



# *Vision & Goals*

DRAFT



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# ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

As with the Carrboro Connects Comprehensive Plan, the engagement process for this project was guided by the Town's commitment to advancing race and equity and incorporating values of inclusivity and representation. A broad range of engagement and outreach tools were used throughout the process, improving on what was successful during the creation of Carrboro Connects, as well as what the Town has learned since then through its growing toolbox of race and equity tools. The Downtown Area Plan aims to build on and reinforce the community's trust that their voices are being heard and that the Town is dedicated to implementing a community-based vision for the future of the downtown area. The planning process officially began in the summer of 2024. Three key principles were observed while developing this Plan's engagement strategy and approach.

## 1. Coordinate with Other Projects and Efforts

- Build on the vision of Carrboro Connects.
- Strengthen the connection of this project to other implementation projects of Carrboro Connects.
- Incorporate previous work, such as parking and circulation analyses, the Bike Plan, the Community Climate Action Plan, and the 2001 Downtown Carrboro New Vision.

## 2. Use Inclusive Carrboro Engagement Principles

- Listen to gain understanding.
- Represent and report comments, input and feedback transparently.
- Be open, timely and responsive, and follow through on commitments.
- Recognize not all community members will engage with digital tools, nor be able to come to a one-time public meeting and provide multiple opportunities and means for engagement and outreach.

## 3. Advance Race and Equity and Prioritize Climate Action

- Collect demographic information at every event to understand who has not been heard from and adjust outreach as needed to address gaps in representation.
- Provide all engagement materials in English and Spanish and provide translation services at events.

- Coordinate with local community organizations to understand how to best include the voices of community members they serve, including Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), Hispanic/Latino and low-income residents.
- Limit single-purpose vehicle trips: plan events in places that are accessible by transit, walking and/or biking as well as by car. Host events at times when community members are already downtown and provide virtual alternatives where possible.

Placeholder for final  
engagement calendar

# HEARING FROM RESIDENTS

Promotion of the Plan and getting the word out to community members included the launch of Carrboro's new outreach platform Engage Carrboro—where the project website was housed. Banners and flyers were placed strategically throughout the downtown area. The team brought opportunities to engage with the community to a variety of events including large Town events like the Fiestas en la Calle (Latin American Festival) and Open Streets, as well as small pop-ups at local businesses and the Farmers' Market. Town staff sent postcards and hand-delivered invites and information to residents' doorsteps in the Lloyd-Broad, Tin Top, Lincoln Park, Alabama Avenue and Glosson Circle neighborhoods, as well as mailing postcards and letters to every resident and property owner in the downtown area. The team conducted small group listening sessions with council members and stakeholders, several dedicated workshops, and other community and neighborhood events.

These ongoing efforts, in tandem with the visioning survey administered both digitally and physically in multiple languages, and word of mouth, sought to facilitate having Carrboro residents lead the planning process, as well as creating opportunities for the team to hear as much as possible from those who face barriers to participating in planning conducted solely through public Town Council meetings.



# COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER & ADVISORY BOARD MEETINGS

A series of small group meetings and discussions were held during the project, including business owners, developers, residents, elected officials and non-profit community organizations. By offering both in-person and virtual options for these meetings, the team was able to speak with over 30 community members throughout the project who offered a diverse array of expertise and lived experience at each step of the Plan's drafting. Participants discussed the things they loved about Carrboro, the places for opportunity and potential change, and helped lay the foundation of the vision for downtown Carrboro for the next 20 years.

In addition to small community member and stakeholder meetings, the project team met with advisory boards and commissions several times throughout the process to pull from their expertise and experiences, gather feedback on iterations of the draft, and verify that the Plan was accurately reflecting the vision of the community and Town.

**BREAKOUT ROOM 2**

- Imagine you left for 20 years and came back to Carrboro- what do you hope is still here? What do you hope has changed?
- In a few words, describe your vision for the downtown area of Carrboro, including the Jones Ferry Rd area.
- What would encourage you to stay longer in downtown or visit more often?

You can add summary ideas/points here

Would love to see a pedestrian street in 20 years

Parks, including Dr. MLK attracts people to the area.

Recurring events – smaller than larger? Piggyback on existing

Pedestrian street, gathering place that makes me want to linger

Echo interest from CC re open space and making more

Physical building of Town Hall – tangible, old bricks, part of the Town's history. Hope there is a way for them to maintain as long as in good repair.

Would love to see a diversity of people in 20 years

Would love to see E. Main Street (between Weaver and Chapel Hill) is more welcoming, more hospitable in 20 years

Really, really free market. To have a culture that produces the free market requires things of Carrboro to make it friendly to hosting this event.

