.

I don't know what my Chamber of Commerce does do for me. They don't do much for me.

I got stuck with 320 dollars worth of candy for Halloween, because the people couldn't find the business. Nobody came by, and I got stuck with all that candy.

We discover Downtown like Lewis and Clark. We go down and look around. There's no guide.

And it will take the businesses taking that initiative.

What's the Chamber of Commerce for, though?

They have good intentions, they just haven't expanded.

If all the businesses get together and meet up with the City, those people that have a little extra money in their pockets, maybe we can all make a flyer to say, "Spend so much money at the coffee house, and get a discount at Monique's." Put something like that out.

In Destin, I tried to go on the Chamber website to find things to do, and couldn't find anything.

Whenever you go some place, you go to the Chamber of Commerce. That's where you expect to find things. And I don't see their website being that compelling.

If somebody comes to my store and asks about getting their computer fixed, I send them down the street. People send people down to me for black hair products. We're all family. Don't try to eat off of everybody's plate, and we'll be all right.

Moderator: Would there be interest in residential living Downtown?

Yup.

Yeah.

I want to move right down there, that big old house on Liberty. I wanted that house bad.

Moderator: What about second-story living?

Zoning is pretty tight on that.

Let me give you a first-hand perspective. There's a lot of potential for it. However, most of that space is not designated as residential, but once you change the usage, the new building codes take effect, and it becomes cost prohibitive. You are held to new construction standards. That's a problem I have. They should take into consideration the historical section of it where the City has the right to waive certain things. So it's all new building. So if they expect to see loft living Downtown, they better relax their standards. Copy the garment district in St. Louis.

My dad has two liquor stores in St. Louis, and we lived right above our stores. I know how it feels to work and live in the building. We didn't have to have a commercial space and buy a house, too. If I could move Downtown and have mixed usage, I'd move in there.

(agreement.)

The hoops I had to jump through were unbelievable to be able to live upstairs. To put your renovations into new construction standards is just insane. Thank god I have a brother who's a civil engineer. I'd have given up. I was rebuilding from the inside, not remodeling. I know there's people interested in some of these buildings.

I was in _____'s building, and the whole floor, I felt I was going to fall through it.

If you're grandfathered in, safety means nothing. If you want to invest, it's so restrictive and so frustrating, and you don't want that mentality.

In Downtown Cape, they're inviting new businesses.

Yeah. You can have standards and code, but the City has the authority to deviate as long as safety is not compromised. I had to spend 40,000 dollars on sprinklers. But there should be compromises that still wouldn't compromise safety.

I'm not in business, but we're posting a whole lot of money on the west edge of town with TIFs, but we're not doing anything for Downtown at all.

Black people don't come to Downtown Farmington.

No one does.

There's no incentive here to start up, but there's incentives on the west side of town.

Farmington did a great thing in creating that historic district, a one-inch step in a one-mile walk. They give you no information about the historic tax credit. The poor lady with Curves jumped into that thinking it would be a simple process, and now she's going to have to tear her building down. The city needs to invest in consulting on how to exploit the tax credits. If the DREAM initiative really wants to help, help them with that. They don't spend a dime on helping people make this a reality. Nobody around knows a dang thing about it.

They should hire me to work on the committee. Right now, the teenagers will not come... I love the police, but the kids do not want to come Downtown because the police station is there and there's nothing to do. If there were something age-appropriate, the kids will start to come Downtown.

Moderator: Let's think about the future of Downtown. Are there types of businesses you'd like to see Downtown?

Bicycle shop.

Bookstore.

There's a dog grooming parlor right next to me now.

Upscale retail.

You know the feel of Delmar, where there's families pushing strollers, and there's couples, and there's old couples, and there's all nationalities...

And there's window shopping, there's actual shopping.

There's beads and all kinds of stores.

I have a whole line of clothing. Come into my store.

Kind of like down on the Landing, except for the bars, but some outside seating and some stores.

A neat little art gallery, a place they read poetry, that atmosphere.

