



CLAREMONT MASTER PLAN 2017: LAND USE COMMUNITY INPUT

Land Use Chapter Appendix A

The Master Plan Update process included initial community outreach: a Community Forum (March 3, 2016) and a Community Survey (administered April-May 2016). These two different methods obtaining community input yielded valuable information on many different topics, which have been incorporated into the overall Master Plan Update. This appendix to the Land Use Chapter provides an overview of the community input about Land Use topics, which has informed the vision and goals of the Land Use Chapter.

COMMUNITY FORUM FINDINGS

The principal tool for obtaining input at the Community Forum was through a mapping exercise where participants were encouraged to provide input and comments on a map of the city. The participants were asked three questions about the City's landscape. Graphic summaries of the community input are incorporated as part of this appendix. The following text provides a general overview of the community feedback:

What Are Areas of Importance for the City?

In this exercise participants were encouraged to identify and emphasize locations they believe to be important in the City.

- The City Center serves as the community center. Its historic buildings and streets are an important aesthetic asset for the City. Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and public parks are important features to maintain. The commercial area is important with cultural venues, restaurants, retail, and offices all contributing uses.
- Recreational areas around the City are important. City parks, natural areas and open spaces (particularly the northern portions of the City) are valued for all types of recreation.
- Certain areas contribute to the community. Washington Street is an important regional commercial district, Valley Regional Hospital and River Valley Community College provide important services to the community, and industrial development in the southwestern quadrant provide important economic value.
- The western edge, along the Connecticut River and Route 12A, is important as an agricultural area with high-importance agricultural soils, historic farms, and open space.

What Areas in the City Need Improvement?

Participants provided thoughts about what needs improvement in the City - often connected with a specific area.

- The City Center received the most attention. The need to maintain appearances (e.g. collecting trash, maintaining sidewalks, maintaining buildings) and proper stewardship of the buildings (e.g. property maintenance, enforcement of City codes, reduce absentee landlords) were popular responses. Comments included interest in City support for private investment, small businesses, restaurants, and neighborhood revitalization.
- General comments included the need to improve rail and airport facilities, improved hospital services, better access to the Sugar River and Connecticut River, and pedestrian facilities

Big Ideas for the City

Participant response to this topic was diverse. There were as many comments focusing on the City Center as the rest of the City.

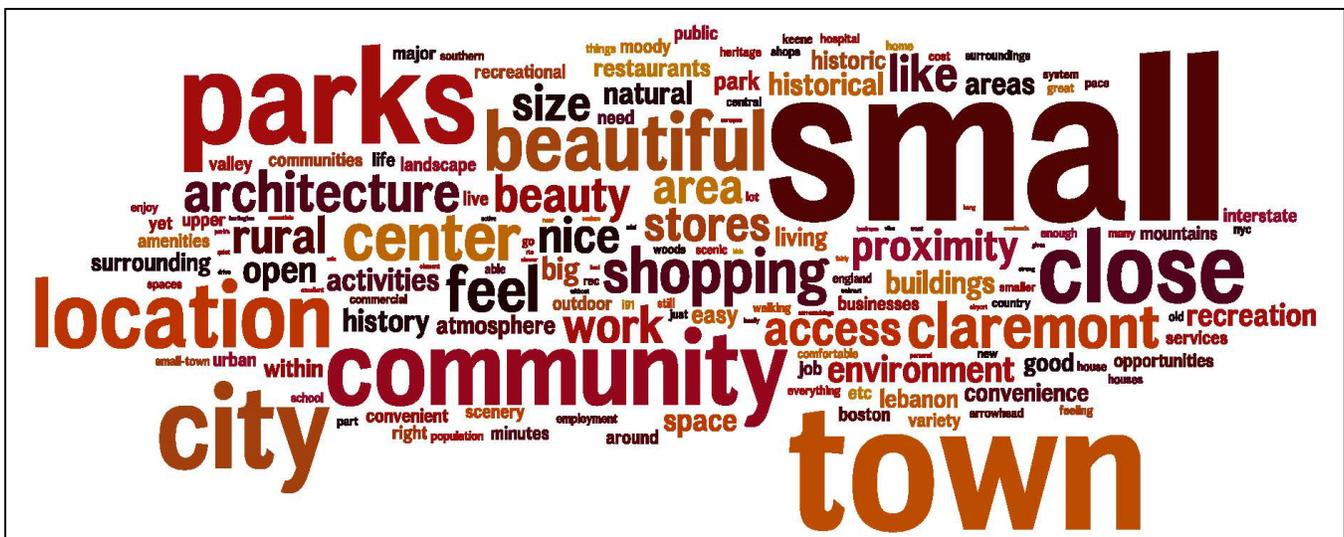
- Enhancing the City Center as a commercial center with a strong creative economy ranging from technical enterprises like the Maker Space to cultural and arts-related enterprises and activities.
- Community aesthetics for City Center, gateways to the City (for visitors), and neighborhood streets.
- Transportation facility improvements ranged from a truck route bypass around the City, sidewalks along Charlestown Road, and enhancing existing transit service and providing shuttles between the City Center and the hospital, community college, and Washington Street.
- The northeastern quadrant of the City would serve best as a rural area serving as recreational and natural open space.

