



Envision Concord October 21, 2017 Event

9:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Concord-Carlisle High School Cafeteria

Summary

Elise Woodward and Gary Kleiman, co-chairs of the Envision Concord Committee (Comprehensive Long Range Plan), welcomed everyone and opened the event. The co-chairs assured the community that the Committee, Town staff, and consultant team are looking at and reviewing all sources of data and data collection as the planning process continues. They explained that by using the American Planning Association Comprehensive Plan Standards for Sustaining Places, this planning process would look different from the previous 2005 Comprehensive Long Range Plan. The principles point to issues and potential solutions as “systems” instead of separate categories, which are the traditional components of comprehensive plans. The APA guidelines also include “authentic participation,” which, in addition to the existing democratic process and meetings in Town, encourages new methods of outreach to get input from community members who typically do not or cannot participate in planning processes.

The Envision Concord Committee will hold a public hearing on November 16th at 7:00pm at the Willard School Auditorium.

Marcia Rasmussen, the Town’s Director of Planning & Land Management, spoke of the three main themes from the 2005 Comprehensive Long Range Plan, and how the Town has successfully been moving forward toward these goals:

1. Protect Concord’s Assets and Character
2. Enhance Quality of Life
3. Balance Town Needs with the Ability to Pay

Susan Silberberg from CivicMoxie, the planning consultant assisting the Planning Division and Envision Concord Committee, gave a quick review of the overall planning process schedule and then reviewed existing conditions and initial thoughts.

Copies of the PowerPoint presentations (parts 1, 2, and 3) are available to download on the project website: www.envisionconcord.org through the Updates tab or Info tab.

Following the first two presentations, CivicMoxie gave meeting attendees the opportunity to participate in real-time voting on a short series of questions. The following are the questions and responses.

Real-Time Voting:

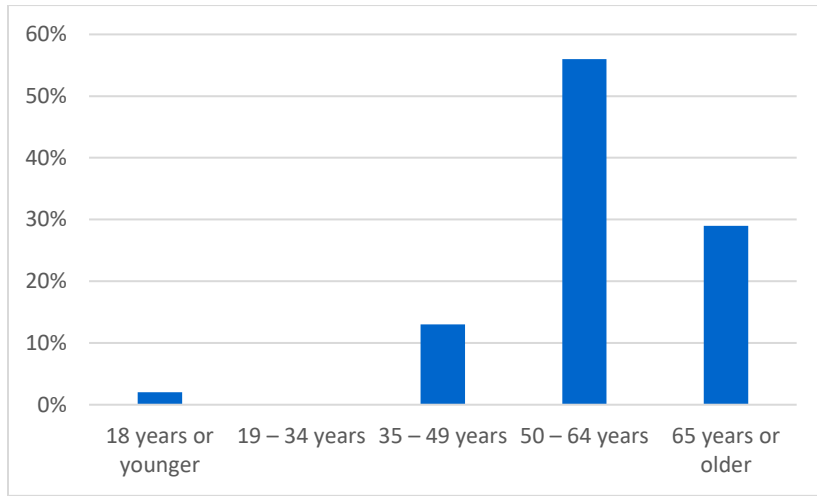
(Range of 51-55 responses per question)

Question #1: Did you attend the May 31st kickoff event?

Responses: Yes 33% No 67%

Question #2: How old are you?

Responses:



Question #3: Do you live in a historic district?

Responses: Yes 3% No 90% Don't know 4%

Question #4: Do you have children under 18 living at home?

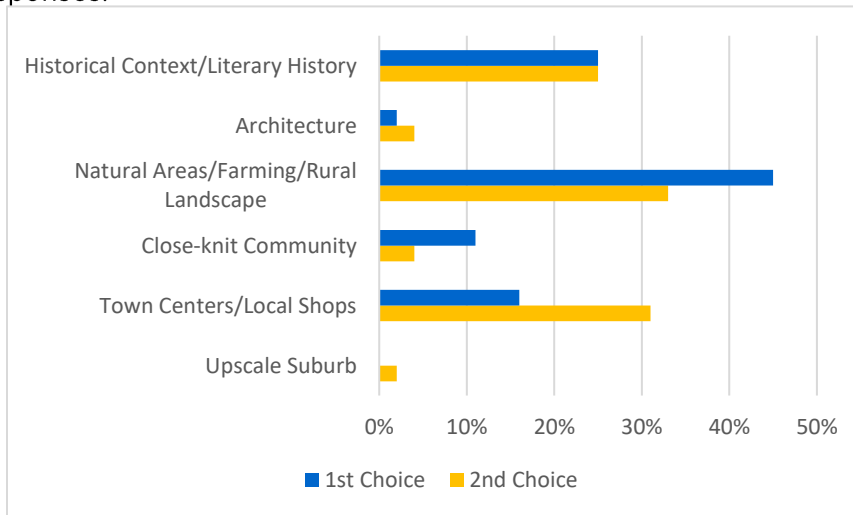
Responses: Yes 38% No 62%

Question #5: Are you currently on a Board or Commission or Committee in Town?

