



Maine South High Schoolers Share Insights for the Future: “What is it you love? What could use some TLC?”



Photo Credit: Brett Clark, Director of Communications | Maine Township High School District 207

“Park Ridge has the best of both -- I like that it is a bustling City but you can easily access nearby nature and bike trails. Uptown almost feels like a Hallmark Movie; the historic buildings and architecture -- it doesn't feel like a sterile, generic place.”

On Wednesday, October 30th the Park Ridge Wonderful Team met with the Engineering Club at Maine South High School to “chat shop” about the City’s Comprehensive Plan, Park Ridge Wonderful. Students were provided with an overview of what a Comprehensive Plan is, what it guides and impacts, the project timeline, and how public outreach is essential to preserving and improving the community residents want.

While noshing on breakfast donuts (it was 7:30 am after all), students discussed the many things they like about Park Ridge. Themes that were reiterated included the community’s history, vibe, unique buildings, open space, access to nature via the surrounding trails, street layout / grid, compact nature / cluster of things to do, walkability, location, and access via transit.

What do you want to see? What could be improved?

Students also addressed those items they thought could be improved and ideas they had for the future. Each student was provided two idea post-its, upon which they jotted down comments and posted to a display board. The input themes were then discussed and priorities identified. Primary areas of improvement centered on:

- addition of bike lanes,
- places to go and things to do during the winter months when it is cold out,
- public art / artist showcase to celebrate young creatives,
- improvements to infrastructure, potholes and rail crossings,
- address / fill vacancies in town,
- higher diversity of restaurants that are affordable / not fancy,
- open space and trees / more in residential areas, and
- environmental “green” initiatives.



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“I’d like to see more ways to showcase up and coming artists in the community, since so much of our community is younger and in their teen years.”

“... more “green” initiatives; energy alternatives (solar power), environmental transportation, community compost collections, less single use plastic.”

“Address congestion in Uptown, the street layout / traffic is really hard to navigate as a driver and pedestrian. More crosswalks - greater safety.”

“I loved the recent Cemetery Tour celebrating the historic people of Park Ridge. Let’s add to that by hosting ghost tours of historic places in town.”

“A multi-purpose entertainment space -- someplace we can go during the winter months when it is cold out. Also, an outdoor ice skating rink.”

“Preserve the old look, feel, and historic vibe of buildings in Park Ridge.”

“Keep adding green space, make playgrounds less restrictive / more interactive.”



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Students, We Salute You!

Special thanks to District 207 and the bright minds at Maine South High School for sharing input as part of the City’s Comprehensive Planning effort! All of the ideas were supportive of the community outreach themes heard to date and will be added to the summary of outreach items to be shared back with City Council.

Key Themes: Walkability, artistic placemaking, historic preservation, ped-bike safety enhancements, community programming and events, heightened restaurant diversity that is affordable / not fine-dining, activities for teens, fill vacancies, further green initiatives, and environmental awareness.