

MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning Spring 2004
11.945 Springfield Studio

Team 1: Economic Activity

In your tour of the District, keep the following questions in mind (and please add your own!). You should also use this visit to inventory and document conditions for the existing conditions analysis with digital photos, mapping of key assets, sites, conditions, and recording and organizing data for further analysis.

Business Mix and Economic Roles

1. What share of activity is retail (convenience vs. comparison)? service? production?
2. What concentrations of the same or related businesses exist? Do existing or potential supplier relationships exist?
3. What and where are the anchor or destination businesses that bring many people?
4. Is the district divided spatially by type of uses or businesses?
5. From your observations, what is the market/clientele for the area and major businesses clusters? To what extent are the markets local or export-oriented?
6. How would you describe the area's economic role?

Sustainable Issues and Opportunities

7. Which individual firms or business types appear to pose the greatest environmental risks or problems to the neighborhood?
8. Are there signs of waste disposal problems? Good recycling or water reuse practices?
9. Do the buildings that house economic activity indicate sustainable practices? Are there ways to move toward "green building" practices?
10. Are there related businesses or uses that suggest opportunities for industry ecology applications?
11. What businesses and economic uses in the district might provide significant employment and/or business ownership opportunities for residents?

General

12. What do you see as the area's two or three greatest economic and environmental challenges?
13. What do you see as the two or three best opportunities to improve the area's economic impact for the neighborhood?
14. What connections do you see between economic development and the environmental characteristics of the area?
15. If you could only do one thing to improve the long-term sustainability of the area, what would it be?

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Team 2: Environment Conditions

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Natural Resources

1. What are the predominant ecological features?
2. What is the type and condition of plantings such as street trees, parks?
3. What is the condition of the ambient air?
4. In general, what is the condition of the local environment?
5. Are there critical ecological features to restore or protect?

Buildings and Streetscape

6. What is the condition, indoor and out, of the local buildings vis. hazardous materials, odors, ventilation, daylighting?
7. Are there signs of waste disposal problems? Good recycling or water reuse practices?
8. Are there important historical or cultural aspects of the built environment?
9. What is the aesthetic impact of the built environment?
10. Is there evidence of use of green building or other sustainable practices? Are there opportunities to move toward “green building” practices?

General

11. What do you perceive as the two or three greatest economic and environmental challenges facing the District?
12. What do you see as the two or three best opportunities to improve sustainable development practices in the area?
13. What connections do you see between economic development and the environmental characteristics of the District?
14. If you could only do one thing to improve the environmental quality of the District, what would it be?

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Team 3: Land Use and Transportation Conditions

In your tour of the District, keep the following questions in mind (and please add your own!). You should also use this visit to inventory and document conditions for the existing conditions analysis with digital photos, mapping of key assets, sites, conditions, and recording and organizing data for further analysis.

Vacant Lots and Buildings

1. How many vacant land sites and building are there in the district? Where are they located? What is their condition and approximate size?
2. Is there evidence that they are brownfield sites (past use, adjacent uses, materials at the site)?
3. Which sites appear to be reuse/redevelopment priorities? Why?
4. What ideas come to mind for these sites? How can reuse advance sustainable development?

Land Uses

5. What are the major land uses in the area?
6. Does it look as though people live and work in the area?
7. What percentage of activity appears to be Residential? Retail? Service? Production? Governmental/Institutional? Open Space/Recreation? Vacant?
8. Are there any parks or open space in the study area? What is their condition? How are they used?

Transit

9. What bus and train lines serve the area? How far are they from the major business areas?
10. What is the condition of bus and transit stops? Do they appear to generate any environmental problems?
11. What are the pedestrian connections to bus and transit stops?
12. Is there commercial activity in or connected to the bus and transit stops?

Pedestrian Activity

13. Do you feel comfortable as a pedestrian in the area?
14. Are there good pedestrian connections throughout the area?
15. How easy is it for someone in a wheelchair or pushing a stroller to navigate the area?

General

16. What do you see as the area's two or three greatest economic and environmental challenges?
17. What appear to be the two or three best opportunities to advance sustainable development practices related to land-use and transportation?
18. What connections do you see between economic development and the environmental characteristics of the area?
19. If you could only do one thing to improve the long-term sustainability of the area, what would it be?