Change the pavement. Slow everybody down, and they'll look.

Right now, with the one-way street, you're just in self-defense.

And they drive fast.

And people think Columbia is the local drag street, because it's big and wide open.

And they don't have a night over there...years ago, you could go drive on the Riverfront, and you could park your cars there.

They have their car show in the Wal-Mart parking lot. The classic cars.

Why is it all the way at Wal-Mart? Why not Downtown?

Because it's a one-way street.

But what about the big parking lot?

I'd go.

Me too.

Moderator: What about restaurants?

A place to have lunch under umbrellas.

Barbarino's is missing an opportunity.

Catering too much to the kids.

That could be a cute outdoor patio.

Put in some music.

I've had people ask me...

That place has such tremendous potential.

I wanted to have a block party in my parking lot, and I called the police to let them know, and the guy said, "You know everything closes at 5:00," and I said, "That's why I'm having this! So people don't go home!"

Moderator: What else could be Downtown?

I don't know if the McDonald's out there on the highway, they have these old bluegrass folks who play there, and why can't they play at the courthouse? They have that in Fredericktown.

Why are they going to these fast food restaurants?

They can drink all the coffee they want, so they get together...

If they're at a certain age, give them a VIP card, and give them refills at your coffee shops.

There's no reason they wouldn't sit on the courthouse steps.

It's County property, so the commissioner needs to approve it.

They need to have a block party for kids, with a band and all that, to promote safety.

That won't be bluegrass for the kids.

(laughter.)

We need to do outreach for the kids.

Moderator: What else about the way Downtown looks?

They made Columbia look nice. Why don't they do that on Liberty Street?

The parade, it stops... what about the people on Liberty? The Country Day parade should go all the way down to the Catholic Church and come around. They just cut off and forget that there's businesses down there.

It's got to stop somewhere.

But cover the whole Downtown. When you have the St. Patrick's parade in St. Louis, you go all the way down Market to Broadway.

It's not that long a stretch here.

Yeah.

I would like to see Liberty Street to get some of the attention Columbia's gotten.

So it's not just a drag, it's a Downtown.

And completing the beautification with the baskets and the banners. On Jefferson, there's the holder for the banners but no banners.

A lot of the shops on Liberty, the mechanic shop and the donut shop... (noise, unintelligible)...stuff needs painting.

Yeah.

Some basic building maintenance.

The donut shop, they've got good donuts, and if you want a donut, there it is.

But there's a big patch of weeds next to it.

Liberty street isn't real pedestrian friendly.

I hang clothes out and run sales and all that.

But away from your plaza... it's not too friendly.

All the banks are backing up against it.

Whoever the zoning guy was back then.

It wasn't me!

Isn't something going in at Rock House?

A sign company.

It should've been a club, and I should've had it, and we should've had Thursday night for grown folks, Friday for teenagers, Saturdays with the coffee guys, Sunday for jazz.

There's still some space left in there.

Moderator: Are there other downtowns that you admire?

Kirkwood.

Yeah.

Isn't it real narrow?

Yeah. It's 2-lane traffic.

And the train runs through there.

And you can park off street and walk all the shops. And there's a sidewalk, so you're not going to run over.

They have a clown out on weekends doing things for kids.

More street vendors might help some of our foot traffic.

Our hot dog vendor, he's got it right. He's the buzz of town.

In the town I used to live in, we had a popcorn vendor, and she did a bang-up job. That went over really well.

I don't want to beat your office yet, but...

I just enforce what's been put in place. That's all I do. All I do is enforce that book. If we want to change the rules, we need to talk to City Council. All I do is enforce. I don't write the rules.

...this Christmas, the same decorations they put on Columbia, they need to put on Liberty, go up to the Coffee House and all that. I'm going to be very upset if that Rock House gets all that and we don't. Then I'll know it's a who's-who thing.

Moderator: Thank you very much.

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SECTION V

LONG TIME RESIDENTS DISCUSSION TRANSCRIPT

Moderator: Tell me a little about your community.

