



Envision Concord May 31, 2017 Kick-Off Event

Summary

The event was opened by Elise Woodward and Gary Kleiman, both co-chairs of the Envision Concord Committee (Comprehensive Long Range Plan). The co-chairs provided a brief history of the committee's membership and work to-date in data gathering and listening to community members on the range of issues and topics that are encompassed in a comprehensive plan.

The Town's Director of Planning & Land Management, Marcia Rasmussen, gave additional background on why the town is updating its comprehensive plan now, with the last one being completed in 2005. The demographics of the town have noticeably shifted since then with a growing segment of seniors living in Concord, with increasing needs around health, transportation, and housing.

Susan Silberberg from CivicMoxie, the planning consultant selected to assist the Planning Division and Envision Concord Committee, explained the structure of the evening's event. Using the "World Café" model, participants sat at round tables with large paper tablecloths and plenty of markers with four envelopes and a set of general guidelines to help foster conversation.

Each envelope contained a question to start a thoughtful discussion about Concord, and people were encouraged to write, draw, and doodle their thoughts, ideas, and questions. Some tables chose to consolidate their thoughts into a single set of notes, while others didn't. After twenty minutes, participants were asked to move to different tables with different people to start the next conversation with a new group.

Below is an abbreviate list of the most common responses to the table questions asked during the Envision Concord Kick-off event on Wednesday, May 31, 2017, at the Concord-Carlisle High School cafeteria. The comments are organized by category and include the number of tables that appeared to have the same response (number of tables/out of total of 9 tables).

Question 1: You are talking to a visitor about Concord and want to explain what makes Concord a great place to live or work. What would you tell him/her?

Cultural & Historic – People/ community (9/9); History/ historical resources (9/9)

Economic Vitality – Two active town centers (6/9); Small businesses (5/9)

Housing – Colonial houses (2/9); (three negatives – cost; downsizing options)

Land Use – Agricultural or conserved land (4/9)

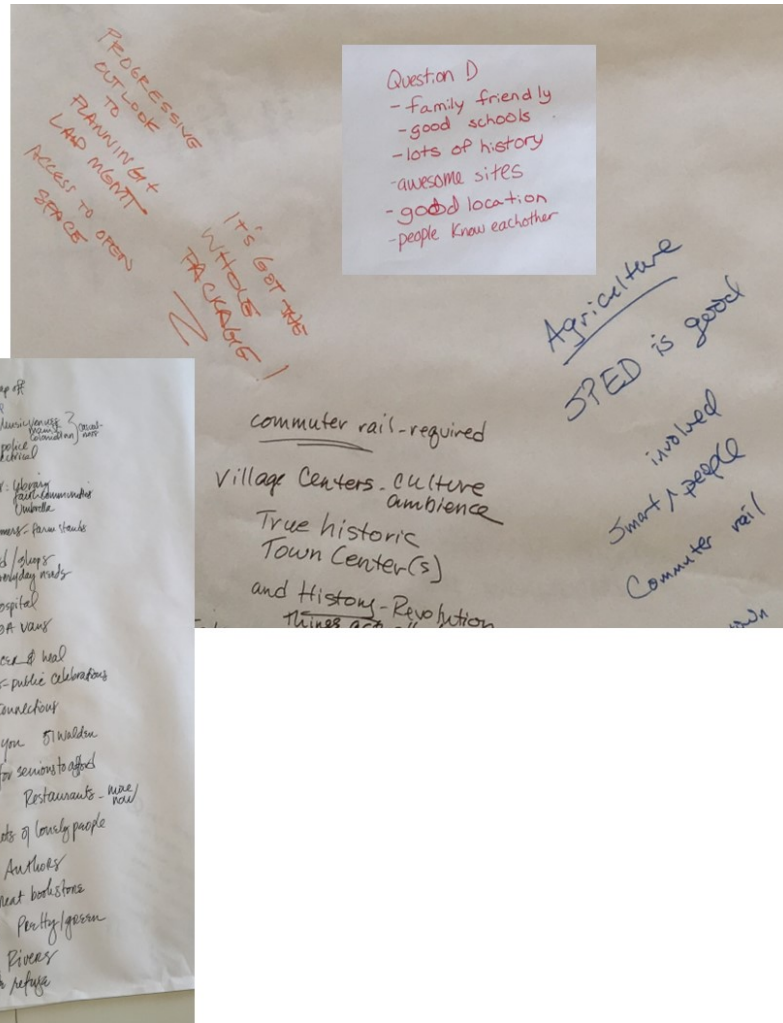
Mobility – Trains/MBTA (7/9); Walkability/bikability (4/9)

