

NORTH END *Neighborhood* PLAN



Survey #3 Summary Report

Overview

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the planned in-person workshop for phase 3 of the North End Neighborhood Plan was cancelled. In order to compensate for the lack of workshop opportunity, the North End Neighborhood Planning Team created a robust online survey and placed additional engagement points throughout the neighborhood to draw interest and increase participation.

The Phase 3 public survey was open from May 31, 2020 to June 26, 2020 and received 520 responses. The survey was design to collect feedback from the neighborhood on the draft policies and actions that will help the neighborhood implement their vision and goals as established in phase 1 and 2 of the neighborhood planning process. Responses to the survey were relatively representative of the overall neighborhood demographics, however homeowners were overrepresented in the responses as only 13% of responses came from renters.

Draft materials including the full survey results and promotional materials can be found at www.cityofboise.org/northendplan

Top Priority Projects and Actions Overall

The top 10 projects and actions amongst all goal areas based on the aggregate survey results are:

1. Develop and implement a strategy for mitigating the effects of commute traffic in existing residential neighborhoods. (Mobility)
2. Create pathways or preserve rights-of-way for neighborhood bike and pedestrian connectivity where street grid is incomplete. (Natural Spaces)
3. Evaluate need for line-of-sight improvements (such as cutting back foliage, enforcing parking distance from stop signs, etc.) at intersections and implement measures accordingly. (Mobility)
4. Restore native vegetation around trailheads and parks. (Sustainable Systems)
5. Expanded bicycle and pedestrian safety education and encouragement efforts. (Mobility)

6. Encourage the use of pollinator gardens and community food production spaces in public areas. (Sustainable Systems)
7. Create a neighborhood forestry plan to expand the urban tree canopy. (Natural Spaces)
8. Plant additional shade trees around sun-exposed neighborhood playground equipment. (Placemaking)
9. Conduct an annual or semi-annual survey of the neighborhood to keep tabs on neighborhood priorities and needs. (Community Engagement)
10. Work with interested North End property owners to develop retail or restaurant spaces that contribute to neighborhood character, where appropriate. (Placemaking)

The projects on this list show areas of consensus among survey respondents and do not indicate the importance or potential impact of the projects on the future of the neighborhood. The top priority lists were generated based off of a function of the total number of times a project was included in a respondents top 5 priorities in a specific goal area and the weighted score from the following question where respondents ranked their top 5 selected projects in the same goal area.

This top 10 priority list features projects from five of the six goal areas (Mobility, Community Engagement, Placemaking, Natural Spaces and Sustainable Systems), indicating that there was less broad consensus around the projects related to housing. Additionally, it is important to note that all suggested projects and actions referenced in the survey received some level of support from respondents.

Top Priority Projects to be Led by the City of Boise

In total 17 of the 64 projects included in the survey would be conducted/implemented by the City of Boise. The top ten City led projects are:

1. Evaluate need for line-of-sight improvements (such as cutting back foliage, enforcing parking distance from stop signs, etc.) at intersections and implement measures accordingly. (Mobility)
2. Plant additional shade trees around sun-exposed neighborhood playground equipment. (Placemaking)
3. Utilize semi-permeable surface treatments to assist with stormwater management in alleyways and parking lots. (Sustainable Systems)
4. Increase enforcement of traffic laws throughout the neighborhood. (Mobility)
5. Create a “Dark-Sky” ordinance for the North End that encourages the use of full-cutoff fixtures that cast little or no light upward to decrease light pollution (Sustainable Systems)
6. Conduct a study to assess the impact of short-term rentals (STRs) within the neighborhood and across the City. (Housing)
7. Develop and adopt a demolition ordinance governing how and why properties can be demolished. (Housing)

8. Identify property within the neighborhood for the City of Boise to purchase to add to its housing portfolio and make available to households with a range of incomes. (Housing)
9. Install additional pet waste bag stations at parks and public spaces. (Natural Spaces)
10. Develop a cultural plan for the North End, which could help direct resources around preserving and enhancing neighborhood places, cultural assets and partnerships. (Placemaking)

The rest of this summary will go over the key themes and priority projects that are related to each of the six broader goal areas.