Pride. We have pride. It's a beautiful town, beautiful hills, nice Downtown with brick sidewalks, we keep improving.

I ran a survey a couple years ago, and 99% of the people said they liked the people and the whole town feel.

(people arriving, many people talking at once.)

I would describe Farmington as very friendly. Even though we might not know each other, we'll help each other.

It's great to hear that. There was a period way back where Farmington was considered to be very cliquish, and it's wonderful to see that that's long in the past.

I'd like to expand on that...I think that the biggest thing that impresses me is that it's family friendly, because of the soccer fields, the water park, the civic center. Being an old Navy wife, that sticks out.

I moved back after a 30-year absence, and I wanted to come back to small town values and a place that was friendly. I had a wonderful childhood.

So many young people go away, and they come back here to bring up their children. A lot of wonderful young men have come back here.

Moderator: Are things headed in the right or wrong direction?

Right.

We need to emphasize on our Downtown more. It's beautiful, but we have trouble keeping people in stores because something's going wrong. Part of it's the hours, part of it's the parking, and the atmosphere is coming back, we're getting some restaurants Downtown. The lady that had the candy store, I don't know if she owned that building, but if we could get somebody that produces chocolate candy, it would help everyone.

The new courthouse annex has approved tremendously the Downtown area. I have to do the appraisal work on the existing properties, and the ones that were there really needed to go, and they opened this big parking area, but today's shoppers want to go to Wal-Mart with a monstrous parking lot. If you want to create business Downtown, you need to create a lot of parking space.

A lot of the old architecture is still good, and the old restaurant or coffee shop over there, they did a lot of work over there. You ought to see it.

Moderator: Where do people shop?

Wal-Mart.

Farmington has a problem that Wal-Mart and a few other stores have sucked the life blood out of Downtown, and I see Downtown as an alternative choice. Create a tourist destination. We're trying to turn it into a historic district, and we've got restaurants and a nice coffee shop. We want another sort of shopping. Towns that are unable to address this problem, their Downtown dries up.

We don't have anything Downtown for women, and we used to have clothes, shoes... and we have plenty of parking Downtown, but people will go to Wal-Mart and walk miles to get across the parking lot.

It's a psychological thing.

We used to have women's shoes and dresses.

If you build up enough stores.

Wal-Mart's better pricewise.

That's why you have to offer something different for people with discretionary income, to buy a nice meal, a piece of artwork, a nice blouse...

Specialty.

I try not to shop at Wal-Mart when I can, and I've been Downtown this week for Plumbers, the bank, 12 West, the Holy Grails...we need to support the old coffee shop, too...and the post office. I think, "I could go out to Wal-Mart and buy bathtub caulk," but I go to Plumbers because I can talk to the guy.

You can say what you want about Wal-Mart, but don't believe that that hasn't been a big factor in the growth of Farmington. They've drawn business and people from miles around. We need to get them to drive Downtown, though. Don't criticize what you have Downtown.

But there's towns all over this country that Wal-Mart comes in and puts a lot of businesses out of business, and it's been good for Farmington, but we've got to find a way to replace those businesses.

I have a friend in Terre-de-Lac, and my daughter lives in St. Louis, and they came here, and they couldn't find anything, and they didn't know how to get to the Factory, and she wanted a map or brochure to find the antique shops and those things. I think Farmington is beautifully situated, and those people that are tooling around and visiting, they want to see the little city.

My daughter and I have a little frame shop in the Factory, and we get customers from Fredericktown, Arcadia, Bismarck, Potosi, St. Genevieve, Irontown...so things are drawing people here. I think the music store is a real asset. I think the pottery shop out on D, that's a good thing. If we could get things like that...a ladies upscale clothing store...

I've been around in the surrounding counties, and our medical facilities draw doctors and patients, and when people come to Farmington for medicine, they're going to do some shopping.

Yeah, there's people from everywhere. You're talking about having a map of Farmington, and maybe we should put all the medical facilities on it.