Open Space & Natural Resources – Open space/natural beauty (9/9)

Public Facilities & Infrastructure – Town services/government (5/9); Hospitals/health care (4/9)

Sustainability – Environmentally aware/sustainable (5/9)

Education (extra category) – Schools (9/9)



Question 2: In 10 years, I/my family member/friend/neighbor will be ____ years old. What do you hope Concord will be for you, your family, friend or neighbor?

Cultural & Historic – More diverse (5/9); Keeps its sense of community (3/9)

Economic Vitality – More functional shopping options (2/9)

Housing – More housing options (including senior/downsizing/2-family) (9/9); Affordable housing (9/9)

Land Use – Maintain farm land (2/9)

Mobility – Improved transportation to city and around town (7/9)

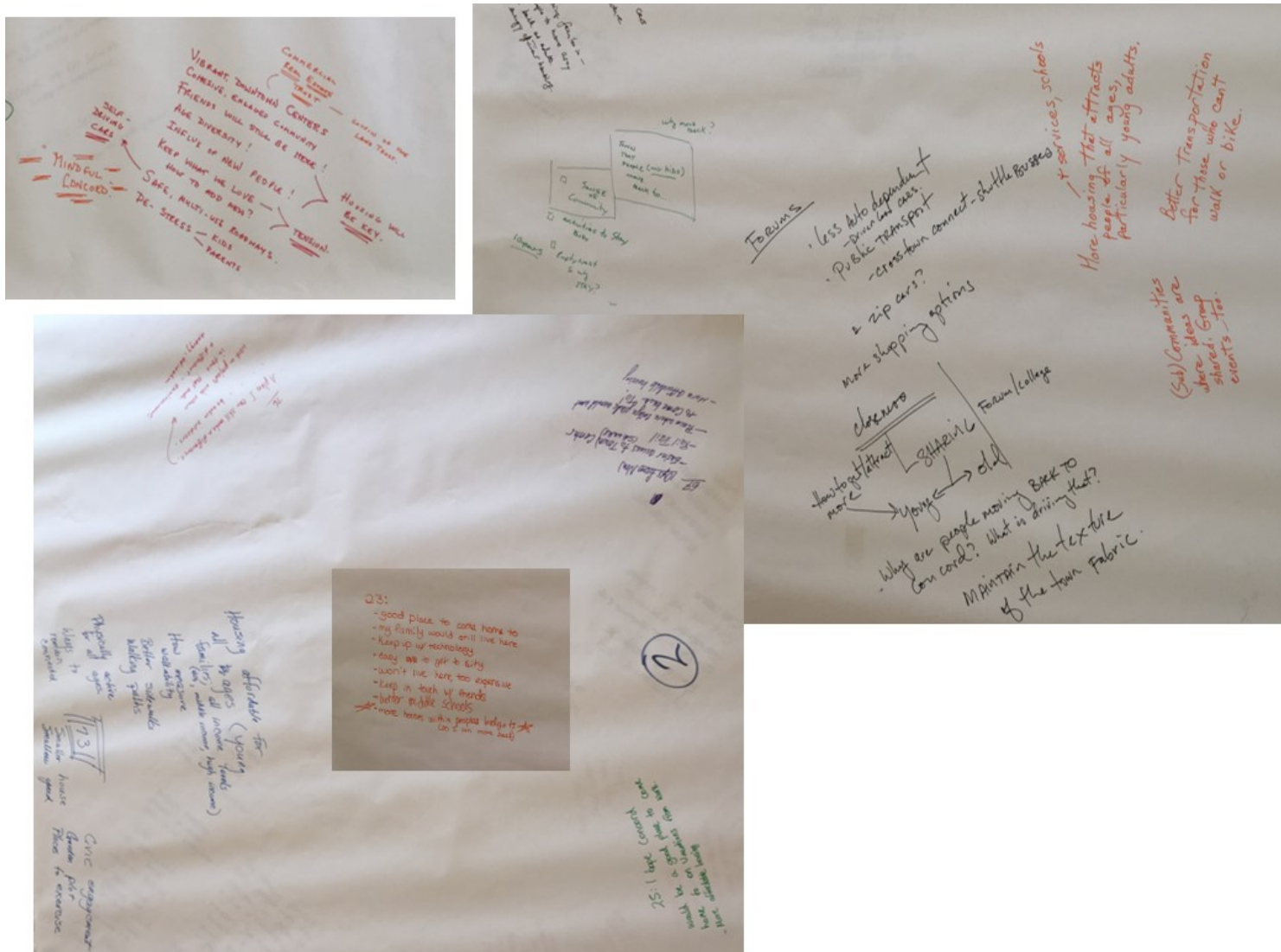
Open Space & Natural Resources – Keeps open space (3/9)

