



COMMUNITY

Princeton Future to study downtown

By Stephen Hsia
Princetonian Contributor

Princeton Future, a nonprofit community organization dedicated to preserving the history and appearance of the downtown area, is launching an effort to examine the redevelopment and preservation of key sites on Witherspoon Street.

The six-month undertaking seeks to compile residents' opinions on future development. It will include four public meetings with consultants to formulate site plans that balance development with the preservation of important institutions.

Once the plans have been drafted, the concepts will be presented in March and refined for a final presentation in May.

Princeton Future was co-founded in 2000 by Sheldon Sturges and former University president Robert Goheen and has previously worked on plans for the Borough garage, luxury apartments in Palmer Square and the Arts Council building.

Sturges said the Witherspoon project will focus on zoning, landscaping, transportation and utilities. Three-dimensional models, implementation options and a proposal for a history trail will also be considered, he added.

Sturges called Witherspoon Street the "spine" of the community, connecting Princeton Borough and Township. It is home to many restaurants, shops and other amenities.

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Robert Geddes, co-chairman of Princeton Future and former dean of the University's architecture school, is optimistic about the effect that changes on Witherspoon Street will have on University life.

"The improved Witherspoon Street will be more attractive for students and faculty," he said during an interview with The Daily Princetonian in April. "It will also help to improve town and gown relations by offering social opportunities to people associated with the University."

The Witherspoon project is led by Princeton Future members Michael Mostoller and Yina Moore GS '80, a graduate of the University's architecture school.

Moore said the community meetings have been helpful in the process.

"It's allowed them to talk in an unstructured way about design and the character of neighborhoods, and it has sharpened our sense of community," she said in Princeton Future's annual report in February.

The committee's first session is scheduled for Nov. 13 from 9 to 11 a.m. at the Princeton Public Library, with subsequent meetings on Dec. 4, 11 and 18.

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