There's a tourist center in the Factory, and that should be part of the Chamber of Commerce. He has maps of the winery loop, of information about Farmington. A lot of good stuff. Historical memorabilia.

That should be put in a brochure, and should be sent out to every business around here. Like Branson.

We used to go to the hospital convention at the Lake, and we'd go to all the antique shops and specialty shops. We have the Jackson Square antique place, and I like it. You can browse around.

Moderator: What about dining and entertainment?

Go to the wineries.

Camping, fishing.

We've got a lot of motel rooms, and you've got Arcadia Valley, and St. Genevieve county, and the wineries and all that. Make this a hub, and advertise the parks and the Elephant Rocks and all that stuff to see within a short trip.

One of the resources I was really glad to see an article in the paper about is horseback riding. Kids can go for their lessons and the summer camps.

(agreement.)

There's two enormous businesses north of town that sell horse-related things.

What businesses draw people Downtown?

The banks.

The music store.

Restaurants.

Plumbers.

We need sit-down restaurants. Everything we have is fast food.

We have 12 West.

Firehouse Grill.

A Chinese restaurant.

What's considered Downtown? Liberty, Columbia?

Yeah.

Downtown Farmington is zoned as central business, but the zoned area of central business would be considered Downtown.

The art gallery in the Factory is very impressive.

Do they need to expand Downtown?

I don't know. I would like to see some large apartments built in the Downtown where people can live, walk, shop.

I get involved in a lot of this because I appraise this, and there's going to be two prime spots, the old Medical Clinic Facility...it became functionally obsolete, and that's a prime location for apartments or something like that, and also the old church property across the street has been for sale for years. They're functionally obsolete, and it would require expense to tear it down, but the City's in the process of doing it with the new fire station.

That needs to be done.

Those are several prime corner spots that could enhance...

But that takes money.

(many people talking at once.)

Moderator: What about recreation?

There used to be entertaining stuff by City Hall.

Country Days.

You have community events. Fredericktown is starting to have country music around the courthouse, and that's gone well in Mountain Home, Arkansas, and that's brought in a lot of people on weekends.

They have Country Days...

They used to have music in the park sometimes, but they don't.

There's little stuff, but it doesn't draw stuff Downtown.

The entertainment... I would rather go inside to the air conditioning than sit out in the park and have bugs.

I don't think that that will draw business Downtown...yeah, actually, it would. They'd go to eat.

That theater group postponed their start in Downtown Farmington. That would've been kind of what we're talking about.

They had it last year, right?

That was a different group.

A candy store would be great, if they're making candy three nights a week. What you want is something going on all the time.

We don't have it like Gatlinburg, Tennessee, they make their own candy and ice cream.

Moderator: Is Downtown user friendly?

No.

That's part of the problem.

You can't change 'em.

They open and close at their convenience, not the customers'.

The biggest thing about Downtown, if one proprietor or two, they're ready to go home at 5:00, and no one caters to the after 5:00. You almost have to have two parties involved for each business. Even if they opened at 9:00...for some reason, people don't want to work more than 8 hours a day.

What businesses would benefit with different hours?

A supermarket. You can't buy a bottle of milk Downtown, except at Casey's. There's nobody, if they want to live Downtown, there's no place to buy groceries.

The little donut shop, and that place sells out every morning.

If you can't get there by 8:30...

They do a good business.

They have good stuff.

The idea of getting to trying to get people to live Downtown, you're not going to get investors for that unless you have groceries and stuff like that.

How many loft apartments do we have Downtown?

There's a few.

There's four over there.

The guy from 12 West lives up there above 12 West.

(many people talking at once.)

If would have to be nice loft apartments.

Like the Central West End in St. Louis.

Right.

(side conversations about buildings developers could use for apartments.)

...they want to sell all 3 together...

...the expense would be prohibitive...

...that would be a great place for some upscale apartments...

There's a lot of people that would have to buy groceries.

