

Downtown Easton Development Plan

PUBLIC WORKSHOP
September 20, 2007





Tonight's Agenda

- Welcome and introductions
- Review of Phase I effort
- Developing the concept plan
- Hands-on workshop
- Wrap-up and next steps

Phase I Summary

- Stakeholder interviews
- May 16 public workshop
- Historic resources inventory
- Market analysis
- Downtown reconnaissance



Stakeholder Interviews

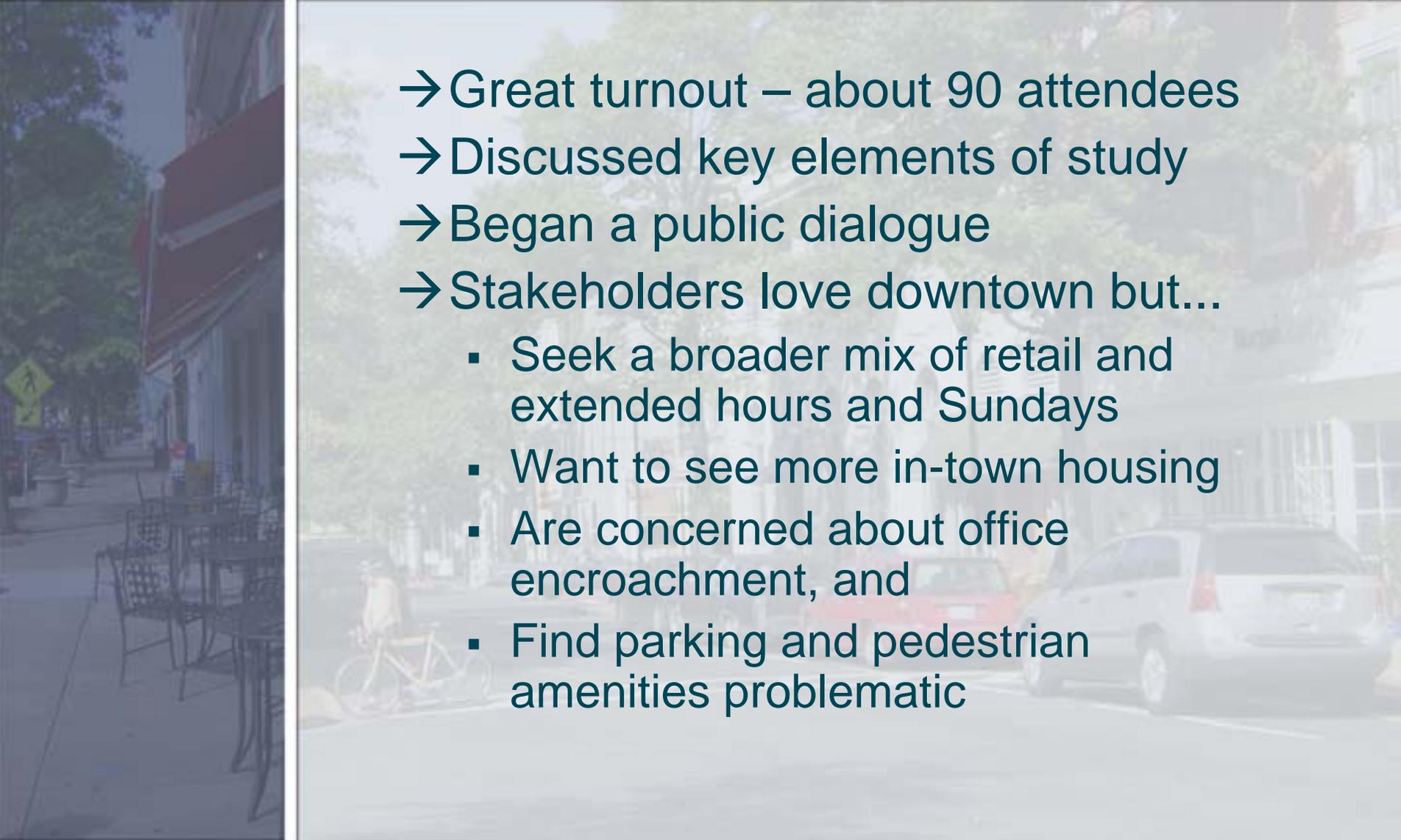
→ The consultant team has met with more than 30 stakeholders, including...

