

Meeting Summary

The consultants met with a group of people from the Town that represented business owners, residents, the Town, neighborhood groups, adjacent municipalities, and the Steering Committee to discuss the current perception of the Town, both internally and externally, and its overall appearance. As part of the meeting, participants identified areas in which the Town could approve its appearance from both marketing as well as a property maintenance perspective. The results of this meeting are summarized below.

What are some attributes contribute to the town's identity or make it stand out?

- Affordable housing
- The lake
- Irondequoit Bay
- Durand Eastman Park
- House of Guitars
- Sea Breeze
- Medley Center
- Marinas
- Titus-Cooper neighborhood
- St. Paul Boulevard
- Two school districts
- Two libraries
- Seneca Park Zoo
- Genesee River
- Transportation options from the City into the Town (& vice versa)
- Golf course
- East Ridge Road
- Certain neighborhoods (i.e. the Flats, Silver City, etc.)
- The view from State Route 104
- The Seaway trail
- Variety of churches
- Sidewalks
- Trees
- McAvoy Park
- Irondequoit Creek
- Local restaurants
- Community Center
- Hot Dog row
- Irondequoit Cemetery
- White Ladies Castle
- Convenience of amenities

How does someone know they have entered Irondequoit?

- The Town signs and landscaping at key locations.
- The speed limit changes within the Town.
- The temperature actually seems to change on Route 104.
- One needs to cross water to come into the Town from the East or West.
- The housing conditions improve in comparison to the City.
- Trees are more prevalent in the Town and they are much larger/older.
- A more visible police force.
- Streets are usually clear all the time during the winter season.
- The roads are more open, since there is little on-street parking and most sites have off-street parking spaces.

What is the perception of the Town?

Externally

Negative	Positive
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Old or aging 2. Crime 3. From the City, it's a step up, but from outer Towns, it's a step down. 4. An extension of the City of Rochester. 5. There is a lack of any new subdivisions or large housing tracts. 6. "That place with the empty mall." 7. An old, dying Town. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It has a lot of natural beauty. 2. Quaint 3. A lot of parks 4. Lots of opportunity and beauty along Irondequoit Bay 5. When discussed or looked at "on paper" it's not as good looking or appealing as it is when you physically see it and experience the Town. 6. A lot of the homes in the Town are much lower in price or under valued and they are then seen as being "not as good" when in reality the homes are quite nice.

Internally

Negative	Positive
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. East vs. West 2. 20-30 year old age group seems to be lacking or missing. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High level of services 2. Not old 3. Young families

What is the extent of the east-west division in the Town, what is the cause, and does it still exist?

- Although the Town has only one zip code, some people refer to where they live as East Irondequoit or West Irondequoit - no such actual location or place exists by either of those names.
- The division seems to be based on the perception that the level of education/schools is better on the west side than the east side.
- One hypothetical question raised was since the division is based on the schools, why not combine them into one district; would it change the perception? This was studied in the past and the NYS Department of Education said they would not do this since the Town currently has two large high schools. In addition, the point was raised that the class size may be increased; the sizes are currently adequate according to the group
- The division also was/is based on income levels, as the east was historically blue-collar and the west was white-collar. This trend is shrinking now as most of the region is becoming predominantly white-collar.

- Is the east vs. west gap shrinking? An older generation of families/residents may still hold on to this division as a way to hold onto their identity in the community. As younger families move into the area, they may be unaware of the division and are looking to change the perception.
- The division does appear to resurface or be brought back up around large issues, such as the current issue of a potential library consolidation.

What are the most attractive parts of the Town? Least attractive?

Most Attractive	Least Attractive
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Gold Coast” 2. Neighborhoods, such as Huntington Hills (near Culver Road by the cemetery), Summerville, the Flats, etc. 3. Durand Eastman Park 4. Irondequoit Bay 5. The drive down St. Paul Boulevard with all the stately homes and trees. 6. Thomas Avenue 7. The Bay “hills” 8. Lakeshore 9. Sea Breeze, especially the miniature golf course, restaurants, bars; Culver Road portion 10. White City 11. Rodger’s Parkway with its great landscaping, homes, and central landscaped median 12. Town Hall campus is a central hub for activities without there being a village in the Town (which is typically the activity hub) 13. Butterfly garden 14. Hidden gems such as Marge’s 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. East Ridge Road 2. Some of the neighborhoods around the Sea Breeze area. 3. Bayview Road homes could be much better looking than they currently are (property maintenance). 4. The condition of fences and backyards that face SR 590. 5. The backs of businesses that face SR 104 look unsightly. 6. Parking and general road condition along Lake Shore Boulevard (edge of roads always looks deteriorated and worn). 7. Median condition on Kings Highway (large weeds grow up in the cracks). 8. Titus-Cooper strip plaza needs maintenance. 9. There is not central theme or identity for the Town for what really are the good points/attributes.

What are some of the things that could be done to improve the identity or appearance of the Town?

- There needs to be one central theme, but the theme also needs to celebrate the uniqueness of each neighborhood.
- “This is not the home of Irondequoit Mall.” (To quote an old sign that used to be in the Town.)

- A Town where the land and water meet, just like what your Town name means.
- The design theme/idea should incorporate a mix of words, colors and graphics that can be put on everything Town related to establish some sort of branding or identity in and of the Town.
- The water on three sides is very unique to Irondequoit.
- There needs to be an increase in pride also in the local businesses, especially along East Ridge Road.
- We need to promote the feeling of the neighborhoods in the theme too. “We need to sell the sizzle, not the steak.”

Map-based notes

- Currently there are nice looking, wooden welcome signs as the following locations: Saint Paul Boulevard @ Town line, Seneca Street @ Town line, Ridge Road East near the Post Office, Portland Avenue @ Portland Parkway, Empire Boulevard on the west side of the Bay, and @ the SR 104 and 590 split.
- In the following locations there are either no signs or the signs are the NYS DOT typical metal signs: Pattonwood Drive @ Sagamore Drive, Seneca Street @ Long Acre Road, Hudson Avenue @ Town line, North Goodman @ Town line, Culver Road @ Town line, Empire Boulevard @ the west Town line, Winton Road North @ Town line, SR 590 @ southern Town line, SR 104 @ the Bay, and Culver Road @ the northeastern Town line.

General Comments/Notes

- East Ridge Road is probably the biggest eyesore
- Concern about increasing rental properties’ impact on the appearance of the town.
- There is a lack of continuity among the condition and appearance of the various stores there.
- “Planting Irondequoit Pride” has been working to improve the landscaping and physical appearance within the Town.
- An increase in marketing and public relations needs to be done to get the word out about the highlights of the Town. Many people do not know how great the Town is until they live here. There have been many instances where people have moved to the Town, moved away, and then came back because the feel of the Town could not be replicated elsewhere.
- The scale of the neighborhoods is close and tight knit.
- “It’s the best kept secret in Monroe County.”
- There needs to be higher expectations from businesses for property maintenance.
- The zoning code in general is outdated and sets the bar low for expectations for development design.
- The Planning and Zoning Boards needs to follow through with conditions that are set on site plans for businesses.
- Some young people are living just outside of the Center City, but outside of the Town as well in areas such as Culver Road or North Winton Road.