Use of the farmers market is wonderful. A variety of public uses in the space

Shaded places for people on foot and bike, to support staying longer. Being downtown in summer expected to be hotter in the future

Jones Ferry needs same TLC, attention as comments for E. Main

**VISIONING QUESTIONS**

1. Imagine you left for 20 years and came back to Carrboro- what do you hope is still here? What do you hope has changed?
2. In a few words, describe your vision for the downtown area of Carrboro, including the Jones Ferry Rd area.
3. What would encourage you to stay longer in downtown or visit more often?

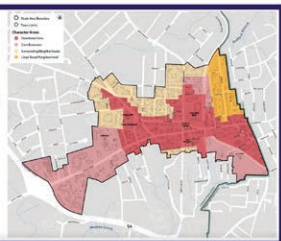
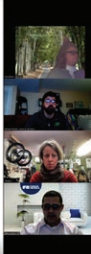


Virtual Advisory Board meeting

**CHARACTER AREA PLAN**

**Downtown Core**

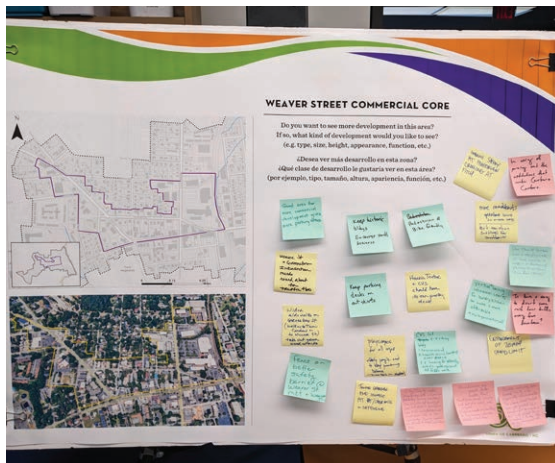
- Intended to include future uses, such as:
  - Affordable housing
  - Mixed use
  - Commercial (retail, daily needs, entertainment, etc.)
- Urban building form that is sensitive to surrounding properties
- 3-5 stories in height
- No new surface parking lots

Virtual stakeholder presentation

# POP-UP EVENTS & OPEN HOUSES

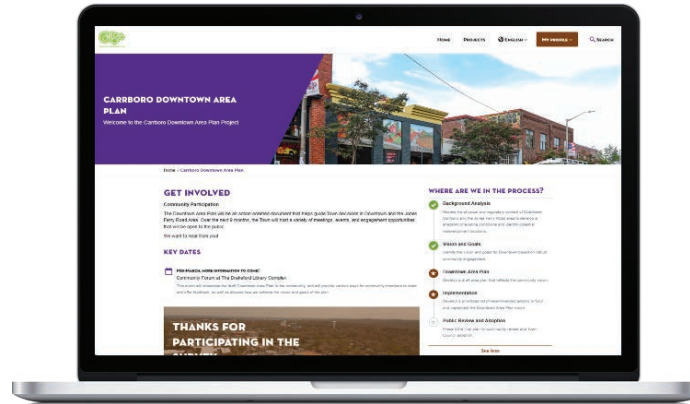
Over the course of the project, the team partnered with community organizations like El Centro Hispano, Marian Cheek Jackson Center, ArtsCenter, Orange County Public Library, CHICLE and Carrboro Farmers' Market to host pop-up events at longstanding Town signature events, and standalone open houses and workshops. Additionally, in the summer/fall of 2025, the draft Plan was released in full for a period of public comment before adoption.



# PROJECT WEBSITE & VISIONING SURVEY

## ENGAGE CARRBORO WEBSITE

Engage Carrboro was launched in parallel with this project and served as a hub for early open discussion and visioning, and the survey. With the ability to translate the site into the six most spoken languages locally, as learned from engagement while creating Carrboro Connects, the website provided a virtual space where community members could read about the Plan, participate in a variety of ways, stay up to date on progress, watch videos of meetings and share their ideas.

