

Section 6: Focus Group Report

Objectives

The purpose of this focus group project was to engage a variety of existing and potential Olympia Fields shoppers in a dynamic conversation about their shopping habits and needs to learn what businesses, events, promotional materials and policies would attract a larger share of resident's time and dollars to Olympia Fields. The focus group process is designed to yield qualitative data, reveal hidden sensitivities, and raise issues not previously considered by those involved in managing Olympia Field's commercial clusters. Although efforts were made to find a geographically diverse sample, this analysis is not meant to provide statistically reliable responses from a demographically representative sample of Olympia Field's total population. Rather, groups with specific characteristics were identified to promote ease of conversation and test preliminary theories that those groups would have different attitudes toward Olympia Field's commercial development.

Methodology

After the Discussion Plan, (Appendix 1) was approved by Village staff, four target groups were identified:

- Empty Nesters
- Young Professionals
- Families with Children
- Metra patrons

Participants were volunteers who attended the Bizio's Fresh Market preview event. Each of the focus groups was lead by a moderator from BDI or Teska Associates whose purpose was to guide the conversation and keep the discussion on point. The moderator followed the Discussion Plan. This Discussion Plan included a series of open-ended questions to intentionally allow individuals to discuss tangential issues and engage in a dynamic group conversation. To aid in focusing the discussion, participants were first asked to think about shopping in general. Discussion then gradually narrowed into considering those issues specific to Olympia Fields. Notes were taken in all four sessions to highlight key comments and a summary of comments by topic follows.

Focus Group Discussion Guide

Attitudes toward shopping

1. In general, what do stores do that make you more likely to shop there?
2. In general what do restaurants with table service do to make you more likely to dine there?
3. In general, what factors determine the grocery store you shop at most often?

Choice influences

4. Thinking about the last time you went shopping for a gift for an adult, what factors influenced your location choice? Prompt for:
5. Thinking about the last time you went shopping for apparel for an adult, what factors influenced your location choice? Prompt for:
6. Thinking about the last time you ate at a fine dining restaurant, what factors influenced your location choice? Prompt for:
7. Thinking about the last time that you purchased specialty foods, what factors influenced your location choice? Prompt for:

Farmer's Market Participation

8. Thinking about the last time that you shopped at the Olympia Fields Farmer's Market, what influenced your decision to shop there? Prompt for:
9. What farmer's markets in other towns have you shopped at?
10. What elements or vendors of those markets should be added by Olympia Fields and why?

The Olympia Fields Shopping Experience

11. Thinking about the last time that you visited a store in Olympia Fields, what was the purpose of your trip?
12. Describe your experience. Prompt for:
13. What changes in the physical environment would have enhanced your experience?
14. What changes in the operation of the businesses would have enhanced your trip?
15. Describe other visits that you have made to Olympia Fields' stores during the past year.

The Olympia Fields Dining Experience

16. Thinking about the last time that you dined in an Olympia Fields' restaurant, how did you choose your destination?
17. Describe your experience. Prompt for:
18. What changes in the physical environment would have enhanced your experience?
19. What changes in the operation of the businesses would have enhanced your trip?
20. Describe other visits that you have made to Olympia Fields' restaurants during the past year.

Other

21. What changes in the way Olympia Fields businesses are advertised would make you more likely to visit?
22. What additional comments would you like to make on conditions in Olympia Fields' commercial areas?

Empty Nesters

When shopping they look for:

1. Fully stocked
2. Unique items
3. Attractive displays
4. Fresh foods
5. Trained/courteous workers
6. Knowledgeable
7. Attractive packaging
8. Cleanliness

When choosing a restaurant they look for

1. No French fries/(but “pommes frites” good)
2. Variety
3. Fair prices/good value
4. Calm, romantic, quiet
5. Proprietor/chef there
6. Relish trays, eg. extra “openers”

In a Grocery Store they look for:

1. One stop shopping (working person)
2. Interesting food at fair values (eg. Trader Joe’s)
3. Being able to find things
4. Healthy/fresh foods
5. Convenient location/parking

When choosing gifts for an adult they look for:

1. One of few in area
2. Sale
3. Hours of operation
4. Link on internet led to store

When choosing apparel for an adult they look for:

1. Variety
2. Quality
3. Artistic clothes
4. Brand names
5. Relationship w/person at store
6. Easy return policy
7. Getting best discount/senior citizen discount

When choosing a Fine Dining location they consider:

1. Check Please Show
2. Recommendation from friends
3. Ethnic variety 1st, then narrow
4. Coupon books
5. Restaurant.com for coupons

When choosing a specialty foods store they consider

1. Knowing store had selection
2. Recommendations
3. Advertising
4. Breads/good bakery
5. Fresh fish
6. Good quality/fair price/variety
7. Really good customer service

Opinions on the Olympia Field's Farmer's Market

1. Saw it
2. Advertising
3. Signs
4. Looking for fresh produce
5. Other Markets they visit
 - a. Park Forest
 - b. Flossmoor
 - c. Tinley Park
 - d. Frankfort
6. Olympia Fields: inconsistent show by vendors, eg. LaBriola Bread

Where they currently shop in Olympia Fields

1. Jewel
2. Tuesday Morning
3. Walgreen's—very good service (Kedzie store)
4. Pepperidge Farms outlet (Flossmoor)
5. Chiropractic—very helpful
6. James & Sons—very good service

Comments on other Olympia Fields shopping

1. Flower Store—didn't feel welcome
2. Cleanliness—good at Olympia Square, hot goods at small stores in Jewel plaza
3. Eye care store—doesn't look open (dark from outside)
4. Really miss Hallmark store
5. GFS food store
6. Would like herbal teas, natural care products

Olympia Fields Specialty Food Store Wish List

1. Sitting outside to dine/or inside connected to deli
2. Coffee shop
3. Customer service very important—young people need training & supervision
4. Brochure/flyer showing products by aisle

Where they currently dine in Olympia Fields

1. Burgundy Bistro
2. Perros Bros—gyros-have “style” & fun
3. McDonald’s
4. Dunkin Donuts

Olympia Fields Dining Wish List

1. Indian food
2. Deli—Jewish style (eg. “Morrie’s Deli”), w/salads
3. Market to hospital employees
4. Vegetarian restaurants

Where businesses should advertise

1. On internet: restaurant.com, Metro Mix
2. Local paper—divided opinion
3. Value pack mailers
4. Emails! Build lists; new way to spread “word of mouth”

Other Comments

1. Olympia Square strip shows promise
2. Focus group process—great way
3. New development needs to have distinctive style, e.g. Frankfort, Geneva
4. Need cooperative agreement w/Flossmoor for development plan for Vollmer Road
5. Shopping center at Kedzie/Vollmer not attractive; not organized well

Young Professionals

When shopping they look for:

1. Clean
2. Friendly w/o oppression
3. Well lit
4. Stocked
5. Atmosphere
6. Value
7. Quality

When choosing a restaurant they look for

1. Service, Quality
2. Focus/sense of place
3. Menu/variety
4. Knowledgeable staff

In a Grocery Store they look for:

1. Selection/variety
2. Room to shop—wide aisles
3. Product placement
4. Display/merchandising
5. Presentation

When choosing gifts for an adult they look for:

1. Variety
2. Accessibility
3. Unique Items
4. Cluster of stores

When choosing apparel for an adult they look for:

1. Location
2. Style
3. Safety
4. Price
5. Quality

When choosing a Fine Dining location they consider:

1. Experience

When choosing a specialty foods store they consider

1. Go to Trader Joe's
2. Unique items
3. Fun atmosphere

4. Staff makes it fun
5. Staff suggestions
6. Samples

Opinions on the Olympia Field's Farmer's Market

1. Convenience
2. Saturday was better
3. Quality
4. Expand-more products
5. Other Markets attended
 - a. Country Club Hills
 - b. Hazel Crest
 - c. Park Forest
 - d. Downtown Chicago
6. Other Elements to add to the Farmer's Market
 - a. Fresh Flowers
 - b. Alfresco dining
 - c. Organic products

Where they currently shop in Olympia Fields

1. Grocery (Jewel)—nice spacious, short lines, good selection, parking
2. Tuesday Morning—Treasure hunt
3. Bus operation—no problem

Comments on other Olympia Fields shopping

1. Walgreens—Kedzie good
2. Governor,s Highway bad—wouldn't open other lines, bad service understaffed at night
3. G.F.S—good