I've dealt with all kinds of housing, and there's a lot of people at Presbyterian Hospital that walk Downtown, and in that respect, I don't think Downtown's very friendly. The sidewalks and lighting are better, but there's so much that you can't get down there. If there were groceries or a market or a ladies clothes store, there's a lot of them that walk. And with the addition of the children's home and senior apartments, you've got to anticipate that those people will walk, but there's nothing for them to do.

We've got benches Downtown.

Those are nice.

I rode a scooter Downtown the other day, and I got out, parked it, and sat down on the bench, and watched the traffic. People used to do that, and they love it. You don't see too many people sitting on our benches.

Moderator: What other things might also be offered Downtown?

Soda fountain, ice cream shop.

Candy store.

It's got to be fun.

Good arts gallery.

Specialty-type stores.

(many people talking at once.)

Art gallery.

Painters outside on the street, to draw people.

That's a good idea.

...they bought the Butterfield's building, and they were ready to expand it, and the City was getting in the way every direction they went. They just wanted to have another entrance off of Columbia and expand Butterfield's.

They go overboard on all of that. There's several contractors from nearby towns, because the ordinances go overboard.

Moderator: Is it hard to start a business Downtown?

It's easier now. We went through a cycle. The guy who owns the bowling alley will not build another thing in Farmington. He built a nice big thing in Bonne Terre...

Everyone should have applauded the Factory, and the guy who redid the Factory, every step of the way, there was something we had to fight through.

Or spend extra money for.

That's what happened to the Whitman building Downtown. I don't know the story, and there's two sides to everything...

I know what happened to that building. I was with _____ who wanted to do the building, and she wanted to take it back to the way it looked years ago, and what happened is when she ripped all that metal off, and they'd torn the bricks off. And the building was going to rot inside. And now she's underwater on the thing, because she's got so much money in the building, and she can't afford to fix it up. And now there's talk about tearing the building down, and what do you replace it with? The DDA is trying to develop a look for Downtown that's similar to...take Farmington back to look like 1910, 1920, and the Whitman building is too far gone to do anything with, but instead of tearing it down, I'd like to see the façade kept and build a brand new building behind it. You keep the same cityscape... or you replicate the façade. But keep the façade, repair and restore it, and you can do that, and build a brand new building. You could put wi-fi, apartments, retail, whatever you want to do. The DDA is trying to make sure the Downtown look moves forward, that we bring merchants, but we're looking for a cohesive look. People come here for the historical aspects, too.

About 10 years ago, they hired someone, a group of college students, architectural students, and they had a study and they did drawings to do what you're talking about.

We've been working on that, and the DDA has a façade loan fund, and we've had very few applications, and the ones we've had aren't for a full redo, and we have limited funds at the same time. There are buildings Downtown that need major overhauls, though.

My son lives in Naperville, Illinois, and around their Downtown is residential, and the City passed ordinances that you have to replace the old architecture. And it's beautiful.

That's another option.

I like both ideas. Who do you get interested in something like that?

Having been on City Council for 13 years, there seems to be a double-standard with enforcement, but if you're putting in a subdivision or a set of apartments on the outskirts of town, the City planner will bend over backwards for you to be able to do that. But if you want to take an old structure and make it viable, you do have one hurdle after another to overcome.

Why?

I don't know. I ask that question several times.

When I was on the City Council, I was involved with passing an ordinance... a few years ago, we had these free-standing aluminum things, and they'd put them right on the edge of the sidewalk, and they worked up an ordinance to say that people could not put a freestanding structure past the back corner of their house, and it slapped me in the face, because in the 1930's, my father built a gazebo in our backyard, and my daughter managed to get the roof of that gazebo, and we were going to construct it in our yard, and the City inspector went by and denied it. It was not out past the steps of the front porch. But they said we had to move it. So, Daddy's gazebo roof, we had to relocate it, and we didn't want special treatment, but we're moving it into the backyard. With that big old yard, it would've looked beautiful. But it meant aluminum carports, not historical gazebos.

Every month, there are appeals for a builder to be able to replant a subdivision because they built on somebody else's property line.