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSES

There were over 240 individual responses to the Claremont Master Plan Survey, which had over 40 questions ranging from general information about the respondents to detailed questions about the City's services. The following summarizes responses to questions as they pertain to Land Use topics.

Question 2: Please list two reasons why you like living in Claremont.

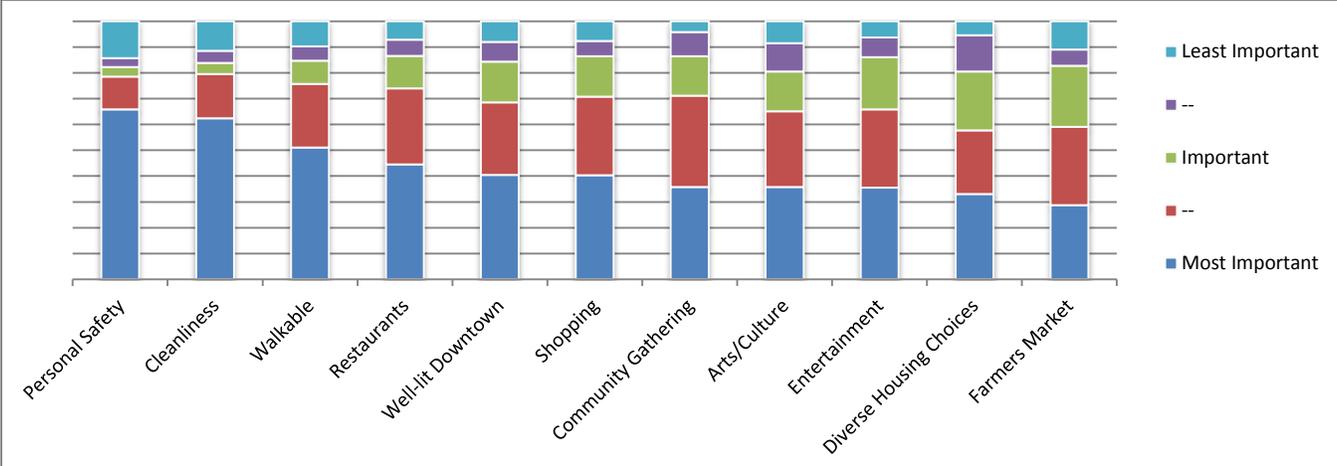
This short response question received over 430 unique responses from almost 230 survey respondents. There were two general response categories: (1) social connections and (2) physical environment. This analysis focused on words and phrases about the physical environment. The word cloud below provides a visual summary; frequently used words appear as larger text. Responses focus on the appeal of living in a small city in a rural area with good amenities, a walkable downtown, and easy access to regional attractions. Important note: Respondents valued social connections as much as land use topics.



Word Cloud Analysis - Survey Question 2 (limited to responses related to land use)

Question 3: Please list two reasons you would like to change about Claremont.