Top Priority Projects to be Led by Neighbors and NENA

In total 33 of the 64 projects included in the survey would be conducted/implemented by North End Neighbors and NENA. The top neighbors/NENA led projects are:

1. Encourage the use of pollinator gardens and community food production spaces in public areas. (Sustainable Systems)
2. Conduct an annual or semi-annual survey of the neighborhood to keep tabs on neighborhood priorities and needs. (Community Engagement)
3. Work with interested North End property owners to develop retail or restaurant spaces that contribute to neighborhood character, where appropriate. (Placemaking)
4. Launch a “Thousand Tree Challenge” for the North End in conjunction with the City’s “100,000 Trees Challenge,” a campaign to expand the tree canopy over the next decade. (Natural Spaces)
5. Encourage the installation of community art and murals through creation of a North End mural program. (Placemaking)
6. Meet with cultural institutions such as Idaho Office for Refugees, Hispanic Cultural Center and Idaho Human Rights Commission that can advise NENA on how to appropriately support and recognize cultural diversity in the community and spread information about protection of civil rights and increasing equity. (Community Engagement)
7. Develop a “Tier 2” funding pool for larger FINE ((Funds to Improve the North End)) grants (e.g., up to \$20,000) focused on key neighborhood initiative areas – mobility, inclusiveness and stewardship of history and natural spaces. (Community Engagement)
8. Form or reinvigorate NENA working groups to help implement plan priorities and projects (1,000 Tree Challenge tree canopy task force or Historic Preservation Task Force, etc.) (Community Engagement)
9. Identify North End properties of architectural, cultural, and social significance and work with Preservation Idaho to evaluate their eligibility for state and federal preservation and rehabilitation programs including local landmark designations, façade easement tax credits, or the Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Incentive program. (Housing)
10. Support increased efforts to educate and encourage neighbors on sustainable practices, such as ways to reduce waste, utilize native and drought resistant landscaping, and lower energy consumption. (Sustainable Systems)

Top Priority Projects to be Led Through Collaboration

In total 14 of the 64 projects included in the survey would be conducted/implemented by North End Neighbors and NENA. The top neighbors/NENA led projects are:

1. Develop and implement a strategy for mitigating the effects of commute traffic in existing residential neighborhoods. (Mobility)
2. Create pathways or preserve rights-of-way for neighborhood bike and pedestrian connectivity where street grid is incomplete. (Natural Spaces)
3. Restore native vegetation around trailheads and parks. (Sustainable Systems)
4. Expanded bicycle and pedestrian safety education and encouragement efforts. (Mobility)
5. Create a neighborhood forestry plan to expand the urban tree canopy. (Natural Spaces)
6. Further invest in increased public transportation options along State Street. (Mobility)
7. Develop a Vision Zero Plan. Vision Zero is a worldwide strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all. <https://visionzeronetwork.org/>. (Mobility)
8. Seek opportunities to improve in-neighborhood connectivity (pathways and/or wayfinding through areas with incomplete neighborhood street grid. (i.e. inaccessible rights-of-way, fenced neighborhood schoolgrounds, etc.) (Mobility)
9. Organize neighbors who live within the northwest area of the neighborhood to evaluate the appropriateness of establishing a conservation district to preserve that area's unique qualities – e.g., rural road sections, larger lots and architectural style. (Housing)
10. Work with Hyde Park businesses owners and neighbors who live near Hyde Park to identify appropriate “good neighbor” controls (such as notification of upcoming public events, limited live music hours, etc.). (Placemaking)

Mobility

The top 5 projects related to the Mobility Goal area according to the survey results were:

1. Develop and implement a strategy for mitigating the effects of commute traffic in existing residential neighborhoods.
2. Evaluate need for line-of-sight improvements (such as cutting back foliage, enforcing parking distance from stop signs, etc.) at intersections and implement measures accordingly.
3. Expanded bicycle and pedestrian safety education and encouragement efforts.
4. Increase enforcement of traffic laws throughout the neighborhood.
5. Further invest in increased public transportation options along State Street.