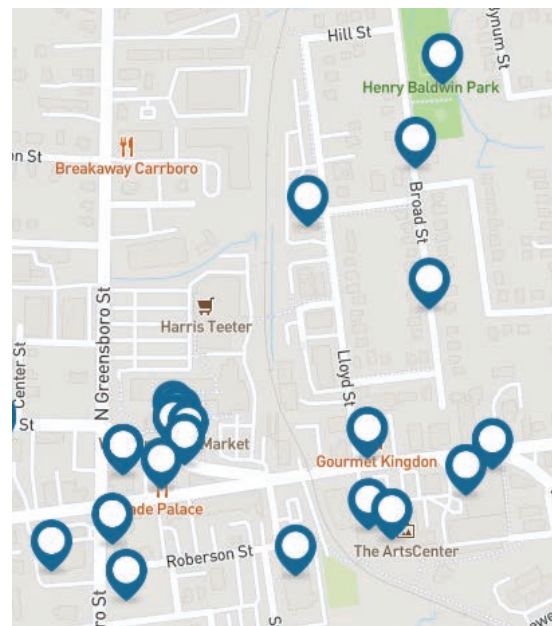


**2,000+  
SITE VISITS**

**800+ MAP  
RESPONSES**

## SURVEY OVERVIEW

An online public survey was launched to gather input from the community regarding downtown priorities, existing conditions in the area and opportunities for the future of downtown Carrboro. The survey was open from September 1 to November 8, 2024 and received 286 responses. The survey was promoted through community events, the Town's website, email blasts and social media. Partners at the Refugee Community Partnership, El Centro Hispano and the Marian Cheek Jackson Center also helped distribute and administer paper surveys to residents and/or administer the questions in Spanish. Highlights of survey results are described on the following pages, with complete, detailed results included in the Appendix.



# VISIONING SURVEY SUMMARY

## RACE, EQUITY & REPRESENTATION

As part of the team's commitment to race and equity, as responses were being collected, staff and the consultant identified a difference between respondents' self-identified race as Black or African American (4%) and Carrboro's population (14%, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates). The survey period was extended and Town staff attended neighborhood meetings and reinforced relationships with Lloyd-Broad and Alabama Avenue residents. This was done in an effort to include Black and African American residents' voices in the visioning process and keep them involved through the remainder of the project.

Survey demographics are provided on this page and represent part of a larger spread of voices heard throughout the project. For in-person events where self-identified demographics were collected, please see the Appendix.

**Figure 12.** Survey Demographics - Age

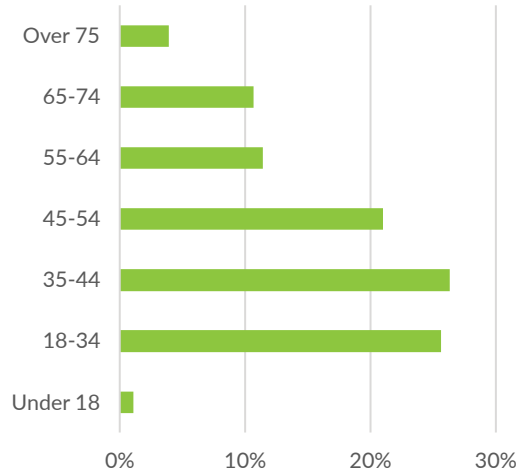


**Figure 13.** Survey Demographics - Home Ownership

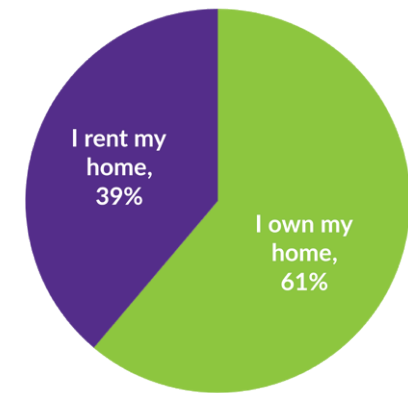
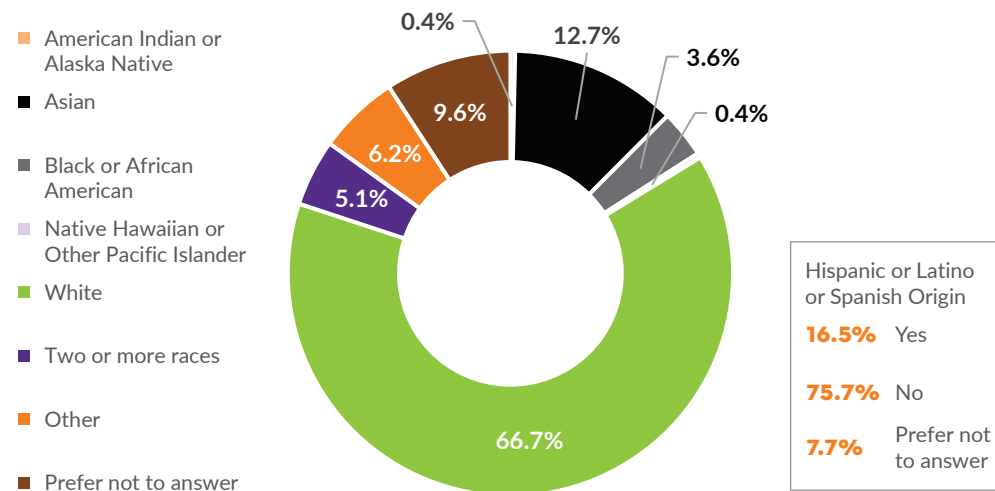


**Figure 14.** Survey Demographics - Race and Ethnicity



## WHAT DO YOU HOPE IS STILL HERE IN 20 YEARS?

Survey respondents expressed a deep appreciation for the vibrant community spirit embodied by downtown Carrboro. Weaver Street Market emerged as a focal point, celebrated for its central role in community gatherings. Similarly, the Carrboro Farmers' Market is cherished for its local produce and social atmosphere. Cat's Cradle, a cornerstone of the local music scene, is beloved for its cultural contributions.