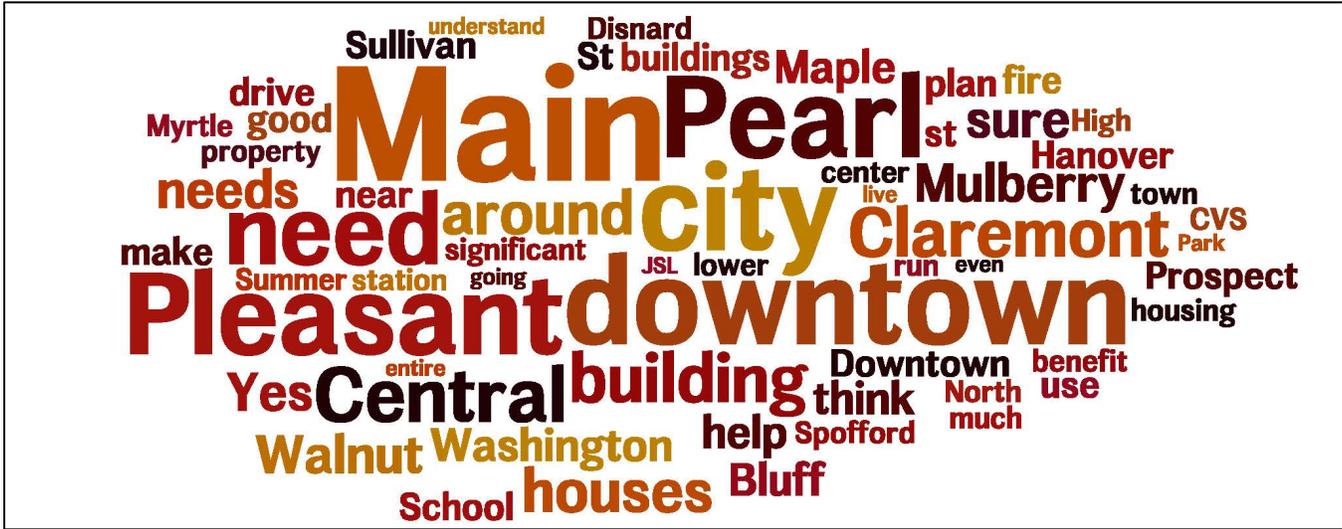
This question prompted respondents to provide short response answers about what they would like to change in the City. There were nearly 470 responses from 240 respondents. As with the analysis of



Survey Question 5 - Important Characteristics of Claremont's Urban Area

Question 10: Are there any Claremont neighborhoods that you think could benefit from their own neighborhood plan?

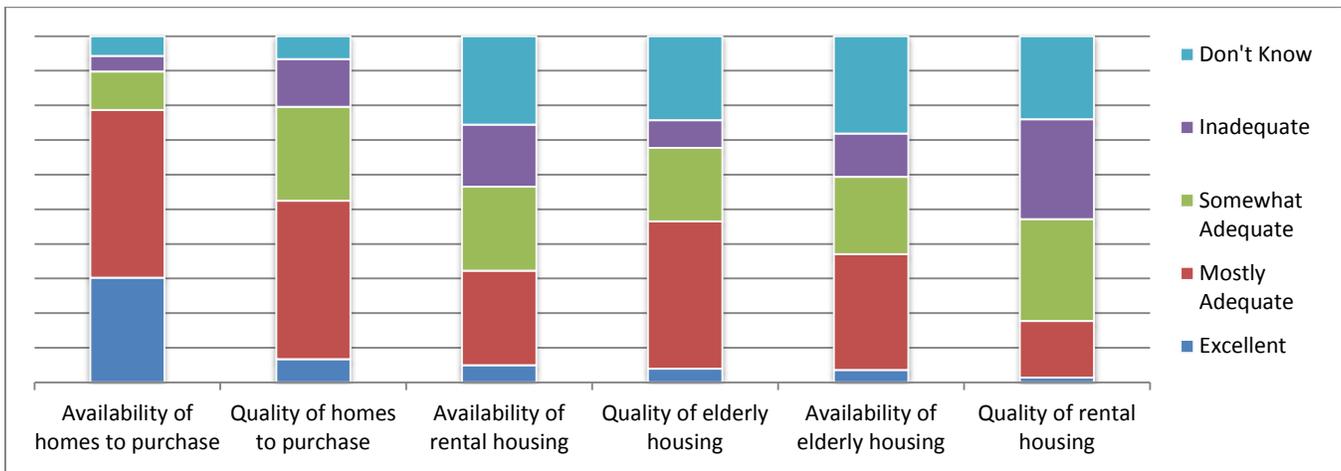
Neighborhood plans are an opportunity to focus on a specific geographic area in the City. This question had an open answer for respondents to list candidate areas. An analysis of the responses (word cloud below) indicates an overall interest in neighborhood plans in City Center residential areas with some interest in peripheral areas like Washington Street. These survey responses will help direct future neighborhood planning, which can be an action item emerging from the Master Plan.



