

NORTH END *Neighborhood* PLAN

North End Neighborhood Plan Workshop #1 and Survey Analysis Report

Overview

Phase 2 of the North End Neighborhood “Learn” was designed to collect baseline information and opinions about the North End Neighborhood. Data collection and public outreach in this phase was focused on learning about the neighborhood’s existing conditions and how the neighborhood views itself (past, present and future). Public outreach for Phase 2 of the planning process featured two main avenues for input: an online survey and corresponding online interactive comment map, and an in-person neighborhood visioning workshop. The results from this phase of the planning process will influence the development of the neighborhood goals, vision statement, and values and begin to give shape to the plan’s strategies and implementation plan.

The most commonly cited topics and themes from across all public outreach efforts include:

- **Support Active Mobility and Public Transit** – Respondents indicated that the North End Neighborhood has been a haven for walkers and bikers, but growth and traffic have started to change this perception. Future planning and development efforts should strive to increase the walkability and bikeability of the neighborhood.
- **Improve Traffic Safety and Congestion** – Respondents broadly identified traffic (volume, speeds and congestion) as a core challenge and area of opportunity in the neighborhood. Reducing single occupancy vehicle trips and offering improved public transit options were also recognized as an important aspects of traffic mitigation in the neighborhood.
- **Offer Diverse and Affordable Housing Options** – Respondents indicated that the neighborhood is becoming less affordable, associated with rising housing costs and increasing property taxes. Ensuring a wide range of housing options for a variety of income levels was noted as an important aspect to keeping the neighborhood affordable.
- **Preserve the Unique History and Character of the North End** – The North End Neighborhood has a rich history that is worth preserving. Respondents want to see thoughtful planning decisions that help preserve historical architecture and important locations.





- **Keep the North End Welcoming, Friendly, and Diverse** – Respondents broadly discussed that the North End is a friendly, welcoming and unique neighborhood that values diversity. Future planning efforts should support individuals of different beliefs, backgrounds and socioeconomic levels.

This draft analysis report features summarized information from both the online survey and in-person workshop. This analysis will be used to discuss trends and findings with the Neighborhood Planning Committee and inform the final Phase 2 Summary report, which will eventually be used to populate sections of the final North End Neighborhood Plan.

Workshop Description

The North End Neighborhood Plan, Phase 2 public workshop was held on January 14th at North Junior High from 4:30-7:30pm. The workshop had over 200 participants and received over 550 responses to workshop activities. The workshop featured five unique elements, including:

- A **Planning Process Station** that provided an overview of the proposed plan process and asked participants to identify who else should be involved, and how they themselves would like to be involved in the process for the remainder of the plan development.
- A **“North End by the Numbers” Station** that highlighted neighborhood existing conditions and trends, and asked respondents to respond to the data and help the planning team direct future data driven investigations for the North End.
- An **“Envision the North End” Station** that asked workshop attendees to identify what they loved most about the neighborhood and their hopes and wants for the vision of the future of the neighborhood.
- **“Agency Alley,”** which featured 10 participating organizations and agencies who are involved in the North End. Participants were able to ask these agencies about what they have underway in the neighborhood and how the plan will interact with their organization. Participating organizations and agencies included:
 - Ada County Highway District (ACHD)
 - Boise Bike Boulevard Coalition
 - Boise School District
 - Boise High School & North Junior High School
 - City of Boise Energize Our Neighborhoods
 - City of Boise Historic Preservation
 - North End Neighborhood Association (NENA)
 - Treasure Valley Canopy Network
 - Treasure Valley Cycling Alliance
 - Treasure Valley YMCA Safe Routes to Schools
 - Valley Regional Transit and City Go

- A **Workshop Presentation** given by planning team members from the City of Boise and Agnew::Beck Consulting. The presentation gave attendees the opportunity to learn more about the planning process, opportunities to stay involved and how the plan will integrate with other planning efforts at the City of Boise.

Workshop Results

This section provides an overview and highlights of the workshop results organized by station areas.

