

Engagement Report

The Peekskill Plan: Public Workshop #1

This report provides a summary of activities conducted and input received on 09/16/2026. This information is intended to help inform the planning process, but does not necessarily reflect the visions and goals that will ultimately make up the framework of the comprehensive plan. Public input will continue to be gathered and analyzed throughout the planning process.



Workshop participants at the Transportation & Mobility table marking where they would like to see certain transportation improvements in Peekskill.

Summary of Public Input on September 16, 2026

City of Peekskill Department of Planning & Development



	Project	The Peekskill Plan
	Event	Public Workshop #1
	Date	Sep 16, 2026
	Time	5:30 - 7:30 PM
	Location	Peekskill Neighborhood Center, 4 Nelson Ave, Peekskill, NY 10566
	Facilitation	<u>City of Peekskill Department of Planning & Development</u> • Carol Samol • Peter Erwin • Samuel Warden-Hertz <u>Interboro Partners</u> • Dan D'Oca • Justin Paul Ware • Claire Pfister • Guido Liwski (Spanish facilitator) <u>Land Use Law Center</u> • Tiffany Zezula
	Attendance	50 attendees (estimated)
	Photos	Google Drive

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Overview

The Peekskill Plan Public Workshop #1 was held on September 16th, 2026 from 5:30 to 7:30 at the Nutrition Center Dining Room at the Peekskill Neighborhood center. This workshop presented key ideas from previous engagement, initial drafts of the Visions and Goals, and engagement activities to gather more in-depth feedback.

The event was formatted as an Open House, with an Introduction station and five stations for the plan focus areas: Land Use, Housing, Economic Development, Transportation & Mobility, and Sustainability & Resilience. Each of the five focus area stations included drafts of the Visions and Goals for people to comment on, as well as mapping activities to respond to. A facilitator from the planning team was present at each station to discuss the activity prompts and answer questions.

All materials for the Public Workshop were provided in both English and Spanish, and a Spanish-speaking facilitator was available throughout the event.

Issue #1 of The Sneak Peak print newsletter was released at the Public Workshop as well, with both English and Spanish versions of the newsletter provided.

The Public Workshop was advertised through The Peekskill Plan website, social media pages, digital newsletter, the mobilization of Community Ambassadors, and printed flyers posted around the city.

Introduction

When people arrived at the Open House, they first stopped at the Introduction station to sign in, get an overview of the event, and learn more about The Peekskill Plan. Introduction materials included posters illustrating the Plan Focus Areas, the Project Timeline, the plan's Leadership and Engagement structure, and selected content from The Sneak Peek Issue #1. People could also pick up The Peekskill Plan postcards, business cards, flyers, and City of Peekskill notebooks.

Overall Vision

The overall vision was presented alongside the Land Use focus area station, but did not receive comments:

DRAFT Overall Vision:

Peekskill will be a connected, creative, and inclusive Hudson River city that embraces thoughtful growth while preserving the neighborhoods, natural landscapes, and community character that make it unique. By investing in people, places, and connections, Peekskill will become an even more walkable, resilient, and prosperous city where residents of all ages, incomes, and backgrounds can thrive.

This incorporates many of the recurring themes from what we've heard so far:

- Connected
 - Creative
 - Inclusive
 - Thoughtful growth
 - Neighborhood character
 - River
 - Walkability
 - Resilience
 - Prosperity
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1. Land Use



The Draft Vision and Goals for Land Use were presented as follows:

Vision

Peekskill will guide growth toward the places best suited to accommodate it while preserving the city's neighborhoods, natural resources, and historic character.

