

MEMORANDUM

To: The City of Carlton

From: Steve Faust
Natalie Knowles

Date: May 9th, 2022

Project Name: Carlton Comprehensive Plan
RE: Summary of Community Outreach

The City of Carlton is undergoing a major update of its Comprehensive Plan with a focus on public involvement and economic development. The objective of the Comprehensive Plan Update is to guide the development and growth of Carlton through a 20-year planning horizon.

As part of the planning process, the city conducted outreach to community members to understand their vision for the future. This process reached more than 150 people through Community Conversations and an online survey. The purpose of the outreach efforts was to ask two core questions:

1. What do you love about the City of Carlton today?
2. What would you like to change in the future?

This memorandum summarizes the key themes identified during the community outreach process. A compilation of community feedback can be found in the Appendix.

Key Findings

The following “themes” emerged from community outreach activities. Each is accompanied by a comment that exemplifies the theme:

Preserve the small-town atmosphere – Specifically the community, safety, and family-friendly opportunities.

“We loved the small-town country community. It was a place people could raise a family and be a part of their community. It was a place where you knew your neighbors and your children went to school together...”

Facilitate community togetherness – Through events and activities, walkability, and investment in schools.

“I would like it to focus on the families that live here more. More park spaces for kids to play basketball. More events that focus on the families that actually live and spend money here.”

Support and expand businesses – The downtown area and its businesses are thoroughly loved, with the hope for expansion of business types (i.e., grocery store, pharmacy, retail).

“The small town but welcoming to all culture that we have. We have small shops, unique stores. It would be nice to have a diversified group of business beyond wine and restaurants but keep the wine and restaurants we have.”

Promote enhancements to infrastructure – With a specific focus on pedestrian amenities, rerouting Highway 47 to reduce traffic, and associated physical hardscape improvements.

“More bike lanes, good sidewalks for walking between the school, neighborhoods, and downtown. Ideally, we could get the trail built to connect Carlton with Yamhill besides the highway.”

Conserve historic features and culture – Preserving historical buildings and features in town, through architectural guidance and overall downtown aesthetic.

“Love the downtown area and the charm and feel of the older established buildings. New commercial and business growth should take the atmosphere and feel into consideration when new construction and growth are approved...”



Additional Comments

The following are responses that demonstrate the actionable thinking and observations on the part of some Carlton community members:

Quotes from Community Members

- *"It looked like a thriving community when I would come to look at houses and visit. Friendly people, small town with vision and close to many activities. People care about what happens to the town"*
- *"I wanted more space for gardening and a smaller more close-knit community. Carlton is close to McMinnville where I worked when I moved here. As a lifelong Oregonian I have a deep connection and roots in the Willamette Valley."*
- *"What makes Carlton special is its sense of community and togetherness. It's a quaint "small town" We need to preserve this because not only do I feel like people move here to experience this, but tourists like that too. They like to go to "cute, small " towns as an experience. A good walking footprint is important too."*
- *"I love all the seasonal involvement of the town like the letters to Santa mailbox or the Halloween hayrides."*
- *"It would be nice to have school go all the way k-12 as population allows. A community activity center, maybe rock climbing and more covered soccer and sport options for harsher weather for the community to thrive off. Complete the trail!"*
- *"I would like to see Carlton become more than a tourist destination. Beyond alcohol, restaurants, and shops. At this point in time, Carlton is a food desert if you don't have transportation."*

Participants indicate that Carlton is a family-oriented community, where many have generational roots that kept them there or brought them back. The proximity of nearby towns and services offers accessibility while maintaining the small-town atmosphere. Housing affordability was a reoccurring theme in the initial interest of purchasing a home.



Online Survey and Community Conversations

An online, open-form questionnaire was distributed between February 11th and May 6th to gauge what community members like about Carlton and what they would like to see in the future. The survey garnered 148 responses. The same themes were covered in “community conversations” with ten community groups, including:

- Yamhill-Carlton School District
- Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)
- Bridging Unidos
- Yamhill-Carlton Lions Club
- Carlton Police Department
- First Baptist Church
- Carlton Business Association
- Yamhill Community Action Partnership (YCAP)
- Yamhill-Carlton American Viticultural Area
- Friends of Yamhelas Trail

What Community Members Like About Carlton Today

Among survey and community conversation participants, there are several dominant themes that emerged regarding what they liked about Carlton. The small-town atmosphere and its associated caring community, the charm of downtown and local businesses, and the historical buildings are all commonly enjoyed aspects of Carlton.

Some respondents enjoy the proximity of Carlton to other neighboring communities like McMinnville, where they can access many of the larger city services. Community members value the existing green spaces and walkability namely from Wennerberg Park and the Yamhelas Trail. The pool is also mentioned regularly as an amenity to preserve and enhance. Safety and family friendly components of Carlton are also expressed, where many noted feelings that Carlton is a great place to raise a family. Additionally, several respondents note that they have family heritage in the area or grew up there themselves. Finally, several respondents enjoy the rural/country and agricultural aesthetic that Carlton offers.



What Community Members Would Like to See Change in the Future

Community members have a variety of ideas of amenities and services that they would like to see in Carlton. Infrastructure and maintenance improvements such as additional bike lanes and walking paths, further connected and repaired sidewalks, school improvements, a community center or town hall, and neighborhood pride and maintenance of yard spaces. Many respondents enjoy the existing local businesses, but many feel there is a need for more diverse business types beyond winery-related activities. Specifically, a grocery store that offers fresh produce and organic options was noted by many respondents.

Traffic improvements that promote bike and pedestrian safety and walkability, slower traffic, continued streetscape improvements, and alleviated parking and traffic congestion are important for many respondents. Access to recreational options such as parks and trails is a frequently cited theme. Additionally, some feel that increased community gathering community spaces such as a plaza or market, public events including live music, and more culturally relevant community spaces and programming could foster a stronger sense of community.

General concern for growing unaffordability, extensive growth, and water costs were brought up by many respondents. Fears of being priced out of Carlton due to housing and utility prices worry residents. Finally, residents would like to a plan for the infrastructure needed to keep up with growth and the tourism Carlton is continuing to experience.