It's like there's no common sense involved.

Moderator: How do people find out about things going on Downtown?

Word of mouth.

Very poorly. Our newspaper does a very poor job. It's pathetic. A town with 16,000, and it's not really our paper.

They talk about Bismarck and Bonne Terre and all that, but Farmington's paying for all the ads, and they never mention Farmington.

We have the radio, but that just covers part of it. I agree about the advertising.

Yeah.

(many people talking at once.)

The City fathers do a good job, but the thing is, let's take Ozark Village. There's an entrance that comes into Farmington from the winery, and there's cars parked there that hasn't moved for years. Why doesn't the City do something about that?

(agreement.)

Generally speaking, if somebody lets them know, they'll do something about it. We had a yard in our neighborhood with grass that was 18 inches high. But you have to report it.

And no one wants to be the guy who rats on your neighbor.

There should be someone riding around looking for things.

I'd love that job.

Moderator: What are some things you'd like to see Downtown in the next couple years? Even beyond new businesses, what types of restaurants and parks and whatever you want.

I'd like to see a shuttle service from the wineries to the motels Downtown. St. Genevieve gets the lion's share of the winery traffic, and they're actually closer to Farmington. If the whole area was like a destination. If you didn't have to worry about a designated driver or driving drunk because there's a shuttle service...

Crown has something like that, but he's pretty selective.

If we could get him to cooperate, that's fine, but we might need shuttles in addition to his. He wants to tout his own place and make it easy to get to his place but not the others. It's his deal, and he's paying for it.

How does St. Genevieve pay for its shuttle service Downtown?

If the wineries just had a big pot to pay for a service like that...

I've talked to a couple people, and the wineries might contribute partly, but a lot of the benefit would fall to Farmington. If we got a shared deal...

How many of you have gone to Tipperary in the Factory, that's a lovely restaurant. She has a great menu. It's an Irish tea house. It's really good. It's a little restaurant with the partitions, and it's just great.

Moderator: What else would you like to see?

An ice cream shop would be great.

What about winter, though? That's seasonal.

A bakery shop. Because _____ sells out.

Moderator: What about the streets and the green spaces and stuff like that?

That's improved greatly in the last few years, and the flowers...

It wasn't very walker friendly, and it's improving steadily.

I was involved with Country Days, and we had a horse and buggy, and we had a lady go up Columbia Street and talk about the old houses, and the ladies dressed up having tea on the street. Stuff like that we ought to do more of.

The house tour.

There used to be tours of Long House.

They were open this year, too.

During Country Days.

It takes somebody that's going to bake the cake, not just people wanting it.

Yeah.

Some people don't have the money to even plan and try to think about it.

Moderator: Are there living options near Downtown?

The Children's Home has some apartments, and they're nice. That's low-income.

You can't have more than \$35,000 in resources.

They're beautiful.

Another undeveloped resource is, I've been above the store in the corner there, Morris Brothers, the space up there is wonderful, and you could make beautiful condominiums. That's the case with a lot of stores. They could turn into loft apartments. But for people to live Downtown, there needs to be more for them to do.

You talked about a shuttle bus for the region, to the winery. What about a local, 5 or 6 block thing...

You could have the same shuttle, in between, it could take people from Maple Valley to Downtown and around Downtown, like a little minibus.

(Side conversations about individuals.)

_____ ran out of money. And he won't put any more money in his building.

There's an antique shop there.

And that's the kind of thing that brings people to Farmington.

That's an ugly side, though.

You could restore that beautiful Walkover Shoe ad from 1910 or so.

Part of the problem with this ordinance thing, I live in an old house, and some of the things you need to do aren't the same as with new places. You can't bring them up to code according to code as the City stated it. The code needs to be friendly for old buildings.

But don't codes need to be brought up to date?

This is part of the frustration, though. The codes aren't friendly.

The Butterfield's building has been there a long time, and they've been in business at least 10 years, and they've done beautifully with the business, and they really wanted to do something else and expand that business, and the City blocked them every direction they went.