Does the North End support the further study of a permanent closure of 13th Street through Hyde Park?

56.7 percent of survey respondents indicated that they were interested in the further study of this potential closure on 13th Street. Comments revealed that much of the support for this closure was rooted in the idea that it could be studied as a potential project. Neighbors did not want to necessarily see the close but thought that the process could be beneficial regardless of the outcome. Much of the opposition to a potential street closure seems to stem from the desire to reduce any potential negative externalities to the surrounding roads including increased traffic on nearby streets, confusing traffic patterns, overflow parking, and safety concerns.

Key Mobility Response Themes

- Respondents felt strongly that **mitigating the impacts of commuter traffic** was a high priority. There are feelings that recent development in the surrounding area has caused an uptick in commuter traffic that has made some streets feel less safe, more congested and in contention with the desired character of the neighborhood.
- Many of the desired projects and actions related to Mobility focus on **improving the safety and character of the roadways** including line of site improvements, education efforts, traffic calming measures were all cited numerous times throughout the open-ended responses to the survey.
- There was interest in the study and development of **additional public transportation options in the area**, including expanded bus routes, rapid transit on State Street, and ridesharing.
- There are **concerns about the effectiveness of traffic improvements without adequate enforcement**. Many comments referenced enforcement as the limiting factor in keeping streets safe and friendly for all users.

Housing

The top 5 projects related to the Mobility Goal area according to the survey results were:

1. Identify North End properties of architectural, cultural, and social significance and work with Preservation Idaho to evaluate their eligibility for state and federal preservation and rehabilitation programs including local landmark designations, façade easement tax credits, or the Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Incentive program.

2. Conduct a study to assess the impact of short-term rentals (STRs) within the neighborhood and across the City.
3. Develop and adopt a demolition ordinance governing how and why properties can be demolished.
4. Promote the City's existing income-qualified low-interest loans for home improvements.
5. Promote, fundraise for, and continue NENA's partnership with organizations, such as Jesse Tree, that support housing needs.

Key Housing Response Themes

- Survey respondents had **strong and conflicting opinions about the future of housing in the North End in terms of desired density, affordability, architectural style, and historic continuity.**
- **Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) were controversial amongst respondents.** Many believed that this type of developments can help increase affordability and generally do not detract from the character of the neighborhood, while others felt that these have no place in the North End. Many of the concerns with ADU's were focused around limiting the impacts of short-term rentals on neighborhood character.
- **Rising property taxes have played a large role in the affordability of the North End.** Many long-term residents are having difficulties keeping up with the increased annual costs.
- There is a perception amongst some respondents that **the neighborhood is experiencing an influx of new home buyers from out of state, pushing potential local buyers out of the neighborhood.**

Community Engagement

The top 5 projects related to the Community Engagement Goal area according to the survey results were:

1. Conduct an annual or semi-annual survey of the neighborhood to keep tabs on neighborhood priorities and needs.
2. Meet with cultural institutions such as Idaho Office for Refugees, Hispanic Cultural Center and Idaho Human Rights Commission that can advise NENA on how to appropriately support and recognize cultural diversity in the community and spread information about protection of civil rights and increasing equity.
3. Develop a "Tier 2" funding pool for larger FINE ((Funds to Improve the North End)) grants (e.g., up to \$20,000) focused on key neighborhood initiative areas – mobility, inclusiveness and stewardship of history and natural spaces.
4. Form or reinvigorate NENA working groups to help implement plan priorities and projects (1,000 Tree Challenge tree canopy task force or Historic Preservation Task Force, etc.)
5. Host "neighborhood conversations," public educational events or form neighborhood working groups to more closely examine topics of interest and concern to the neighborhood.