Survey Question 10 - Neighbor Hood Plan Word Cloud

Question 11: Level of satisfaction concerning housing in Claremont.

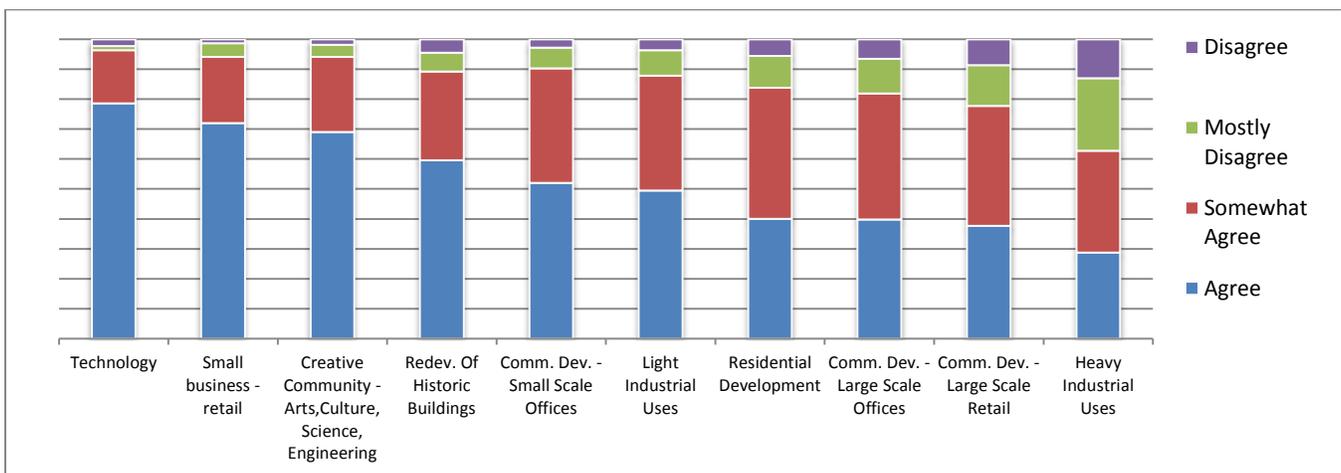
Housing is a major component of the City's landscape from the moderate to higher density City Center to the sparsely populated hills in northern and southern Claremont. Respondents provided input on their satisfaction about a half dozen housing topics. While there is general satisfaction about the availability of homes to own or rent, respondent opinions about the quality housing range from adequate to low. More information about the City's housing stock is an important need.



Survey Question 11 - Satisfaction with Aspects of Claremont's Housing

Question 15: In what direction would you like to see Claremont grow in the future?

This survey question sought to obtain respondent preference about types of non-residential development in Claremont. This public opinion about which economic sectors should be the focus of economic development informs the location and scale of commercial development in the City. The public opinion appears to focus on technology and small-scale commercial development, which would fit well in the historic downtown. Larger-scale commercial and industrial development is less favorable to the survey respondents.



Survey Question 15 - Opinion: Future Economic Growth

Question 16: What type of job opportunities/businesses would you like to see?

Much like the responses to Question 15, respondents appear to prefer pursuit of technology-based jobs with healthcare and local agriculture employment the next highest response. Retail, cultural, and hospitality services round-out the preferred job opportunities.

Question 17: Where would you like to see residential growth occur?

Like earlier questions, the responses were allowed as a short text response. Analysis of the responses by phrases and words consistently returned a variety of responses. There was a group of respondents looking to redevelop/rehabilitate existing residential areas in the City Center. There was also a collection of responses supporting new residential development in areas outside the City Center.