I'm on the planning and zoning commission, and I was probably someone that was kind of responsible for that, because they wouldn't tell us what they wanted to do, and they wanted to bring out a driveway too close the stop sign, and they were very vague about what they wanted to do. But the biggest thing was the traffic issue. Their driveway would've been 4 cars back from the stop sign.

That section there is a nightmare.

You want to know what could be done to make Downtown more user-friendly? Make the traffic better during peak times.

People are peeling off on side streets to avoid that stop sign down there. You don't need a traffic light.

You just need somebody directing traffic.

Moderator: What's the highest priority for Downtown?

Money making business of some sort. And I think the hours. Closing at 5:00.

Well, we worked on that for years, though.

I don't care. We should work on it again.

You've got to have business to justify keeping the hours.

(many people talking at once.)

It's a real Catch 22, because if you don't have any customers...

They're keeping the Factory open until 7.

But there's a lot of businesses there.

It's not like Plumbers. I feel sorry for them. They're fine people, and they're so dedicated.

I think Plumbers is getting by, but I'm not sure they're doing well.

If it wasn't for a bunch of people who feel loyal to Plumbers, that's what's keeping Plumbers going.

I go to Plumbers all the time.

If we look at some of the things that do bring people Downtown, that silly indoor walking track at the Factory brings people. I'd rather go down there and walk, because up here, you feel like a rat. There, you can look at stuff.

I'd want to stop and look at all the stores.

And if it was marketed right, that skate park... I have relatives in St. Louis County who drive down here to go to that skate park, because there's nothing up there like that. They found out about it from a magazine article, and there's parents that drive them down there.

It's one of the best skate parks in about 100, 150 miles.

People from Cape come up here, too.

We have some good things we could build on.

We're poor in marketing.

One thing that we've got, when _____ first opened her store, she was amazed about how many people came from St. Louis. It's a major marketing tool we aren't using. To make this a day trip or a weekend trip for people from St. Louis...

And if they could get on a shuttle...

A motel or hotel near Downtown would help, too.

The airport is going to help us a lot. We have a screen with a little history of Farmington when people fly in.

The airport is super.

And see, our Ingler Park, if you have kids or grandkids, if you ever go out there when there's a soccer match, there are thousands of cars. They come from all over.

Moderator: What other downtowns do you admire?

I like St. Charles.

Prairieville. They're one of the more aggressive older downtown. They've got concrete streets and brick sidewalks, and they've revamped everything.

I agree.

Boulder, Colorado impressed me. There's certain parts of the old downtown that you can't even put a car on, it's all walking, and they've got big wide steps that go up to the second floor of businesses, and it's really nice.

St. Joe's has closed off a couple blocks to traffic, and the stores are in the courtyard. Restaurants, hotels...

Downtown Springfield tried the same thing, and it didn't work.

With the courthouse and the post office, that wouldn't work for us.

Because they're what's helping save Farmington. Marketing is one of the main things. If we had brochures of our Downtown...we need to tie in all the stuff we've got here.

I don't think a lot of the local people know what's going on at the Factory Downtown. They have a ceramics shop, and kids can make gifts for mom and dad, and they've got the art gallery, and they're setting up an artists studio, and there's all kinds of stuff down there.

There's not hardly a town of this size that isn't going through the same thing we're going through. Festus, Crystal City, Poplar Bluff, Cape Girardeau...everything moves towards the highways. Any town I know of, they're all having the same problems. Everything's moving toward the highways. Sikeston. Their downtown areas are not what they used to be, and what you do to restore them...

St. Charles, Illinois, near Chicago, what they did...they provided parking behind the stores, and we've got lots all over the place. They've got alternative businesses that cause discretionary income to come into town. What are the shopping mall type businesses, and put things that aren't like that Downtown. Restaurants, art galleries, funky little stores, a charming Downtown with wonderful little storefronts.

Geneva and St. Charles know what they're doing.

St. Charles has got the hotels, the restaurants, the boutiques. It's not interfering with banks and post office and stuff.