Neighborhood Collaboration and Conversation

Most respondents indicated that they were in favor of having organized cross-neighborhood conversations around shared goals. This interest in collaboration shows the importance for

neighborhoods to work together and create interfaces that serve the broader area not just within the neighborhood boundary. Specific interest for projects is shown below:

- 83 percent of respondents wanted to see conversations take place between the North End and the Highlands/East Foothills Neighborhoods around the creation of a more pedestrian friendly streetscape and commercial area around the intersection of Bogus Basin Road and Hill Road.
- 81 percent of respondents wanted to see conversations between the North End and Sunset around safety improvements and neighborhood serving commercial on State and 28th Street.
- 67 percent were in favor of conversations with Somerset to discuss traffic and trail access
- 66 percent were in favor of conversations with the East End around Fort Boise planning efforts.

Community Engagement Response Themes

- **The North End values inclusivity** and wants to ensure that residents feel welcomed and have opportunities to positively interact with their neighbors.
- **There was interest in finding additional ways for the neighborhood to communicate with the City of Boise, ACHD, neighborhoods and other agencies.** One example was a designated resident that would serve as a point of contact for the neighborhood to help increase informational dissemination and representation when decisions are made.
- **Community engagement is facilitated by creating friendly and interactive public spaces.** Many respondents indicated that having pedestrian friendly commercial centers, parks, public pools and other gathering spaces is critical in the creation of a welcoming neighborhood. Could the neighborhood explore options for how to transform underutilized space into community activity centers?

Placemaking

The top 5 projects related to the Placemaking Goal area according to the survey results were:

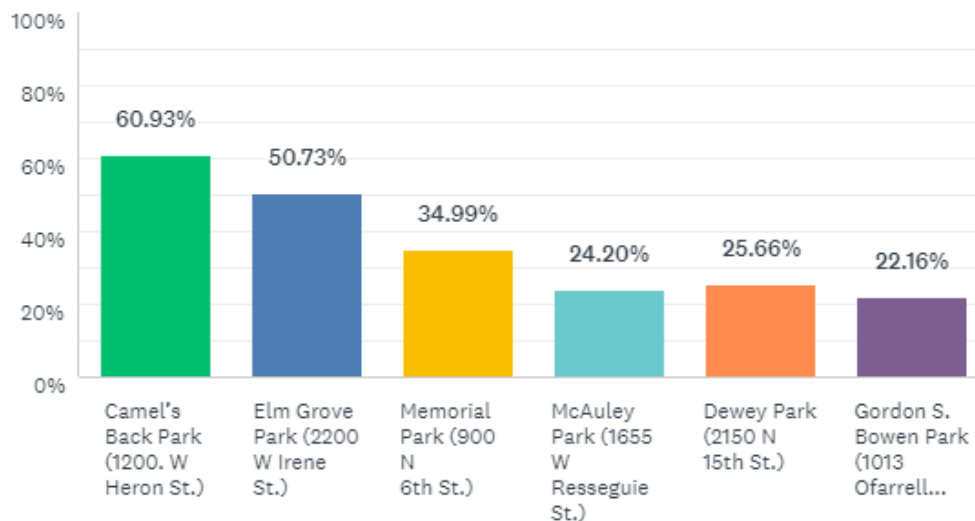
1. Plant additional shade trees around sun-exposed neighborhood playground equipment.
2. Work with interested North End property owners to develop retail or restaurant spaces that contribute to neighborhood character, where appropriate.
3. Encourage the installation of community art and murals through creation of a North End mural program.
4. Continue to promote the use of “FINE” (Funds to Improve the North End) grants for small-scale neighborhood-serving projects.
5. Develop a cultural plan for the North End, which could help direct resources around preserving and enhancing neighborhood places, cultural assets and partnerships.

Does the North End support the development of additional neighborhood activity centers (like Hyde Park)?

Respondents overwhelmingly support the development of additional activity centers like Hyde Park at key locations in the North End. 85 percent of survey respondents indicated their support for this type of development. Comments indicate that while this is supported development needs to be planned carefully to reduce any possible externalities such as increased traffic or noise. All developments should have their own separate and in-depth planning process to ensure that the correct considerations are made.