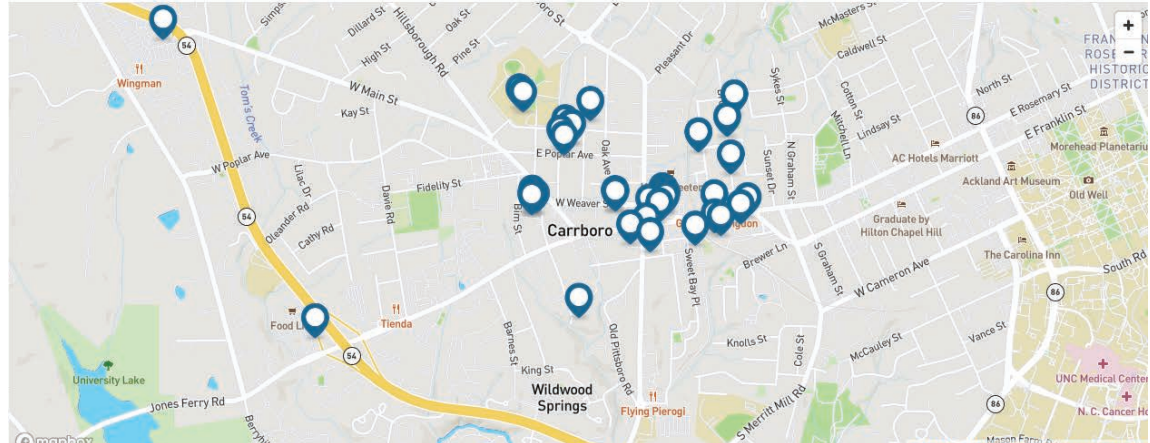
Residents praised the variety of parks and green spaces like the Town Commons, which offers recreational opportunities and hosts community events. The presence of small, local businesses adds a unique charm to downtown, with many enjoying the diverse range of dining and shopping options. The Town's walkability and bikeability were also highlighted, with respondents valuing the ease of navigation and dedicated paths.

The historic and unique buildings of Carrboro were mentioned fondly, with a call to preserve the architectural character that sets the Town apart.

Community events and activities, such as festivals and markets, contribute to a lively and engaging downtown atmosphere. Additionally, venues like The ArtsCenter play a crucial role in supporting local arts and culture.

Overall, the map responses reflect a strong sense of community pride and a desire to maintain the welcoming, inclusive and vibrant nature of downtown Carrboro.

**1** In 20 years, what do you hope is still here? This could be a business, a landmark, a neighborhood, or even an experience.  
Map | Skipped: 77 | Answered: 209 (73.08%)



Map from online survey showing a sampling of comments

*As our town grows I'd love for Carrboro to build more community spaces downtown. Parks, gathering spaces, recreational use, picnic spaces, art spaces, splash pad.*

*A vibrant downtown area with businesses that appeal to all sorts of people and more 'third spaces' where we can gather, people-watch, share experiences*

*General walk and bikeability.*

*Add places for small businesses that are affordable by allowing for more space, maybe going up in height of existing commercial space.*

*Respect the historic district and protect it.*

## How People Spend Time in Downtown

84% of respondents visit the study area at least a few times a week.

When asked about how they spend time in the downtown area (with respondents selecting all that apply), respondents indicated a variety of activities, ranging from meeting daily needs, to socializing, education and entertainment activities. The team asked for more details about the types of places visitors go, to also understand about the kinds of uses are successful and most sought in the study area to date.

These existing activities help illustrate what draws people to the downtown area today, showcasing the wide range of activities and services available that create a lively, active downtown area that supports live, play and work experiences.

