

What should be done for downtown York?

Consultant Roger Brooks will visit York in August.

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If locals won't hang out in a downtown area, neither will visitors, according to a tourism consultant who will visit York next month.

Roger Brooks, of Seattle, Wash.-based Destination Development, will make his second visit to York to determine what the city can do to make sure it's a place where both these groups want to spend time.

"Here's what our real goal is: how do we make downtown York a thriving, vibrant destination?" he said.

Brooks first came to York last year, acting as a "secret shopper," to get an idea of what York is like for a visitor. That, he said, was a great "conversation starter."

Now, he said, he'll focus on downtown and what should be done there.

Brooks' latest visit, which will be Aug. 9 to 14, was arranged by a number of local organizations, including the York County Economic Development Corporation, Better York, and Downtown Inc., which is coordinating his schedule.

Sonia Huntzinger, director of Downtown, Inc., expects to receive some "marching orders" from Brooks.

"He'll come up with a designated area in the downtown we should focus on," she said.

Brooks believes that downtowns must follow the "10-10-10 rule" to become a destination. Within three linear blocks, there must be a minimum of 10 places that sell food, 10 destination retail shops, and 10 places that are open after 6 p.m.

For York, part of the job might be "rearranging the furniture," so that similar businesses are in the same district, he said.

Some local businesses welcome Brooks' visit.

"Maybe he can help," said Andrea Giuffrida, owner of Flair Fashions on North George Street.

"I am not swamped down here, and it really bothers me," she said. She has a good location, advertises, and holds sales and fashion shows, she said. She has a crowd of regular customers.

But she thinks some people don't know if it's safe downtown or don't want to deal with parking. She'd like to have some competition, because it would bring in more people.

Joseph Cilluffo, chef and general manager at the restaurant Colosseo, on North George Street, said Brooks' visit is "the necessary step York needs to make it a destination."

Cilluffo believes York needs to bring in some "big city lights," make people feel more secure, and improve parking. He hates to stand outside his restaurant and see cars being ticketed at 6 p.m.

The city needs more boutiques, and its history should be marketed, he said.

"We have all the pieces to get there," Cilluffo said. "We need the right leadership."

Brooks said he'll spend his week walking the city and talking to people.

At the end, "We hope to have it nailed down, this is what York should do," he said.

On the web

To prepare for a visit from Roger Brooks, Downtown Inc. has posted a survey online, asking people what they think of downtown York. The results will be given to Brooks.

Visit www.downtownyorkpa.com to take the survey or www.destinationdevelopment.com to learn more about Brooks.