But I think the two could probably coexist in an atmosphere that wouldn't dampen... the people who would come to town for a tourist destination would come in on weekends, not when the banks are open.

There's probably a lot of funding, and we probably have no one looking for these opportunities.

There are funds, tax credits for working on a building, and there's money available, but it's not sufficient for the work than needs to be done.

(agreement.)

I want to ask a question. Are the Downtown businesses going broke? Are they making any money?

There's businesses Downtown... I mean, look at Friends of Country, I don't think they're doing so bad. But they're not shopping center type businesses that do well. I think there are some on the edge, but...

We need a bookstore.

Our bookstore doesn't have a broad enough range.

They go to the big bookstore up in South County.

We don't have the turnover down here, and who reads books anymore? Everybody's got computers and everything. Just like the newspapers going out.

I think, and I've heard many women say this, when I go Downtown, I get the nicest feeling that I live in this town. The trees are there, the businesses are neat, there are very few empty buildings, and it's a charming place. We need something that will make them stop. We've got plenty of traffic going down there. If they're not making money...

I think part of the problem is that we're not drawing people in from outside in sufficient quantities.

I think the first thing we need to do is to get stuff for people from outside. We need to get the message to them.

Is Country Days any benefit to Downtown?

No. It hurts the stores.

But wait. They don't expect to do any business that day, but it reinforces the message of Downtown.

I know people who have moved here because of Country Days. I think it does pay off.

The Downtown businesses, they don't have business that day.

But you have to look at the whole picture.

Personally, I think the shuttle, advertising, and to try to get, whether it's someone that plays the guitar or little music groups to play in Long Hall or on the courthouse steps. If there was something there weekly or something. The parking lots, the little individual lots, need to be lit better and marked so people know they're there.

There's a plan for that.

The back entrance needs to be improved.

There's plans afoot to develop all those, but you'd need nice-looking back entrances.

The parking lot across from the fire station is beautiful.

That's sort of the prototype.

I thought of the words tourist commission...maybe there ought to be a committee or an arm of the Chamber that looks at getting people to visit. There's no concerted effort.

The Downtown Farmington Organization was supposed to be doing that.

I'm a member of that. It could be a committee within that. There ought to be a tourist commission of some sort.

(many people talking at once.)

Moderator: Is there anything else?

Going back to the music makers, I think that's a potential real draw, and as an example, there's a worthless old building in Columbia, Missouri, and there was a high school music group that wanted to use that. They play rock music, and they had no place to practice. From that, now, it has become a venue that draws 10 to 15,000 people who pay money to come and listen to music.

Another idea, every once in a while a church will come to the Factory to have a bake sale. I know the schools have fundraising things for the bands and school trips. Temporarily, until there was someone that wanted a business Downtown, what about taking an empty building, and open it up as a space for fundraisers to draw people into town.

We used to do that with Lions Club.

(agreement.)

Hermann did that.

(many people talking at once.)

That's the kind of thing that would bring people in. Kind of like the farmer's market.

I wish the farmer's market was Downtown.

I think you've done a great job with it.

I want to tell you something. The farmers are farmers, and we give them a dinner every March with money that we don't use, and it came up last March that one of them wanted us to move here or there, and the master of ceremonies said, "Do you want to move?" and every one of them screamed, "No." I can be for it, and my co-manager, she would like to move, but there is a problem that we are so settled there. All we need is a little advertising. Last year, when we started, we kept track of what each farmer brought in, and the first year, they took in a total of 15,000 dollars, and last year it was 82,000. You can see why they don't want to move. A lot of cars go by there. I wish I could say yes, but they even have come down on Fall Festival...

The courthouse parking lot would be a good place for that.

When they first started the annex, I thought farmer's market was going to use that back space.

They talked about that. And who knows, at some time, we might be able to do it...

The Mennonite store out there, they draw people way out there, and if it were Downtown...

Oh, yeah!

(many people talking at once.)

Moderator: Thank you very much.