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Goals

	Context	Goal
1	<i>Desire for more diverse housing options and residential infill in appropriate areas</i> <i>Desire to leverage the riverfront with appropriate development</i> <i>Desire for more connectivity and continuous development between the waterfront and Downtown</i>	Direct new growth toward Downtown, the Waterfront, corridors, and other opportunity areas.
2	<i>Concern about lack of connectivity between neighborhoods, Downtown, the waterfront, and other destinations</i>	Encourage mixed-use, walkable development in appropriate locations.
3	<i>Desire to preserve Peekskill's character while also accommodating growth</i>	Protect established neighborhoods while allowing compatible, incremental change.
4	<i>Concern about vacant properties and storefronts – desire to see these properties reused</i>	Reinvest in vacant and underutilized properties before expanding outward.
5	<i>Strong desire to preserve Peekskill's parks, open spaces, and natural and historic resources</i>	Preserve parks, hillsides, historic resources, and the Hudson River waterfront.
6	<i>Desire for stronger local food systems to support food security and sustainability</i>	Support opportunities for urban agriculture in Peekskill
7	<i>Desire for new development to serve the existing community, improve the public realm, and support sustainability & resiliency</i>	Encourage/Incentivise new development to incorporate sustainability practices and be responsive to community needs

The Land Use Vision and Goals received 13 comments. Feedback themes included:

- Encourage development, but ensure it is responsive to the needs of the existing community
- Parks need improvement and better maintenance
- Need for more affordable housing and diverse housing options
- New development should be responsible and sustainable
- Interest in alternative land ownership models such as community land trusts
- Interest in Transit-Oriented Development

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Selected quotes:

“More affordable housing that people of all generations can afford.”

“Policy securing responsible development - developers need limits - must be sustainable economically and ecologically.”

Land Use Mapping Activities included the following prompts:

Land Use Prompt 1:

What we’ve heard:

Growth should strengthen—not undermine—Peekskill’s character. Participants called for growth that is walkable, environmentally conscious, equitable, and compatible with neighborhoods.

Question:

Where should Peekskill welcome additional homes, businesses, or activity? What would make that growth a good fit? Choose up to three cards to show the homes, businesses, or activity you have in mind. Add a sticky note: “This would fit because . . .” Use blank cards for ideas not in the deck.

There were 33 comments on the first Land Use map. Responses included:

Comments about specific locations included:

- Desire for more attractive entryways into the city, particularly near Annesville
- Bus service needed from the train station to downtown
- Better maintenance, lighting, and parking needed at Depew Park
- Concern about traffic pollution impacting the community farm near Forest View
- Concern about vacant properties and desire for more retail and dining Downtown
- Safety concerns about poor lighting south of Downtown
- Better traffic coordination needed on Main Street
- Interest in rezoning areas near Lower Washington Street and Bleloch Park from R2 to R4 for apartments

Comments referring to the entire city, or more generally included:

- Desire for more mixed-use development

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- Desire for more housing options such as starter homes, rowhouses, and low-density housing
- More and better green spaces needed
- Desire for more bike lanes
- Concerns about building too high and overcrowding
- Interest in more retail options including chain restaurants
- Desire for an “anchor” attraction in Peekskill similar to Dia Beacon

Selected quotes:

“On vacant buildings, put up murals and things to make them look better.”

“More retail that anchors the community - laundry, bakery, hardware.”

Land Use Prompt 2:

What we’ve heard:

Neighborhood character means different things in different places. Descriptions emphasized historic homes, quiet streets, trees, diversity, family life, walkability, and community ties.

Question:

What specifically makes your neighborhood feel like itself? Grab a sticky note, put it over your neighborhood, and let us know!

The second Land Use map received 14 comments. Responses included:

- Waterfront: area near the train station is vibrant and connected
- Lower South Street: high amount of vacancy
- Downtown: needs additional retail as well as community space. People like organized events and activities Downtown such as movie nights in the parks.
- Woodside / South Peekskill: people mentioned that this area is quiet, walkable, friendly, and family-oriented
- East Main Street: needs to be more attractive to encourage commercial use
- Depew Park: needs better maintained trails, traffic calming, parking, and improved signage

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Land Use: Overall Summary of Key Themes

- Many comments expressed support for growth and development, but stressed the importance of prioritizing the needs of and considering the impacts to existing low- and middle-income residents
 - Support for mixed-use, walkable, and transit-oriented development in appropriate locations.
 - Desire to reuse vacant commercial and industrial properties, with an opportunity to reduce the negative impact of vacant properties by keeping them from deteriorating and activating them with public art
 - Desire for development that is economically and environmentally sustainable and establishes appropriate limits or standards for development.
 - Desire for more parks and green spaces, as well as better maintenance and funding for existing open spaces.
 - Desire for improved connectivity between Downtown and the waterfront.
 - Interest in additional retail and community-serving businesses, including everyday needs such as groceries, bakeries, hardware stores, and other neighborhood services.
 - A number of comments expressed concern about overdevelopment, building height, and high-rise development, while others supported greater density in certain locations.
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2. Housing



The Draft Vision and Goals for Housing were presented as follows:

Vision

Peekskill will provide housing choices that allow people of different incomes, ages, household sizes, and life stages to live and remain in the city.