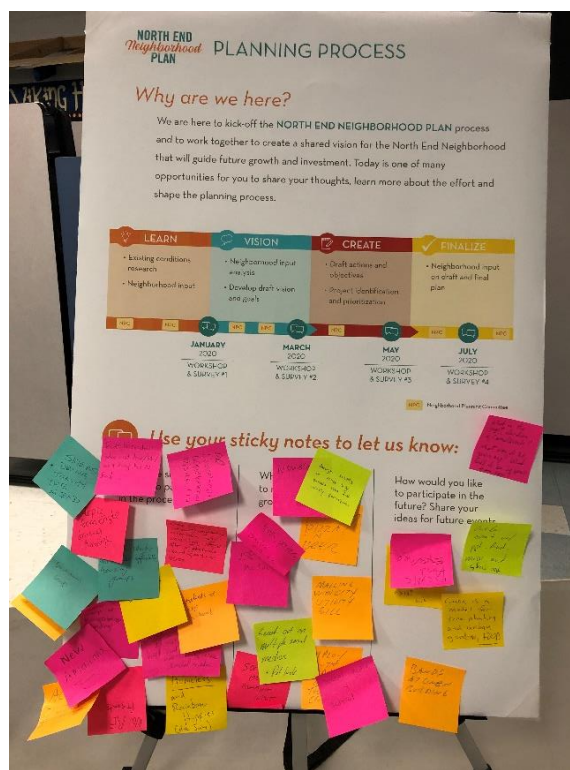
Planning Process

Workshop participants were happy with the described planning process and were glad to have so many opportunities to provide input throughout the plan’s development.

Respondents indicated that it was important to have a widely inclusive process and suggested that the following groups be invited or accommodated to ensure participation.

- Adjacent neighborhoods
- Elderly and disabled individuals who may be unable or limited in their participation options
- Students and youth
- Broad economic and social groups including low income individuals and people experiencing homelessness
- New Americans and Refugees

Participants felt that the best way to ensure an inclusive process was to continue using social media, newsletters, public posters and signage to distribute information about how to stay involved.



Planning Process Station with Comments

North End by the Numbers

When presented with initial existing conditions research for the North End Neighborhood Participants indicated:

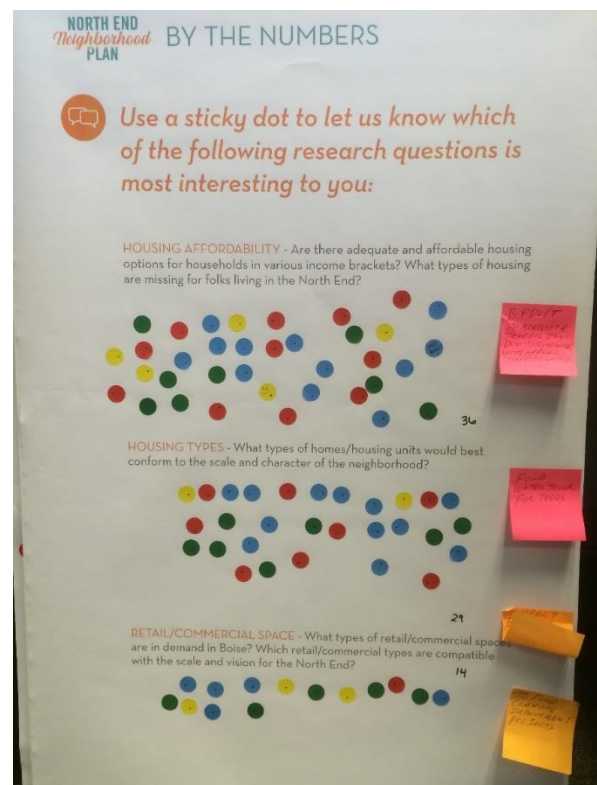
- Feelings that the neighborhood has become less affordable and many wondered how the neighborhood was reacting to home and rental prices increasing faster than incomes. There was also interest in additional housing information, including average vs. median home price, amount of affordable housing related to the rest of the City and impacts of ADUs.

- A belief that the number of ADU's and short-term rentals was being presented in a way that did not represent the full impact of these type of developments. The data collected and shown only measures new construction of houses and ADUs that have applied for and received a building permit within the last 14 years (2005-2019). The City does not currently require the registration of short-term rentals in the City.
- Neighbors wanted to see a reduction in the number of single user vehicle trips and an increase in the number of walkers and bikers.
- The tree canopy and sidewalk coverage numbers are good but could be improved.
- Participants seemed surprised that the median household income was below the City average, while home prices are amongst the highest in the City.

Future Research

Participants were generally enthusiastic about the direction of future “deep-dive” research questions; however, housing affordability and housing types appropriate to the neighborhood received the most support as an area for additional research.

- **Housing Affordability** – Are there adequate and affordable housing options for households in various income brackets? What types of housing are missing for folks in the North End? – **34 respondents indicated support**
- **Housing Types** – What types of homes/housing units would best conform to the scale and character of the neighborhood – **29 respondents indicated support**
- **Retail/Commercial Space** – What types of retail/commercial space are in demand in Boise? Which retail/commercial types are compatible with the scale and vision for the North End – **14 respondents indicated support**



By the Numbers Future Research Question with Comments



- **Activities and activity centers**
 - Parks and Trails, including Elm Grove Park, Camel's Back Park and convenient access to many Ridge to Rivers Trails and amenities
 - Vibrant retail and dining opportunities
 - Active community gathering locations including Hyde park, YMCA, Boise Co-op, coffee shops, etc.
- **Access and Transportation**
 - Walkable and bikeable streets
 - Easy access to amenities and downtown Boise
 - High quality schools that are easy for neighborhood residents to access

What are the “Must Haves and Want to Haves” for the Future of the North End Neighborhood.