Park Activation and Utilization

When asked which parks in the North End should be prioritized for additional planning and activation, respondents answered at the following rates:



Additionally, survey respondents indicated that they are heavy users of the North End parks and trails, with 42 percent of respondents indicating that they use the parks/trails almost daily and 38% a few times a week. Only 2 percent of respondents indicated that they almost never use the parks and trails in the North End.

Placemaking Response Themes

- **Placemaking should be balanced and integrated with natural open spaces.** Respondents suggested that placemaking efforts be linked with open spaces, opportunities to engage in natural environments and should not detract from wildlife or habitats.
- **Respondents indicated that they would prefer to see local, neighborhood serving businesses thrive in the area as opposed to chains and larger retailers.** Fresh local foods, support for local artists, neighborhood serving services including salons and pubs were offered as examples of the type of local business that would meet the character and needs of the neighborhood.
- **Lowell Pool was often referenced as an important neighborhood asset that should be improved and/or preserved.**
- **Creating unique spaces with public art and green design** was referenced by many respondents. Activating non-traditional spaces like alleys, building facades and streetscapes with public art from local artists were listed as examples of the type of spaces respondents imagined for the North End.

Natural Spaces

The top 5 projects related to the Natural Spaces Goal area according to the survey results were:

1. Create pathways or preserve rights-of-way for neighborhood bike and pedestrian connectivity where street grid is incomplete.
2. Create a neighborhood forestry plan to expand the urban tree canopy.
3. Launch a “Thousand Tree Challenge” for the North End in conjunction with the City’s “100,000 Trees Challenge,” a campaign to expand the tree canopy over the next decade.
4. Work with local partners to preserve neighborhood-level trail access.
5. Identify, inventory, and map neighborhood-level trail access points and informal trails.

Should the North End daylight parts of Hulls Gulch Creek?

The North End residents who responded to this survey indicated an interest in exploring the possibility of daylighting Hulls Gulch Creek. 56 percent of respondents were outright in favor of the possibility while 31 percent wanted to learn more about the project before making a statement in support. Open ended comments reveal that there are some concerns about the safety of an open canal in the neighborhood, and others postulate that this might not be a priority project given the potential expense in relation to limited budgets.

Natural Spaces Response themes

- **The Tree Canopy in the North End is seen as one of greatest assets in the neighborhood.** There is strong support for the preservation and promotion of this healthy and robust tree canopy.
- There is **a strong desire to create a bike and pedestrian friendly street /pathway network** that creates broad connectivity to natural space destinations both within and outside of the neighborhood.
- Respondents would love to see an **increase in the amount of pollinator friendly and native landscaping** throughout the North End.
- Trail access and use is an important part of the North End’s interaction with natural spaces. **Respondents generally wanted to see the preservation and creation of foothills access points**, while taking opportunities to create more positive user interactions in the foothills.

Sustainable Systems

The top 5 projects related to the Sustainable Systems Goal area according to the survey results were:

1. Restore native vegetation around trailheads and parks.
2. Encourage the use of pollinator gardens and community food production spaces in public areas.
3. Utilize semi-permeable surface treatments to assist with stormwater management in alleyways and parking lots.
4. Create a “Dark-Sky” ordinance for the North End that encourages the use of full-cutoff fixtures that cast little or no light upward to decrease light pollution
5. Support increased efforts to educate and encourage neighbors on sustainable practices, such as ways to reduce waste, utilize native and drought resistant landscaping, and lower energy consumption.

Sustainable Systems Response themes

- Survey respondents had lots of **ideas for how residents could reduce their environmental impact** ranging from recycling initiatives, pollinator and community gardens, greywater and rainwater reuse, composting, etc. These ideas should be promoted in the final Neighborhood plan and via formal/informal neighborhood communication networks.
- **A demolition ordinance/restriction could help reduce construction waste.** This contrasts some respondent’s comments that restrictive limitations make it expensive to upgrade to sustainable components when remodeling.
- Some respondents indicated that **sustainability considerations should be reviewed under a framework of impact.** For example, how much impact does a recycling program have when compared to an initiative to reduce traffic emissions.