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Goals

Context	Goal
<i>One of the single most common concerns so far has been around housing affordability</i>	Expand housing affordability.
<i>A desire for more diverse housing choices and opportunities</i>	Increase the diversity of housing types.
<i>A desire for more small-scale multifamily housing as well as alternative housing options such as ADUs</i>	Support ADUs, missing-middle housing, and context-sensitive infill.
<i>A desire for more homeownership opportunities for people to live and stay in Peekskill</i>	Encourage homeownership opportunities.
<i>A desire to maintain Peekskill's character while addressing the need for more housing options</i>	Ensure new housing complements neighborhood character.

The Housing Vision and Goals received 33 comments. Some of the key themes included:

- Focus on expanding housing that is genuinely affordable to low- and moderate-income households, rather than housing affordable according to broader Westchester County income patterns. Need to define what “affordable” actually means.
- Need for more opportunities for homeownership, particularly for first-time buyers, young adults, and existing residents.
- Desire for more variety in housing options including smaller housing units and ADUs
- Interest in alternative housing models such as community land trusts, housing cooperatives, and other community-oriented housing opportunities.
- Some comments supported additional density, while others expressed concern about excessive density or changes to neighborhood character.
- New development should be well-designed and community-oriented, rather than feeling impersonal or dominated by large development projects.
- Comments stressed that housing growth should be coordinated with infrastructure, transportation, schools, parking, and public services.
- Participants also raised concerns about overcrowding and unsafe housing conditions, suggesting a need for stronger enforcement and attention to existing housing conditions.

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Selected quotes:

“What does affordable actually mean? Housing advertised as affordable has not been affordable to lower income residents or not appropriate for families.”

“Before anything Peekskill needs an infrastructure maintenance plan!”

The Housing Mapping Activity included the following prompt:

What we’ve heard:

People want a wider range of housing choices. The report records support for varied housing types and additional density in appropriate locations.

Question:

What housing options are missing from different neighborhoods? Use the housing cards to show where smaller homes, family-sized homes, apartments, or other options could work.

Participants placed a total of 43 cards on the map. The types of housing selected for each neighborhood included:

- Chapel Hill: tiny houses, townhouses, ADUs
- Downtown: apartments, mixed-use housing, townhouses
- Finktown / East Main Street: ADUs, cottage courts / clusters, duplexes
- Hill Crest: ADUs, townhouses
- Lower South Street: cottage courts / clusters, mixed-use housing, townhouses
- Lower Washington Street: ADUs
- Nelson Avenue / North Peekskill: ADUs, single-family homes
- Pataki Farms: ADUs
- Washington Street: mixed-use housing
- Waterfront: apartments, mixed-use housing, higher density housing above train station
- Woodside / South Peekskill: ADUs, cottage courts / clusters, duplexes, mixed-use housing

Additional comments related to the map activity included:

- Need for more housing options for seniors
- Importance of preserving the existing affordable housing stock

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- Need for more homeownership opportunities such as co-ops and condos
 - Affordable housing requirements should be incorporated into new development
 - Concern about overcrowding
 - Need to adjust zoning and policies to allow ADUs and multi-family housing in more locations
 - Concern about impact of new development on infrastructure systems
 - Desire for homeowner maintenance and repair assistance
 - Interest in alternative housing models such as cooperative housing
 - Parking requirements should be reduced for new development
 - Desire for more open space before housing development

Selected quotes:

“ADUs should be allowed everywhere – not everyone is going to build them, so parking shouldn’t be such an issue.”

“Look for grants to give homeowners a way to rehab their housing.”