**Figure 15. How People Spend Time in Downtown**

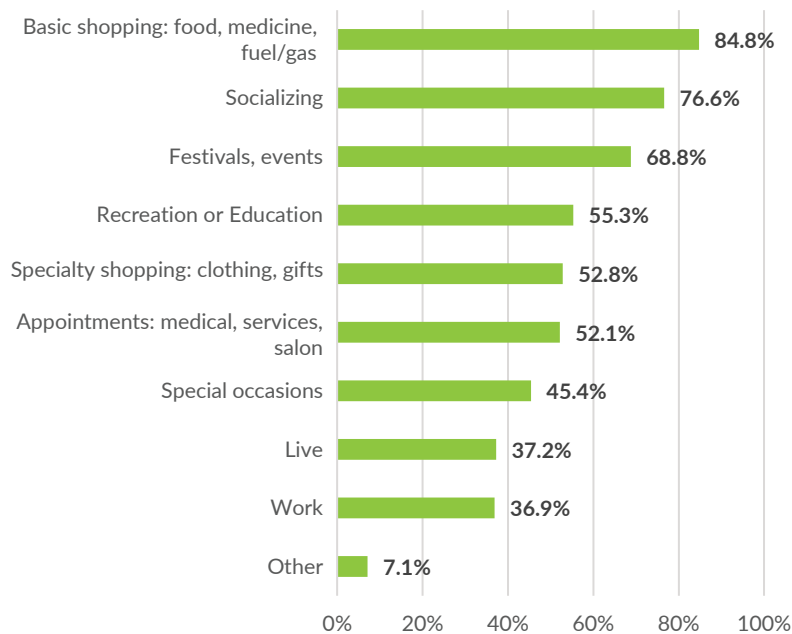


**Figure 16. What Activities People Do or Places They Visit**

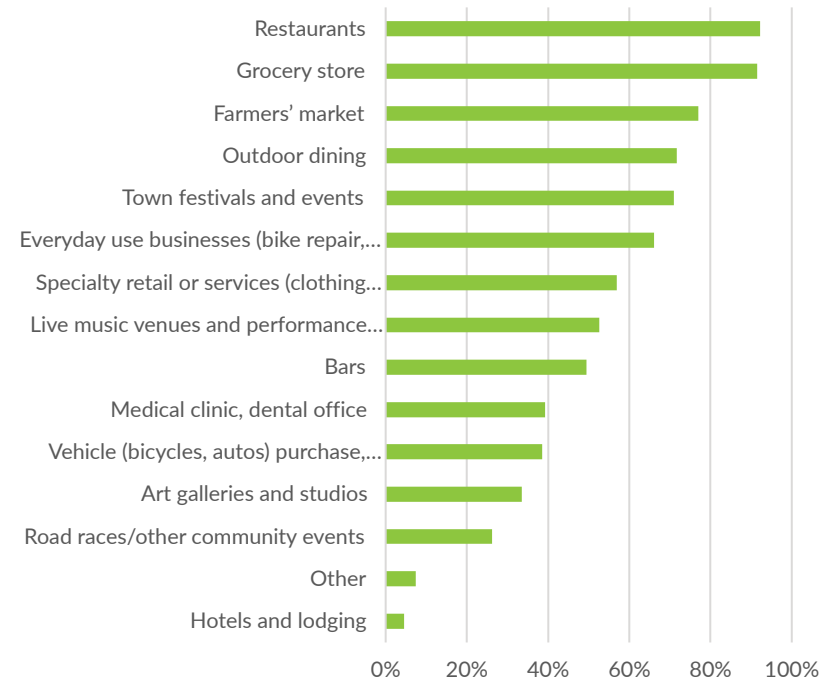
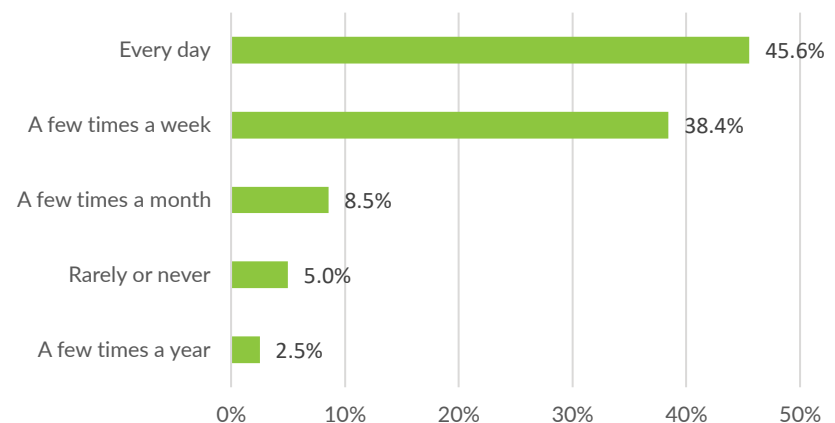