- Business owners
- Residents
- Property owners
- Leaders of cultural institutions
- Town and County government officials

→ Easton has...

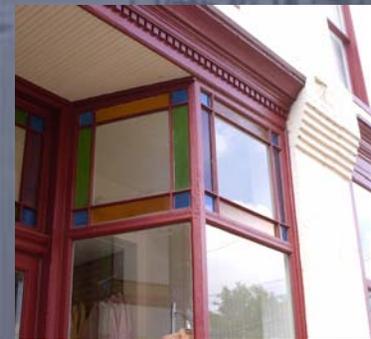
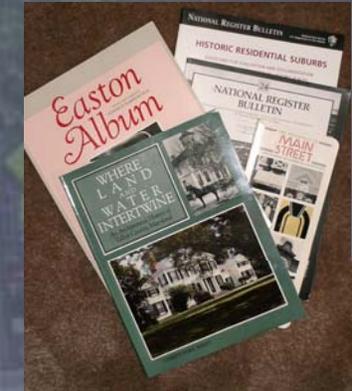
- Strong community identity
- Community activism and leadership
- Wide range of resources

First Public Workshop

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- A faded background image of a city street scene. On the left, there's a sidewalk with outdoor seating (chairs and tables) in front of a building. A person is riding a bicycle on the street. In the background, there are parked cars and buildings. The image is semi-transparent to allow text to be overlaid.
- Great turnout – about 90 attendees
 - Discussed key elements of study
 - Began a public dialogue
 - Stakeholders love downtown but...
 - Seek a broader mix of retail and extended hours and Sundays
 - Want to see more in-town housing
 - Are concerned about office encroachment, and
 - Find parking and pedestrian amenities problematic

Historic Inventory

- Planning to historical context
- Historic District data is outdated
 - Literature review
 - Architectural survey
 - Update of “Contributing Status”
 - Out of 228 buildings, 24 recommended changes



Study Area Inventory

- Nearly 50% of downtown's storefronts had office uses
- Rents range from \$12 to \$20 per SF



Market Assessment

→ Overall finding: Positive market factors support downtown Easton's ability to attract new and more diverse

- Housing
- Office
- Retail
- Restaurants and entertainment



Retail Market

- Easton and Talbot County are clearly regional centers for retail sales
- Downtown Easton does not capture a larger portion of that spending power (about 10%)
- Expanded retail investment will be based on showing enough spending power in key market segments

Retail Market

These customer segments include:

- Residential population in Easton, Talbot, and limited adjacent counties, focused on family incomes of greater than \$75,000 per year
 - Retirees
 - Pre-retirees
 - Families
- Second homeowners
- Overnight visitors
- Day-trippers