3. Economic Development: Strengthen the Local Business Ecosystem



The Draft Vision and Goals for Economic Development were presented as follows:

Vision

Peekskill will build an economy that celebrates the city's creativity, supports local businesses, creates quality jobs, and makes it a destination for residents and visitors alike.

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Goals

Context	Goal
<i>Concern about decline in activity and vibrancy Downtown</i>	Strengthen Downtown as the city's commercial and cultural heart.
<i>Concern about local businesses closing</i>	Support entrepreneurs and locally owned businesses.
<i>Concern about the impact of vacant properties and storefronts</i>	Reuse vacant commercial and industrial properties.
<i>Pride in Peekskill's artistic and creative culture and desire to support and strengthen it</i>	Support and Expand arts, culture, and entertainment.
<i>Desire to bring new industries to Peekskill to support job opportunities and economic growth</i>	Attract clean industries and innovation-based employment.
<i>Desire to strengthen the waterfront as an amenity and destination for residents as well as visitors</i>	Leverage the waterfront as an economic asset while maintaining public access.
<i>Desire for a local economy that supports Peekskill's existing community and reduces waste</i>	Support a local circular economy in Peekskill

The Economic Development Vision and Goals received 34 comments. Feedback themes included:

- Support locally owned businesses and entrepreneurs
- Provide financial assistance, tax incentives, grants, loans, and business-development support.
- Address vacant storefronts and consider policies such as vacancy taxes.
- Improve coordination between vacant property owners and prospective tenants.
- Expand the variety of Downtown businesses
- Support arts, galleries, artist studios, cultural programming, and entertainment.
- Improve event and wayfinding signage.
- Build on successful community assets such as the farmers market.

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- Better integrate Hispanic-owned businesses and the Hispanic community into the broader business community.
- Improve Downtown's appearance and pedestrian environment to promote activity
- Reuse vacant commercial and industrial properties for new businesses, cultural uses, entertainment, and other productive activities.
- Explore economic opportunities along the waterfront while maintaining public access.
- Interest in attracting new employment opportunities while ensuring that economic development benefits existing residents and locally owned businesses.

Selected quotes:

"We need retail - how can we support businesses in their first year?"

"Visually improve Downtown - set standards for businesses to adhere to and create a retail environment."

"The arts community could use an anchor storefront use - such as a co-op."

The Economic Development Mapping Activity included the following prompt:

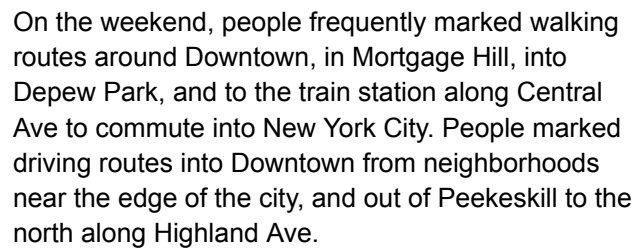
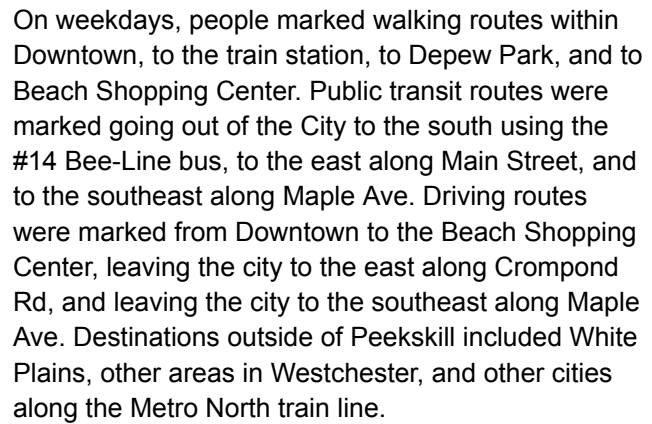
What we've heard:

Residents want more opportunities to work, shop, and spend time in Peekskill. Earlier engagement called for more local businesses, everyday services, and good jobs, while also highlighting the importance of connections to employment and destinations elsewhere in the region.

Question:

Draw a typical weekday itinerary and weekend itinerary. We want to learn about where you work, shop, and play, and how you get there. Use a blue marker to indicate walking, a red marker to indicate driving, and a green marker to indicate public transportation.