**Figure 17. How Frequently People Visit the Study Area**



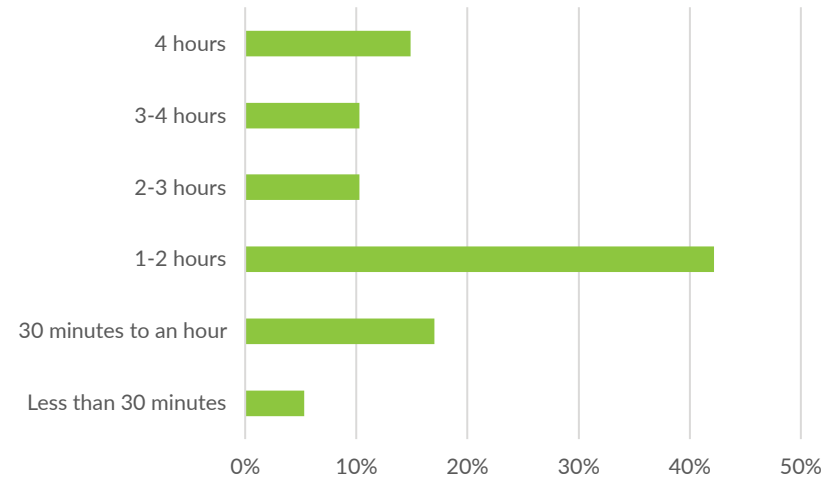
## GETTING TO AND STAYING IN THE DOWNTOWN

### ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO STAY LONGER

Over 40% of survey respondents indicated that they stay in the study area for 1-2 hours when they visit. 67% responded with ideas for what would encourage them to stay longer. The most common themes were:

- More public seating, shaded areas and outdoor spaces to spend time in and with the community without needing to spend money. Suggestions include parks, benches, plazas and other small public spaces, particularly beyond Weaver Street Market to create more opportunities for visitors to walk and stop at places throughout downtown.
- Improved circulation, access and safety for all modes of travel – exploring ways to mitigate pedestrians, cyclists and cars on the road, bus service later into the evening, more public parking and friendlier parking policies on private lots.
- Extended business hours and a greater diversity of dining and shopping options, noting a desire for more global cuisine that represents and caters to a variety of community members, helping them to feel welcome.
- More frequent community and cultural events and additional public amenities (e.g., public restrooms, robust Wi-Fi network).
- Spaces and festivals that provide things to do for all ages. Some respondents commented that many businesses seem to cater to students and younger crowds.

Figure 18. How Long People Typically Stay in the Study Area

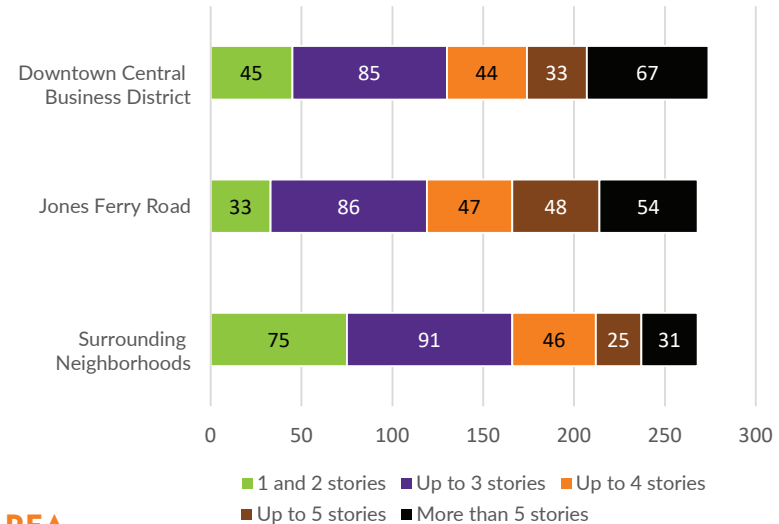


## IMAGINING THE FUTURE OF DOWNTOWN CARRBORO

### MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHTS IN THE STUDY AREA

Respondents were asked what they think the maximum building heights should be in the Downtown Central Business District, Jones Ferry Road area and the surrounding neighborhoods. Most respondents indicated that up to three stories was the most appropriate for all locations. The second largest ranking for the Downtown Central Business District and Jones Ferry Road was more than five stories, while the surrounding neighborhoods were one and two stories.

Figure 19. Maximum Building Heights



### WHAT PEOPLE WANT TO SEE MORE OF IN THE STUDY AREA

Survey respondents were asked what types of things they would like to see more of in the study area and were able to choose five priorities. The most popular priorities were:

- Trees and shade.
- Safe bicycle and pedestrian spaces.
- Public gathering spaces, parks, plazas and/or pavilions.
- Affordable housing.
- Vehicular and traffic flow improvements.

The least common specified priority was buildings or places where people exclusively work (rather than mixed-use where people can live and work), with 10% of total responses.