Public Facilities & Infrastructure – Has better sidewalks/bike paths (3/9)

Sustainability – More environmentally sustainable (5/9)

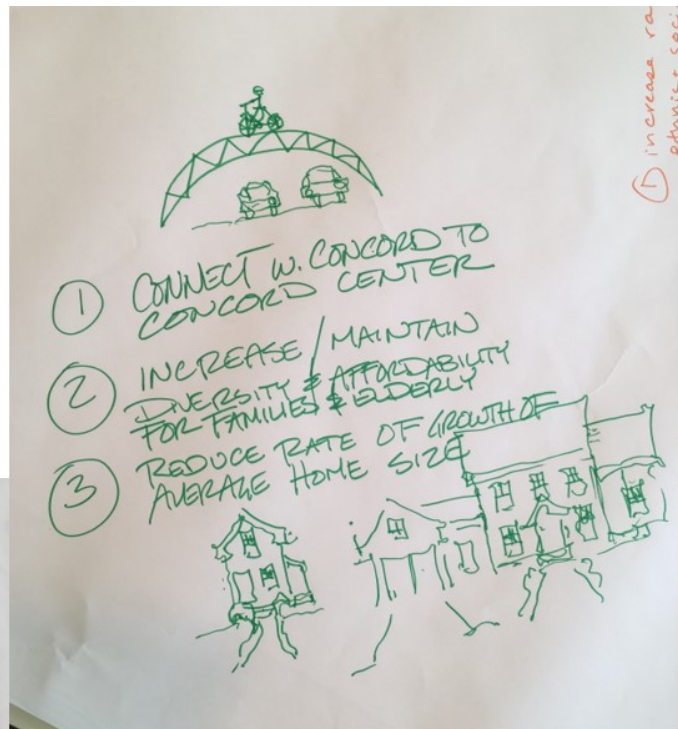
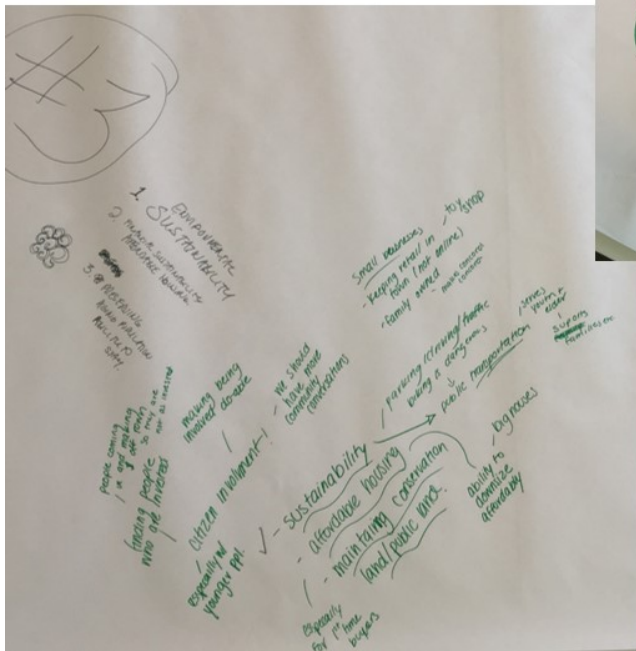
Education (extra category) – New/better middle school (2/9)

