Anderson Tomorrow
Shaping our Community for Future Generations

Let's Get Connected! Public Input Report

Date: May 24, 2021

This memo provides a final summary report of input collected from the first round of public engagement for the Anderson Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan update planning process.

Overview of Round One of Public Engagement:

Let's Get Connected! was the first round of public engagement for Anderson Tomorrow. This first round of engagement included virtual meetings held on April 20-22, 2021, two online surveys – student specific and general public- open April 20 - May 17, 2021, paper copy surveys for senior center members and a student specific survey and student focus group meetings. The total number of people who participated in the round one engagement was approximately 1,378 which includes (94 virtual meeting attendees, 539 general survey respondents, and 745 student survey respondents). This first round was designed to not only inform and educate the community about the planning process, but to allow the community to react to the existing 2016 comprehensive plan vision and provide input on new topics or focus of interest for the plan update.

The objectives for this first round of engagement included:

- Make it easy for people to participate (multiple days, times, etc.)
- Provide multiple ways to engage (virtual meetings, self-paced online survey)
- Ensure safe and productive engagement given the current and ongoing pandemic
- Offer different types of input activities (survey questions, small group discussion, etc.)

The student engagement connected with students at Nagel Middle School, Anderson High School and Turpin High School. It included a specific student survey and a virtual focus group session with the Turpin High School student council.

This round also included direct engagement with the Anderson Senior Center members through a presentation by Staff, online survey link sent to the 265 registered email addresses and direct mailing of a paper survey to those who did not provide an email address.

Communications and Outreach Efforts:

In preparation for the first round of engagement, various methods of communication and outreach effort went into promoting this public input opportunity to make sure that people knew it was a choice to get involved and have their voice heard. Methods of communication and outreach included:

- Equipped the Steering Committee with a publicity toolkit, which contained materials to help promote the virtual meetings and public engagement input opportunities. The toolkit included: a toolkit overview, an invitation to the virtual meetings (rack card, 8.5"x11" flyer and 11"x17" poster formats), program/bulletin insert, FAQs, elevator speech with sample social media posts, and logo guide.
- Worked with the Steering Committee to identify groups they would commit to reaching out to and inviting to participate in the first round of engagement. The groups identified by the committee included:

    - Transportation Advisory Committee
    - Mt. Washington Community Council
    - Coworkers and friends that reside in the Township
    - Anderson Area Chamber of Commerce
    - MSD
    - Duke Energy
    - SORTA
    - ODOT
    - REDI
    - ORSANCO
    - Eastern Hills Exchange Club
    - WeThrive
    - Anderson Township Little League
    - Other sport groups
    - Senior Center
    - Great Parks of Hamilton County
    - Anderson Park District
    - Turpin & Anderson Alumni Associations
    - Forest Hills Foundation for Education
    - Forest Hills Council of PTA/Os
    - Anderson Mental Health Collaborative
    - Other ideas but not directly associated with: Homeowner Associations

- Promoted the virtual meetings and survey link through Anderson Insight Newsletter in March.
- Published posts on the Township Facebook pages as well as other social media pages active in the community
- Sent emails directly to the Township Trustees and all members of Township boards and commissions.
- Placed temporary yard signs throughout the Township which advertised the virtual meeting date and times and how to sign up.

WHAT WE HEARD: General Public

This first section includes a summary of the themes heard from the questions asked of the general public either at a virtual meeting or through the survey.

Question 1: What is your favorite place to hang out in Anderson Township?

This question has generated a total of **110** responses from the workshops from the virtual meetings.

Top responses:

1. Parks (Woodland Mound, Beech Acres, Julifs, etc.) (68 responses)
2. One of the many Anderson trails (20)
3. Coney Island, Riverbend (10)
4. Anderson Towne Center (9)
5. Anderson Branch Library (2)
6. Anderson Township Senior Center (1)

Questions 2: In one word, what do you love most about living in Anderson?

This question has generated a total of **1420** responses from the virtual meetings and survey**.** The top seven words are listed below starting with the word that got the most responses.

1. **Community** (Family, Friends)
2. **Parks** (Greenspace, Trails)
3. **Location** (Convenience, Walkable, Accessibility)
4. **Schools**
5. **Safety**
6. **Quality of place** (Peaceful, value)
7. **Food**

Question 3: How strongly do you feel this vision statement represents your vision for the future of Anderson?

This question has generated a total of **595** responses from the virtual meetings and survey.

Average: 6.3/10

Question 4: Regardless of how you rated the statement are there things that you feel are missing that should be captured in the vision statement for Anderson?

This question has generated a total of **568** responses from the workshops from the virtual meetings and survey.

Comments on the content of vision statement

1. Diversity & Inclusion
2. Greenspaces & Environmental preservation
3. Walkability & Bikeability
4. Schools & Education
5. Housing

Comments on the structure/format of the vision statement

1. Not a vision statement
2. Too long/wordy
3. Not aspirational

Questions 5 What additional topics do you think should be covered in the new plan? and Question 6: Please review the following list of 19 potential topics/focus areas. Choose ones you think the Township should consider as part of a future plan. (choose up to 5 topics)

The two questions combined generated a total of **2,838** responses from the virtual meetings and survey. For question 6, each respondent chose up to 5 different potential/topic focus areas out of the given 19. These are organized into themes ranked by most mentions.