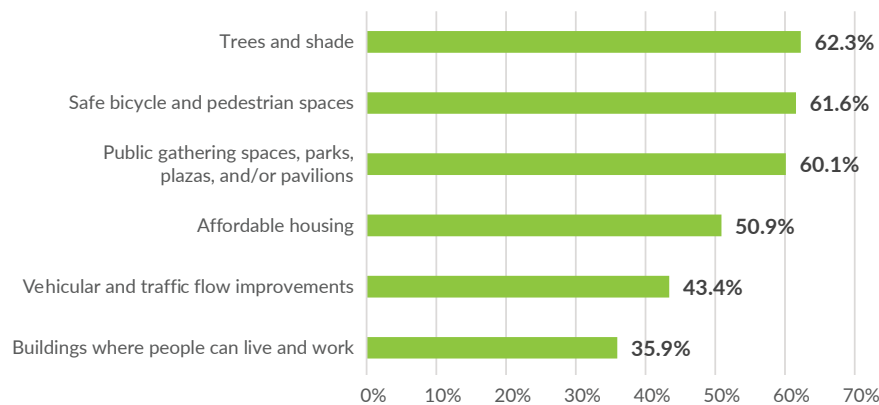
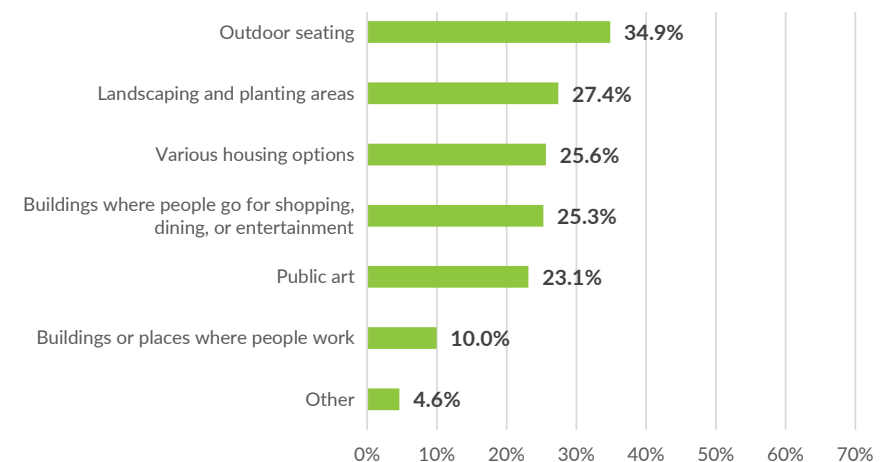


Figure 20. What People Want to See More of in the Study Area

## WHAT DO YOU HOPE HAS CHANGED IN 20 YEARS?

Residents and visitors envision a downtown transformed into a safer, more representative, more accessible and community-centric space.

Desired changes include improvements in traffic circulation and transportation options, with an emphasis on safer streets, more available public transportation and enhanced walkability and bikeability. Safety and connectivity are key parts of this vision, notably continued build-out of the bike and pedestrian network to help people easily and safely navigate the area.

Affordable housing is a major concern, with many expressing a need for increased availability of housing options that cater to all levels of low-income households (30%, 60%, and 80% Area Median Income).

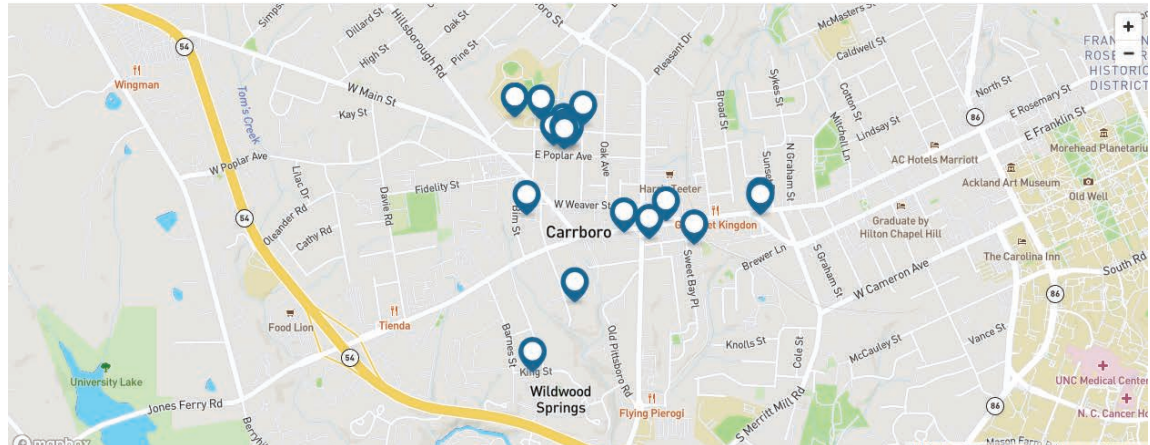
Respondents call for stronger support for the local arts, music and culture scene(s); encouragement of small business growth; and more diverse dining establishments to enhance the unique character of Carrboro.