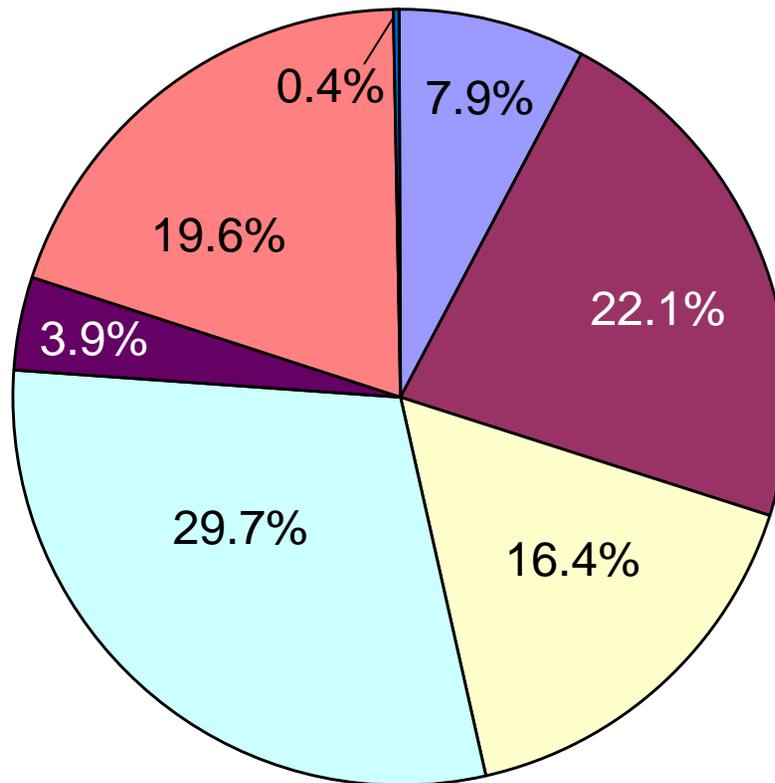
Potential Expenditures

2006 Estimated Trade Area Expenditure Potential by Targeted Consumer Segment

Consumer Segment	Household or Trips	Annual Expenditures	Primary Market Base
Residents			
Easton Households	682	\$37,832	\$25,801,424
Talbot County Households	590	\$39,604	\$23,366,360
Talbot County Pre-Retirees Households	3,289	\$41,818	\$137,539,402
Talbot County Retirees Households	2,814	\$36,355	\$102,302,970
Surrounding County Residents Households	13,951	\$13,279	\$185,255,329
Non-Residents			
Second-Home Owners Households	1,240	\$19,796	\$24,547,040
Overnight Visitor Trips	79,503	\$1,539	\$122,355,117
Day Visitor Trips	14,030	\$167	\$2,343,010
TOTAL TRADE AREA EXPENDITURE POTENTIAL			\$623,510,652
Sources: U.S. Consumer Expenditure Survey and AKRF, Inc.			