Other – A place to come back to and call home for a lifetime (7/9)

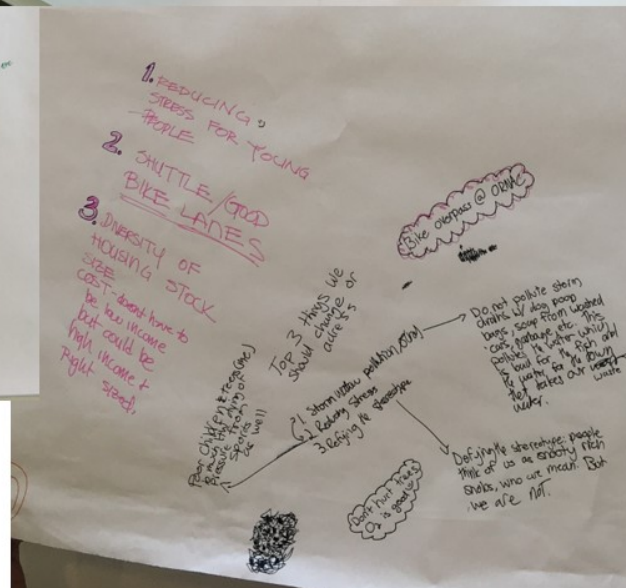


Question 3: What are your top 3 issues or challenges that we need to address in Concord?

- Cultural & Historic – Diversity of people (age and racial) (8/9)
- Economic Vitality – Income diversity/affordability (9/9)
- Housing – Affordable housing (9/9); affordable senior housing (6/9)
- Land Use – New zoning (4/9); Affordable farming (3/9)
- Mobility – Transportation/traffic (9/9); Bike lanes (5/9)
- Open Space & Natural Resources – Protect open space (3/9)
- Public Facilities & Infrastructure – Lighting (better street lighting or less) (3/9)
- Sustainability – Sustainability of energy, water, natural resources (8/9)
- Education (extra category) – Maintenance of high quality school system (2/9)



1. Reduce energy use / CO₂ output
New EU standards - race, religion, income, diversity
2. Increase diversity as all go to same center
3. Rite 2 exercises for postmodern people.



For the last question, people were asked to write his/her own comments onto a self-sticky note that he/she then had to place onto a sheet on the wall by category.

Question 4: If this planning process highlights one thing guaranteed to be improved, what would you recommend?

Top 8 Recommendations:

1. Affordable housing for income diversity, young, and the elderly (20)
2. Diversity -racial, economic, age (7)
3. Multimodal Transportation linking all of Concord and surrounding communities - bus from Center to West Concord (7)
4. Improving transportation for all modes other than single occupied vehicles - public, walking, biking, shuttle buses, and more trains to Boston (5)
5. Safer pedestrian and bicycle travel through town, separate from automobiles (3)
6. Deepening and Broadening citizens commitment to action that supports environmental sustainability (2)
7. Greater socio-economic diversity for a vibrant community (2)
8. Commitment to preserving Concord's unique characteristics: environment, economics, transportation, diverse housing stock, independent business (2)

