

HUDSON

Comprehensive Plan

Youth Workshop Summary January 22, 2015

On January 22nd, a Youth Workshop was held at Hudson High School to engage the city's youth about their aspirations and priorities for the future of Hudson. About 20 students participated, ranging from freshmen to seniors. The workshop centered around three key questions:

- What are five issues or concerns facing the City of Hudson?
- What are three specific projects or actions you would like to see undertaken in Hudson?
- What are the primary strengths and assets of Hudson?

The following is a summary of the thoughts, comments, and opinions highlighted in the workshop in response to the above questions. It is important to note that the items identified in this workshop summary are not consultant recommendations, but rather feedback and comments received from the high school students attended the workshop.

Top Issues

The discussion began by asking those in attendance to identify five issues or concerns facing Hudson. A wide variety of topics were discussed in response to the question; however, many of these issues were interrelated and in alignment with other responses and opinions. Accordingly, the responses are grouped below into several common themes.

Youth Activities

Youth placed high emphasis on the need for new youth-based activities and entertainment options. Students felt the city lacked activities or recreational options that were exciting to teenagers, citing a desire for more places to congregate and spend time. This included the desire for new recreational facilities such as a recreation center, aquatic centers, or skating rinks. Students also noted that most Hudson businesses do not have night hours of operation, limiting entertainment options during the evening.

Community Diversity

Workshop participants noted a lack of diversity in the Hudson, which they felt contributed to an isolated community in terms of income, race, age, and ethnicity. One student discussed Hudson as feeling like a "bubble," due to the lack of community diversity.

More Businesses

Closely related to the desire for more youth-based activities, respondents highlighted the lack of diverse and unique businesses within Hudson. The students listed a number of retail types and chain restaurants which they would like to see move to Hudson. Participants also noted the lack of shopping options within Hudson.

Downtown Traffic

Students who participated in the workshop consistently raised traffic in Downtown Hudson as an issue. Respondents noted that traffic and congestion was difficult not only for getting to destinations within the Downtown, but also for those attempting to move through the Downtown area to others options. The limited number of pathways available to avoid or go around the Downtown area was also discussed, as well as the need for more parking options.

Additional Issues

The following are other issues and concerns raised by event participants that do not fit within the identified themes:

- Lack of bike lanes, bike trails, and pedestrian paths
- Limited space for economic growth
- Concern for new developments on Barlow road, particularly the Hotel
- City services, such as leaf collection
- Need for more industry

Top Project or Actions

Hudson's youth suggested a wide range of steps to improve Hudson. Some of the more popular responses included: building a new recreation center, building new aquatic facilities, adding more parks and trails, and encouraging more diverse retail and restaurant options.

Specific projects and actions provided by committee members are listed below:

- Build a new recreation center with a pool
- Build an aquatic center
- Build a new pool at the high school
- Build an ice skating rink
- Develop more areas for outdoor activities and sports recreation
- Develop increased activities and entertainment options that are youth or teen focused
- Encourage the development of diverse entertainment options, such as bowling alleys, aquariums, theme parks,
- Construct new parks and trails
- Construct a dog park
- Plant native plants in parks and landscape areas, including the Downtown
- Develop better connectivity, mobility and access in the Downtown
- Repave Barlow Road
- Develop more bus stops with better signage
- Add more staff to city government
- Encourage more diverse shopping options, including a shopping mall or center and more options for male shoppers
- Encourage more diverse restaurant and eating options, including fast food and non-chain restaurants
- Encourage and develop shops that stay open later, including 24-hour convenience stores and restaurants

- Develop workshop space, such as a Fab Lab
- Develop a theater or auditorium available for public use
- Promote improve environmental awareness
- Promote cultural diversity
- Promote historic preservation

Primary Strengths & Assets

Lastly, youth were asked to identify Hudson's major strengths and assets. Popular responses focused on the Downtown area, quality school system, local parks, events and activities, and the City's history.

A full list of responses is provided below:

- Downtown area, particularly First and Main
- Attractive architecture
- Small town feel
- Size
- Community
- People
- Citizen engagement
- Variety of shops and services
- Variety of places to eat
- Quality school system
- Excellent sports teams
- Local parks and trails
- Natural areas
- Events and activities
- Taste of Hudson
- Hudson's history and historic feel
- Well maintained roads and buildings
- Safe area
- The neighborhoods
- Seasonal climate
- Small, local businesses