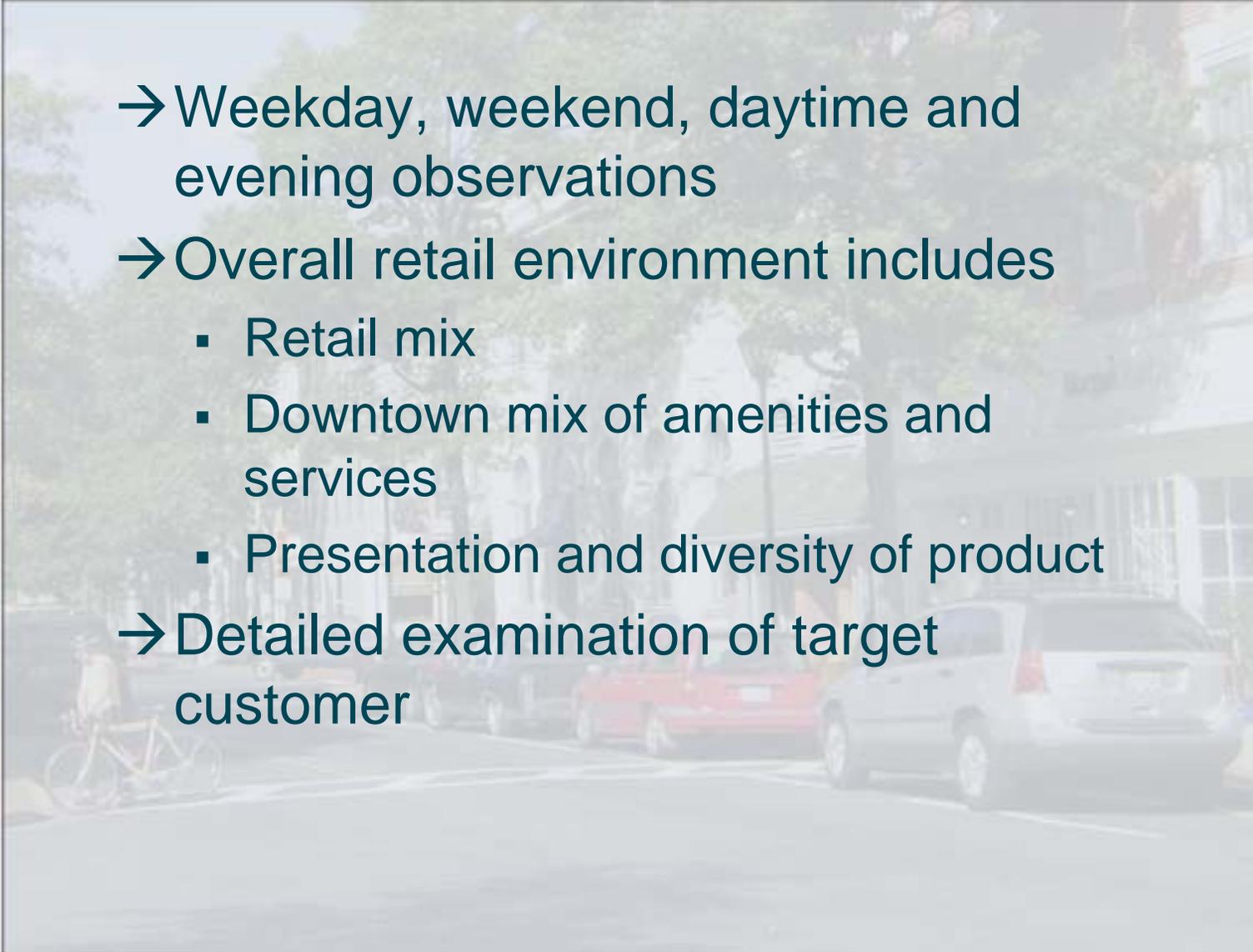
\$620M Expenditure Potential

Spending Potential by Customer Segment



- Easton and Talbot County Family Households
- Talbot County Pre-Retiree Households
- Talbot County Retiree Households
- Surrounding County Households
- Talbot County Seasonal Homeowners
- Overnight Visitors
- Day Visitors

Downtown Reconnaissance

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- A vertical photograph on the left side of the slide showing a downtown street scene. It includes a sidewalk with outdoor seating (chairs and tables), a building with a red awning, and a yellow pedestrian crossing sign.
- Weekday, weekend, daytime and evening observations
 - Overall retail environment includes
 - Retail mix
 - Downtown mix of amenities and services
 - Presentation and diversity of product
 - Detailed examination of target customer
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- A horizontal photograph on the right side of the slide showing a downtown street scene. It includes a sidewalk with a person on a bicycle, a red car, a silver SUV, and a building with a white awning.

Merchandising Assessment

→ Mixed messages:

- Overall, peaceful and charming, geared to and comfortable to the older shopper
- Only a handful of stores and restaurants with a more modern attitude attracting a wider range of ages
- Very little of interest to families with children
- Farmers Market is attractive to all
- No open area/park with inviting seating

Merchandising Assessment

→ Store environment:

- Many stores sell the same product category and begin to look alike to the consumer, e.g. jewelry and tableware
- Much of the same product sold is not new or distinctive, therefore not eye catching
- Older display fixtures and signage signal “older customer” even if product is younger
- Many stores are crowded with merchandise, others are less cluttered and offer a clear point of view to the customer