Comments on dining in Olympia Fields

1. Word of mouth is how restaurants are promoted
2. Need more restaurants
3. Burgundy Bistro-very good
4. Harold Motors—get restaurants
5. Bistro Great--intimate
6. Leaking roof

Where businesses should advertise

1. Some in star
2. Value packs
3. Burgundy Bistro-cable
4. Mailings
5. Things on community cable
6. Group marketing/sales

Other Comments

1. Expand Farmers Market—have on weekend, have limited space here
2. Limited lighting
3. Better/brighter lights
4. Like clothing
5. More restaurants
6. Coffee shop & bookstore

Families with Children

When shopping they look for:

1. Well lighted
2. Clean
3. Modern
4. Other kinds of stores that are not attractive
 - a) Liquor stores
 - b) Payday loan establishment
5. Other attraction
 - a) Environment that is healthy, conducive to community growth
 - b) Border's book store
 - c) Linen N Things

When choosing a restaurant they look for

1. Flavor-unique menu, décor, entertainment, quality food, intimacy
2. Kingsberry
3. Variety—Cooper's Hawk
4. Dave and Buster's

When choosing gifts for an adult they look for:

1. Location
2. Orland Park—will drive extra distance to save money
3. Need more variety beyond Lincoln Mall
4. New developments in Lincoln Mall

When choosing a Fine Dining location they consider:

1. Reputation of restaurant, great service, high expectations for great service

Opinions on the Olympia Field's Farmer's Market

1. More vendors and additional products (Farmer's Market)
2. Service, atmosphere, easy parking, availability

Comments on other Olympia Fields shopping

1. Positive experience in smaller stores
2. Welcome atmosphere, friendliness
3. Customer satisfaction and business perception of customer

Where businesses should advertise

1. How businesses are advertised—newspaper, flyers
2. Community engagement & communication, welcome visitors at Village Hall, email, Village Newsletters, homeowners assoc. communication

Other Comments

1. Shopping, dining observations that will enhance economic development
2. Retail establishments and its services that will attract community

Metra Patrons

When shopping they look for:

1. Price
2. Quality of goods
3. Organic grown foods
4. Imported foods
5. Cleanliness of store
6. Friendly service
7. Distance to store—not as important
8. Key Buyer Considerations for Grocery
 - a. Quality of produce
 - b. Quality—price relationship
 - c. Variety
 - d. Service
 - e. Organic grown foods

When choosing a restaurant they look for

1. Service
2. Food quality
3. Less important –price and distance of drive

When choosing gifts for an adult they look for:

1. Parking
2. Selectively and uniqueness of goods
3. Presentation of goods
4. Quality of goods
5. Good price—quality comparison

When choosing a Fine Dining location they consider:

1. The atmosphere and experience
2. Service
3. Quality
4. Price—quality comparison
5. Distance less important
6. Ethnic selection
7. Experience
8. Price—Quality comparison (higher prices are OK)

Opinions on the Olympia Field's Farmer's Market

1. Freshness
2. Advertising
3. Good vendors
4. Eager service
5. Other Markets visited
 - a. Park Forest
 - b. Tinley Park
 - c. Chicago
6. Recommendations for Farmer's Market
 - a. Broaden selection
 - b. Good bakery goods
 - c. More foods –less arts/crafts and hospitals

Comments on Olympia Fields shopping

1. Jewel in Olympia Fields is poor and dirty
2. There is a lack of store selection
3. Shopping in Olympia Fields would improve with these changes:
 - a. Cleanliness
 - b. Strip malls are “tacky”
 - c. Access—in/out—poor
4. I like these attributes in a store
 - a. Service
 - b. Friendliness
 - c. “The store knows your name”
5. Specific store evaluations
 - a. Don't like Jewel
 - b. Don't like Ultra
 - c. Like Dominick's in Matteson
 - d. Very good—GFS (Sam's)

Comments on dining in Olympia Fields

1. Limited food selection of restaurants
2. Service offerings are not good

Where businesses should advertise

1. “Don't need more advertising until there are more things to advertise”

Other Comments

1. Would like to see a “value oriented” big box at Lincoln & Western
2. Like “Tuesday Morning”
3. Didn't seem to want more Starbucks or Pete's Coffee
4. Would like high design guidelines and landscape for new projects