Responses: Yes (on 1) 30% Yes (on >1) 13% No 57%

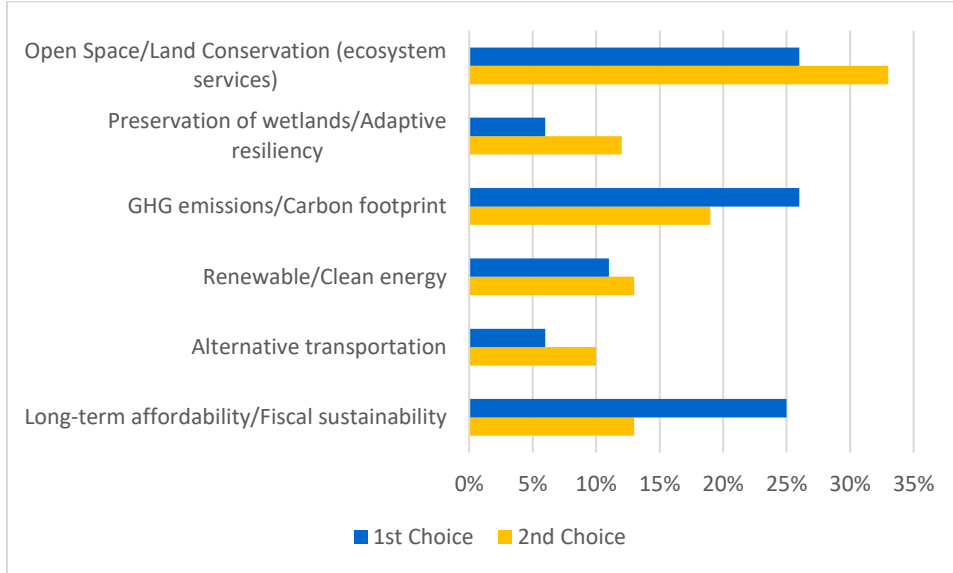
Question #6a and 6b: When you hear the phrase “town character,” what defines the word *character* for you? 1st and 2nd choices

Responses:



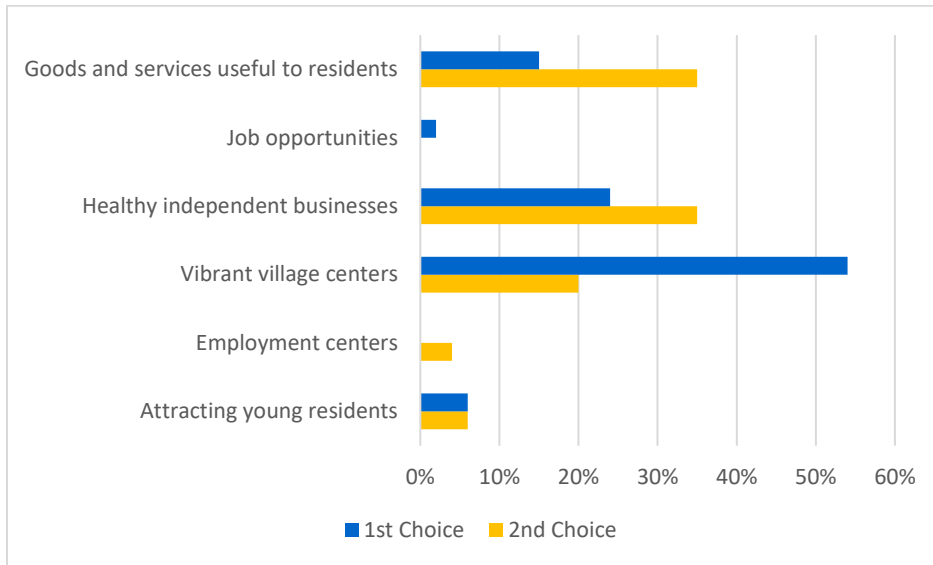
Question #7a and 7b: What do you consider important to Sustainability in Concord?
1st and 2nd choices

Responses:



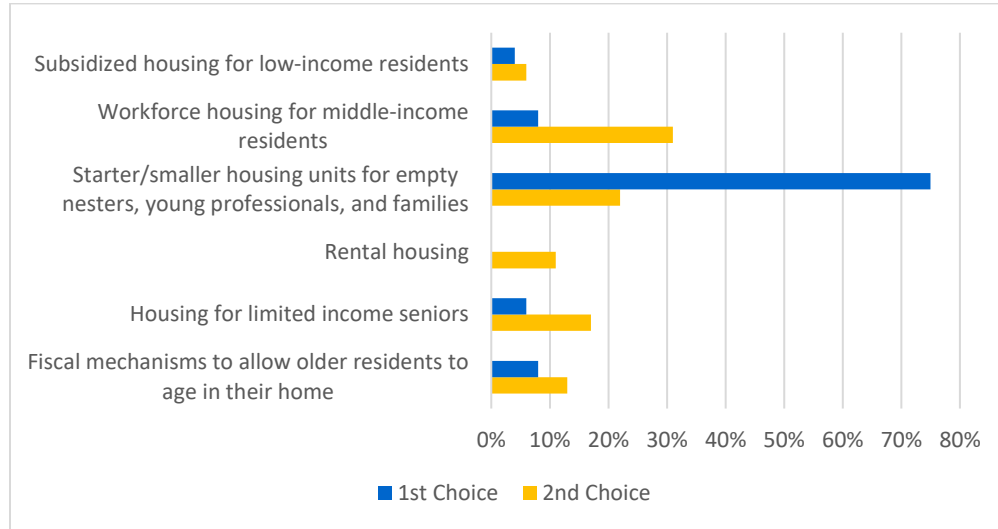
Question #8a and 8b: What do you consider important to Economic Vitality in Concord?
1st and 2nd choices

Responses:



Question #9a and 9b: What do you consider the most important types of housing needed in Concord? 1st and 2nd choices

Responses:



After the real-time voting portion, Susan Silberberg highlighted results from the Envision Concord Survey, the intercept surveys that were done on Friday, October 20th as part of the Open House tabling in Concord Center and West Concord.

In the interest of time, the co-chairs asked attendees if it would be acceptable to hold an open comment/ questions session instead of break-out sessions, with opportunities for break-out conversations with Committee members in the next two weeks (see information below). Attendees agreed given the time and below are the questions and comments.

Comments/ Questions:

Comment: Definition of terms are helpful and important when talking about these issues. What is a “small” business – is it an employer with three employees? Does the Dunkin Donuts count if it has 12 employees? What is “workforce” housing? Is that “affordable” for families making \$100,000/year or is it low-income?

Question: There was a good amount of data presented – is this everything? Will distillation of the data be coming?

Answer: There is still more data that wasn’t shown, including comments from Commissions, Boards, and Committees, with most of the information collected by the end of the month. Also, yes, the distillation process will be starting.

Question and Suggestion: Does Planning have a distinction between “internal” versus “external” development? There’s a nuance because “internal” development includes re-use and renovation of existing buildings, which is separate from “external” new construction, which tends to make people nervous.

Comment: “Sustainability” should be at the forefront of all of the planning goals and components. The Town voted to support living sustainably and adopted a set of Sustainability Principles.

Comment: It may be helpful to “define the end” and then detailing how to get there. Look at scenario planning, for example, controlled and managed vehicular access. Europeans look



ahead 10-50 years and work steadily towards a bigger vision. Some of those larger components of the vision would be preserving the character of Concord, and thereby protecting land but also attracting tourism to maintain economic vitality, and coordinating transportation. Visioning sometimes means suspending disbelief for a bigger vision.

Comment: We should try to move away from the dichotomy of development versus sustainability. Development can be renovation and re-use. There may need to be more than just accessory units to fill in the needs, but there could be more structure to development.

Comment: 1) There are underrepresented parts of the population (just looking around the room). The youth are the future, and we need to engage them and be more diverse. 2) Also, there may be limits to growth – confusion between preservation and potential “Disneyfication” with tour buses putting pressure on planning and traffic.

Response: The Committee and consultant team have been working with the Town’s Youth Services coordinator to try to engage more youth in this process.

Comment: Supports the need to reach out to young families who are so busy and can’t come to meetings. It may help to go through the schools to reach this part of the community.

Comment: There are many people 65+ who also don’t attend Town Meeting or go to other hearings or meetings because they have difficulty with vision and hearing loss. Other towns are finding ways through infrastructure/technology to help this population participate in Town meetings (such as Closed Captioning, large print text, etc.).

Next Steps:

Members of the Envision Concord Committee will be hosting “Listening Sessions” on the topics below. Participants were encouraged to sign up to receive reminders of sessions they’re interested in attending. The sessions are open to the public.

Culture + History/ Economic Vitality Listening Session – 10/26/17 at 3:30pm at the Wheelhouse, 33 Bradford Street

Open Space + Natural Resources/ Housing/ Land Use Listening Session – 11/06/17 at 3:00pm at Fowler Library Meeting Room, 1322 Main Street

Transportation + Infrastructure/ Housing/ Social Services Listening Session – 10/31/17 at 9:00am at Main Street Café, 42 Main Street

Town Character/ Culture + History/ Diversity Listening Session – 11/02/17 at 5:00pm at Reasons To Be Cheerful, 110 Commonwealth Avenue

Sustainability Goals + Policies/ Town Resources Listening Session – 11/03/17 at 7:30am at the Wheelhouse, 33 Bradford Street

*Special thank you to the CCHS staff and students, especially for their assistance with the real-time voting activity.