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4. Transportation & Mobility



The Draft Vision and Goals for Transportation & Mobility were presented as follows:

Vision

Peekskill will create a transportation system that allows everyone to move safely, comfortably, and conveniently, regardless of age, ability, or travel mode.

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Goals

Context	Goal
<i>One of the top concerns across feedback so far has been walkability and pedestrian safety.</i>	Improve pedestrian safety citywide.
<i>Concern about lack of connectivity and poor pedestrian/cyclist infrastructure</i>	Complete a connected sidewalk and bicycle network.
<i>Desire for better connections between the waterfront, train station, and Downtown</i>	Better connect neighborhoods with Downtown, the Waterfront, and the train station.
<i>Desire for improved connectivity for people without access to a car</i>	Improve transit access and local circulation.
<i>Concern about walkability and lack of activity Downtown and around local businesses</i>	Design streets as places that support businesses, neighborhoods, and public life.

The Transportation & Mobility Vision and Goals received 35 comments. Feedback themes included:

Walking and biking

- Complete missing sidewalk connections.
- Repair deteriorated, unsafe sidewalks and offer incentives or assistance for property owners in maintaining sidewalks.
- Add protected bike lanes and create a connected citywide bicycle network.
- Improve pedestrian crossings, lighting, signage, and traffic calming, especially at dangerous, high-traffic intersections and street segments.
- Establish safer routes to schools.
- Improve connections to parks, Downtown, the waterfront, and the train station.
- Focus on improving pedestrian infrastructure along Main Street and in Downtown.

Transit

- Increase bus frequency and improve neglected bus stops.

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- Explore a regular shuttle between the train station, Downtown, neighborhoods, and major destinations.
- Improve mobility for seniors and residents who do not drive.
- Ensure transit improvements serve existing Peekskill residents and workers, not only visitors and tourists.

Cars and parking

- Improve public parking garages, including lighting, cleanliness, safety, and maintenance.
- Improve traffic signal coordination.
- Address truck routing and commercial truck impacts.
- Use traffic calming and complete-street approaches rather than prioritizing vehicle movement alone.

Selected quotes:

“People move to peekskill because it's walkable. Let's actually make it walkable and safe for pedestrians.”

“We need safe spaces for people to ride bikes to commute, shop, and live all around Peekskill. Infrastructure like bike lanes save lives and uplift communities.”

“Allow subsidies for homeowners for sidewalk repair.”

“Public transit loop from neighborhoods to downtown and riverfront. How do we get downtown without parking?”

The Transportation & Mobility Mapping Activity included the following prompt:

What we've heard:

Pedestrian safety was a recurring concern. Comments identified speeding, difficult intersections, missing or nonfunctioning walk signals, and a need for traffic calming.

Question:

Which crossing or stretch of street most needs attention? Grab a sticky note and tell us why it needs attention. Grab a transportation card and let us know what you think would best address the problem.

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- Downtown: complete streets, safer crossings, traffic calming, protected bike lanes, better sidewalks
- Central Ave: dangerous crossings, gaps in sidewalk
- East Main Street: traffic calming, safer routes to school
- Highland Ave: needs crosswalks and sidewalks
- Hudson Ave: better pedestrian crossings
- Requa Street: better sidewalks, and bike lanes to waterfront
- Waterfront to Downtown: better connections for pedestrians and bikes



5. Sustainability & Resiliency



The Draft Vision and Goals for Sustainability & Resiliency were presented as follows:

Vision

Peekskill will protect and enhance its natural systems so the city remains healthy, beautiful, and resilient for future generations.