Themes ranked by most mentions

1. Diversity and equity (358)
2. Social infrastructure ("third spaces" such as community gathering spaces, libraries, schools, etc.) (266)
3. Appearance and design of community (235)
4. Green infrastructure (rain gardens, bio swales, green roofs, pervious pavement etc.) (191)
5. Environmental Stewardship (188)
6. Art and culture (179)
7. Placemaking (creating public spaces through urban design, art and creativity that promote health, happiness and well-being) (173)

8. Life cycle housing/a continuum of housing choices including apartments, starter homes, townhomes and senior housing (158)
9. Adaptive re-use, infill and building redevelopment (158)
10. Economic resiliency (143)
11. Civic engagement (citizen engagement, civic infrastructure) (121)
12. Historical preservation (112)
13. Connectivity, multi-modal transportation, self-propelled transportation design (109)
14. Public health (102)
15. Digital connection (public broadband and wi-fi) (86)
16. Partnerships (public-private) (74)
17. Co-working, entrepreneurial start-up and maker spaces (61)
18. Disaster preparedness and recovery (COVID) (50)
19. Food production (39)
20. Schools and Education (23)
21. Safety (12)

Question 7: What specific projects, programs or policies would you like to see the township work on in the next 5 years?

This question has generated a total of **155** responses from the virtual meetings and survey. The question was open-ended and responses were categorized based on the existing 2016 comprehensive topics. The comments below are organized by top responses and include a summary those responses.

1. **Quality of life**

   - More arts and cultural events, classes, festivals, community events, entertainment, programs, etc.
   - Consider individuals with special needs or disabilities, and create more activities for people of all ages and disabilities
   - Focus on gathering spaces and places, including a main gathering area
   - Provide more recreational activities, sports, family activities, green spaces
   - Maintain education excellence

2. **People**

   - Improve and attract diversity and ethnicity in the community
   - Educate the community about diversity and inclusion
   - Promote equity and inclusion

3. **Housing**

   - More housing options (i.e. apartments)

- Address gaps in housing prices
- Consider housing affordability and life cycle housing (i.e. affordable senior housing)

4. **Land Use and Development**
   - Improve connection between land uses and walkability (i.e. residential to schools to parks to downtown, improve pedestrian connections)
   - Allow for unique places that draw people into the Township
   - Consider impacts from development (i.e. traffic and environmental features such as floodplains, animal diversity, etc.)

5. **Transportation**
   - Improve Beechmont Avenue streetscape and accessibility
   - Add additional public transportation (i.e. metro line, light rail, improved bus system)
   - Implement safety measures to roads in residential areas (i.e. slow traffic)

6. **Economic and Health**
   - Encourage diverse, unique and local businesses

Other general comments
   - Encourage native plants and trees
   - Develop overall greenspace percentage target for the Township
   - Add more sidewalks in neighborhoods
   - Create more opportunities for volunteering and civic involvement, make it easier to find opportunities
   - Allow for more engagement opportunities

WHAT WE HEARD: Student Engagement

This section includes a summary of the themes heard from the questions asked in the student specific survey.

Question 1: What events, activities and places in the Township do you enjoy? What do you do, where do you go in your free time?

This question has generated a total of **734** responses from the student survey.

1. Outdoor activities (parks, recreational sports and activities – hike, fish, golf, etc.)
2. Dining (fast food, coffee, dine-in restaurants)
3. Indoor activities (movies, shopping, entertainment)
4. Anderson Town Center and shopping center
5. Community events (Anderson Days, festivals, holiday (Fourth of July, Halloween and Christmas) events)
6. Hang out with friends
7. Personal hobby (video games, drawing, dance, etc.)

Question 2: What <u>new</u> events, activities and places would you like to see in the Township?

This question has generated a total of **654** responses from the student survey.

1. Retail (local businesses, athletic wear, clothing, thrifting)
2. Food (non-chain, greater variety, healthy)
3. Parks and Recreation (disc golf, skateparks, nature trails, sports facilities)
4. Indoor Entertainment (arcades, bowling, skating rinks, cheap hangouts)
5. Educational Activities and Museums (classes, art museums)
6. Community Events (additional festivals, food events, concerts, parades, fundraisers, etc.)

Question 3: Imagine going off to College. After graduating what would make you want to come back to live in Anderson Township?

This question has generated a total of **704** responses from the student survey.

1. Friends and Family
2. The good schools
3. Affordable living
4. Job opportunities
5. Amenities (more restaurants and things to do)
6. Access to nature and parks
7. More diversity
8. Safety and sense of community

Question 4: What barriers do you perceive that would prevent you from living in Anderson in the future?

This question has generated a total of **683** responses from the workshops from the student survey.

1. Interested in a more diverse place and new experiences
2. Lack of opportunities
3. Cost of living
4. Lack of things to do
5. Climate/weather/environment
6. Desire for urban living
7. Desire for rural living

WHO WE HEARD FROM: General Public + Students

How long have you lived in Anderson Township?

This question has generated a total of **1335** responses.

1. 0-4 years (146 / 11%)
2. 5-9 years (223 / 17%)
3. 10-19 years (637 / 48%)
4. 20-29 years (101 / 8%)
5. 30-39 years (89 / 7%)
6. 40-49 years (51 / 4%)
7. 50+ years (61 / 5%)
8. I don't live in Anderson Township (31 / 2%)

What is your age?

This question has generated a total of **1,340** responses.

Age Group	Responses	2019 Census
Under 18	50% of total responses	27%
18-24	6% of total responses	5%
25-34	3% of total responses	9%
35-44	12% of total responses	13%
45-54	10% of total responses	14%
55-64	9% of total responses	15%
65+	9% of total responses	16%

What grade are you in? (Students)

This question has generated a total of **742** responses.

1. Grade 7 (2 / <0%)
2. Grade 8 (2 / <0%)
3. Grade 9 (250 / 34%)
4. Grade 10 (210 / 28%)
5. Grade 11 (207 / 28%)
6. Grade 12 (71 / 10%)