Enhancing Existing Retail

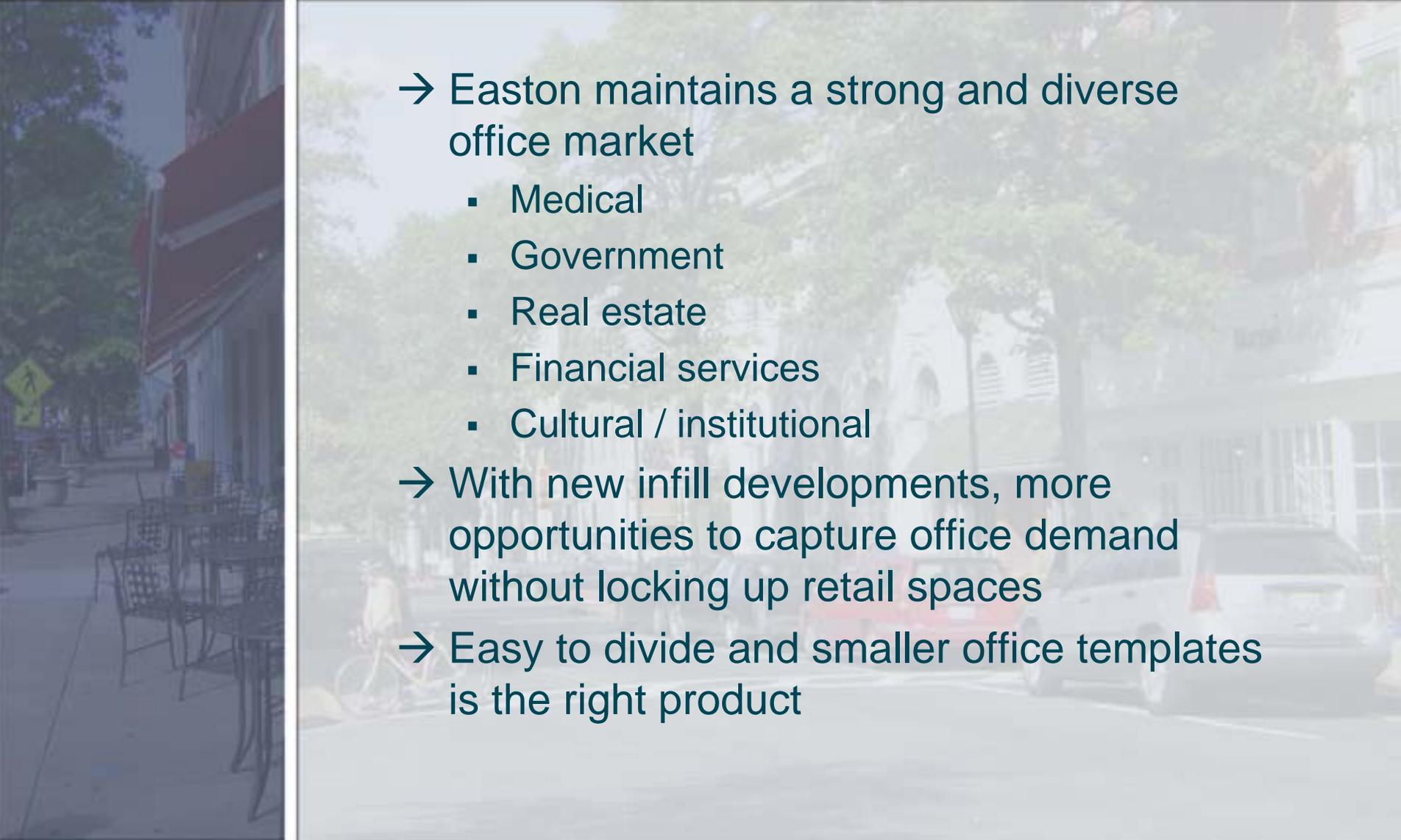
- To enhance existing retail, Easton's retailers could diversify their:
- Product (sports, garden, children, teen)
 - Retail environment – modern can be inviting to all ages
 - Ethnic restaurants
 - Gallery shops – stores selling handmade products linking retail with Easton's arts
- To be a destination locale, bring in a few specialized regional or national stores



Housing Market

- Building permits, housing prices, and days on the market indicate stable growth
- Most expensive homes are in Talbot County, but not necessarily in Easton
- Growing second homeowner market, notably with pre-retirees and people moving from farther way
- Community support for condos and apartments in downtown
- Market for urban living is young professionals, pre-retirees, and empty nesters

Office Market

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- A faded background image of a city street scene. On the left, there's a sidewalk with outdoor seating (chairs and tables) in front of a building. A person is riding a bicycle on the sidewalk. In the middle ground, there are trees and a white building. On the right, there's a street with parked cars, including a white sedan and a red car. The overall scene is a typical urban street with a mix of residential and commercial buildings.
- Easton maintains a strong and diverse office market
 - Medical
 - Government
 - Real estate
 - Financial services
 - Cultural / institutional
 - With new infill developments, more opportunities to capture office demand without locking up retail spaces
 - Easy to divide and smaller office templates is the right product

Unlocking Easton's Potential

- Existing retail is beginning to transition on its own
- Existing retail will benefit from new development to the north
- Developers are showing interest in downtown and mixed use
- Focused and creative use of redevelopment areas requires public and private collaboration



Street-Works



Next Steps

- AKRF and Street-Works develop concept plans
- Review concept plans at 3rd workshop
 - Assume mid- to late-October
 - Date to be determined
- Stay in touch via the web site:
 - www.eastondowntownplan.com