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Goals

Context	Goal
<i>Concern about lack of shade and poor tree canopy</i>	Protect and expand the tree canopy.
<i>Concerns about flood risk</i>	Improve stormwater management and reduce flooding.
<i>Desire to protect the riverfront, parks, and open spaces as key resources and amenities</i>	Protect the Hudson River and natural resources.
<i>Desire for better access to parks, open spaces, and recreational resources</i>	Improve access to parks, trails, and open space.
<i>Concern about extreme heat in the city, especially for more vulnerable populations</i>	Reduce urban heat.
<i>Concern about future threats related to climate change</i>	Strengthen resilience to climate change.
<i>Concerns about air, water, and soil quality for the Peekskill community as well as local ecosystems.</i>	Make efforts to protect and improve air, water, and soil quality

The Sustainability & Resilience Vision and Goals received 25 comments. Feedback themes included:

- More street trees needed in Downtown and along major roads
- Drainage, stormwater, and water infrastructure needs to be upgraded and maintained
- Protection of the riverfront and natural ecosystems in Peekskill is essential
- Desire for more green spaces and better maintained parks
- Need for better waste management and environmental education
- Sustainability benefits and resources should be accessible to all residents
- Interest in community solar and other renewable energy options
- Desire for sustainability goals to be more specific, actionable, and coordinated between the City and residents

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Selected quotes:

“Riverfront must be protected. It is the crown jewel of Peekskill.”

“Community solar for businesses to buy into - Historic buildings don't have adequate roof space to make solar affordable.”

“Stormwater management and drainage systems need to be updated.”

The Sustainability & Resilience Mapping activity included the following prompt:

What we've heard:

Shade and outdoor comfort need improvement. Park comments requested shade and seating; Uriah Hill responses also called for more trees and shade.

Question:

Where is it uncomfortable to walk, wait, play, or gather on hot days? What would help most at that location—trees, another source of shade, seating, drinking water, or something else?

The Sustainability & Resilience map received 37 comments.

Comments about specific locations included:

- Annesville Park: needs better maintenance, safety concerns
- Depew Park: trails should be better maintained, ponds should be cleaned
- Downtown: more street trees, concern about truck traffic, desire for more benches and shade, desire for more planting and landscaping, desire for water filling stations or other cooling infrastructure
- East Main Street: better maintenance of trees and walkways
- Fort Hill Park: the park is not accessible and not very visible, could be a better used resource
- McGregor Brook: frequent flooding needs to be addressed, concerns about roads collapsing, interest in daylighting
- Pataki Farms: flooding issues
- Pugsley Park: needs better shade, new furniture doesn't allow people to lay down
- Waterfront: needs more garbage bins,

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More general comments included:

- Desire for more community gardens throughout the city
- Concern about solar infrastructure on water supply
- Desire for more street trees citywide
- Interest in solar powered street lights to address poor lighting
- Desire for more native planting

Selected quotes:

"Fix, drain, and clean McGregor Brook - causes flooding in East Peekskill."

"Solar street lights - lights are out often - dark and bad for walkability."

"More street trees downtown!"

Overall Summary

Across the five topic areas, residents repeatedly emphasized the importance of investing in the city's existing community, neighborhoods, anchors, and infrastructure rather than focusing solely on new development. Participants expressed support for additional housing and mixed-use development in certain locations, but stressed that growth should be affordable to current Peekskill residents, compatible with neighborhood context, and accompanied by adequate transportation, infrastructure, and public services.

Affordability, housing and economic opportunity emerged as particularly interconnected concerns. Participants called for more genuinely affordable housing, expanded homeownership opportunities, diverse housing types, alternative housing models, and policies that address displacement and the rent gap. Many comments also expressed the desire to strengthen local businesses, reactivate vacant storefronts, expand retail and services, and create more opportunities for arts, culture, and entertainment.

Walkability and connectivity were also major themes. Residents identified incomplete sidewalks, unsafe crossings, inadequate bike infrastructure, poor lighting, limited transit, traffic concerns, and disconnected neighborhoods as barriers to everyday life. There was strong interest in better connections between neighborhoods, Downtown, the waterfront, parks, schools, and the train station, including protected bike lanes, improved pedestrian infrastructure, expanded transit/shuttle service, traffic calming, and safer routes to schools.

Comments on environmental sustainability and resilience were generally tied to quality of life and infrastructure challenges. Participants highlighted the riverfront, parks, tree canopy, and open space as important community assets, while identifying flooding, stormwater management, deteriorating roads and sidewalks, heat, inadequate shade, and poor maintenance as key concerns.

An additional theme that emerged was community members' desire to see and understand more specific, quantitative existing conditions data. A number of comments asked about information around business closures, vacancy rates, traffic crash patterns, flooding issues, and other topics.