People desire a climate-resilient future calling for sustainable and eco-friendly improvements and interventions, such as green building and environmental conservation efforts.

Finally, there is a strong emphasis on community-centric development, with suggestions for youth centers and spaces that enhance the well-being of residents. People desire more parks, green areas, recreation facilities and general spaces to foster a sense of community and provide places for the community to gather.

**2** In 20 years, what do you hope has changed? This could be a business, a landmark, a neighborhood, or even an experience.

Map | Skipped: 98 | Answered: 188 (65.73%)



Map from online survey showing a sampling of comments

*As we build more density we add to the heat dome affect in town. We need more water feature parks for kids and dogs to cool off in.*

*Affordable, dense, housing on Jones Ferry toward OWASA.*

*I hope we will continue to prioritize making the town as bike- and pedestrian-friendly as possible.*

*Add flashing lights to these and other crosswalks across Greensboro.*

*I hope E Weaver is closed to motor vehicle traffic either full time, or from 7 am to 10 pm.*

*Work with property owners and stakeholders to redevelop for greenway oriented high density and mixed use.*

# RECURRING THEMES

This Plan embodies comments received from residents and visitors across 286 survey responses and hundreds of attendees across public events (community members could both fill out the survey and come to events). The collective vision and goals of this Plan—for an equitable, climate-conscious and economically sustainable downtown—reflect the outcome of concerted discussions about growth and change in the downtown area. A detailed summary of events and survey responses can be read in the Appendix of this Plan.

Through the varying engagement methods, the Carrboro community shared their priorities and vision for the downtown area. When considered holistically, a series of recurring themes become clear.



## PUBLIC SPACES

The community envisions inclusive gathering spaces that provide engaging activities at no cost, creating opportunities for everyone to enjoy.



## MOBILITY, ACCESS AND TRANSPORTATION

The community prioritizes access and safety, through continued improvements and resources for walking and biking, complete streets that manage traffic effectively and safely, and space for visitors who must drive to come to the downtown area.



## AFFORDABILITY

The community desires affordable housing and businesses, with a particular focus on retaining places that meet daily needs and providing more budget-friendly dining options and grocery stores.



## PLANTS AND GREEN SPACE

The community values trees, green spaces, native plants and green infrastructure for shade, aesthetics and ecological and environmental services that address climate change, like air quality and stormwater mitigation.



## ART, MUSIC AND ENTERTAINMENT

The community desires to continue to foster vibrant spaces like murals, interactive art, color, music and live entertainment to create an engaging atmosphere. Creative expression is a defining feature of Carrboro.



## ORGANIC GROWTH AND HISTORIC IDENTITY

The community emphasizes that new development should be thoughtful and blend with the existing spirit of Carrboro, including a strong interest in maintaining historic buildings, small businesses and local landmarks.



Hold for photos later in  
the process



# VISION

The following vision statement comes from community members' thoughts and ideas and from input from Advisory Boards, Town Council, community partners and residents.\*

It embodies the collective aspiration heard from the community and serves as the foundation for moving forward and is built directly on Carrboro Connects and its commitments to advancing racial equity and addressing climate change.

This statement guides the formation of goals and implementation strategies that make up the Strategies and Considerations, Master Plan, and Implementation chapters.

*\*All data, comments and other inputs can be seen in the Appendix.*



***Carrboro's downtown area is a vibrant, walkable and community-oriented space that balances preserving historic charm with thoughtful growth. The downtown area serves every Carrboro resident, with particular attention to BIPOC and marginalized community members; as a place for daily needs, a place to gather with community and a place to live. The downtown area fosters economic diversity, celebrates arts and culture, and ensures accessibility for all.***

# GOALS

The following goals provide overall direction for the downtown area of Carrboro to achieve the community's direction, vision and aspirations. The goals serve as the ultimate basis for the Plan's recommendations and implementation. They also provide a framework to evaluate changes, challenges, opportunities and issues that were not anticipated by this Plan, allowing it to function as a living document responsive to future needs.

1

Build for climate resilience; protect and plant trees, install and incentivize green stormwater features, enhance and establish public green spaces.

2

Ensure a range of housing choices, including affordable and workforce housing, to support economic diversity and prevent displacement, allowing all current and future residents to thrive in Carrboro's downtown.

3

Improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, reduce traffic congestion, and expand public transit options to create safe and equitable mobility opportunities for all residents.

4

Support small businesses, entrepreneurs and minority-owned enterprises by creating affordable commercial spaces, fostering a dynamic local economy, and encouraging inclusive economic opportunities.

5

Maintain the architectural integrity of historic buildings while encouraging sustainable and compatible development that aligns with Carrboro's unique identity.