Workshop participants were asked to think about the future of the neighborhood and to identify elements they would like to see preserved from the existing neighborhood or developed via future endeavors and changes. The most common comments were around the following topics (underlined topics were by far the most noted items):

- **Housing and Land Use**
 - Preserve affordable and diverse housing options in the neighborhood Encourage smaller homes when properties are being developed and re-developed
 - Preserve the historic homes and architecture of the neighborhood
 - Be consistent in the application of historic standards.
 - Manage the conversion of homes and attached dwelling units to short term rentals
- **Transportation and mobility**
 - Keep the neighborhood streets safe by reducing speed limits, encouraging well designed traffic calming measures
 - Reduced traffic volumes
 - Pedestrian only/protected areas that are in the heart of the neighborhood commercial centers (including Hyde Park)
 - Enhance and develop infrastructure for bicyclists and pedestrians
 - Improve access to public transportation options and encourage less single occupant vehicle (SOV) trips
- **Neighborhood Character**
 - Activate community members from all socioeconomic and age groups
 - Preserve and further develop the healthy and lush tree canopy
 - Preserve and encourage open and green spaces within the neighborhood
 - Clean streets and properties
 - Gardens and green spaces

- **Activities and activity centers**

- Preserve and improve parks and trails, including Elm Grove Park, Camel's Back Park
- Expanded opportunities for retail and dining in the neighborhood
- Active community gathering spaces and neighborhood events

What Values are Most Important for Future Considerations in the Planning Process?

Workshop respondents were asked to react to a list of seven groups of neighborhood values by placing a sticky dot next to the values that they believed were important. Nearly all of the value themes were supported with five of the top 8 receiving 40 or more “votes” from participants. The top five most supported value themes were:

1. Connection – Community – Neighborly with 51 votes
2. Environment – Stewardship – Adaptability & Resilience with 49 votes
3. Well-being – Health – Safety with 44 votes
4. Belonging – Inclusion – Diversity – Equity with 42 votes
5. Tradition – Preservation – History with 40 votes

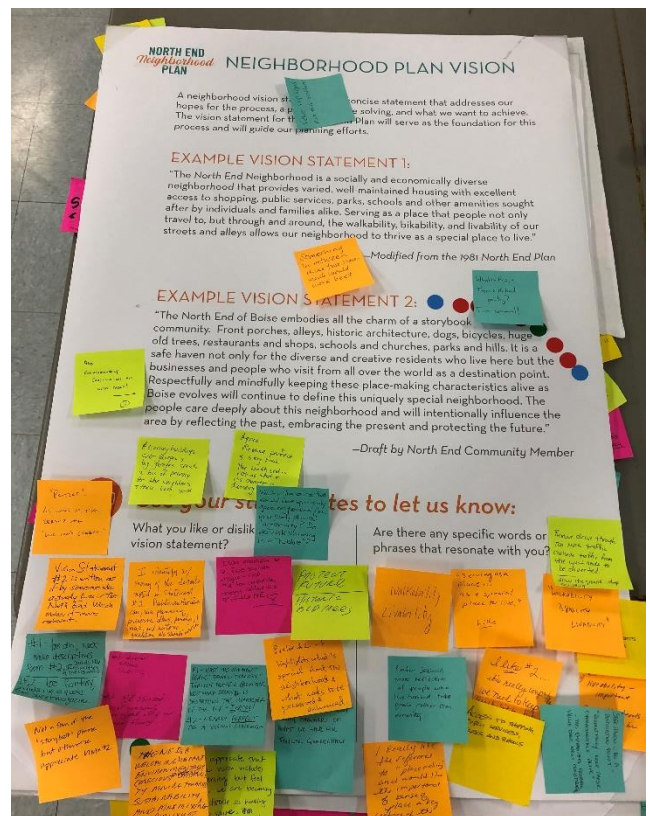
Vision Statement

Workshop participants generally felt that the vision statement drafted by a member of the Neighborhood Planning Committee was a good starting point for the North End Neighborhood vision statement. Highlights from the comments related to the vision statement examples include:

- The vision statement should sound unique and representative of the neighborhood, not like anywhere U.S.A.
- The vision statement should highlight what is special about the neighborhood and what deserves preserving.
- Should reference the future of the neighborhood and recognize that the neighborhood is real not a “storybook”.

Specific topics people want to see mentioned in the vision statement included:

- Livability
- Active Transportation - Walkable/bikeable
- Safe
- Historic value
- Environmentally conscious and sustainable.



Neighborhood Vision Statements with Comments

North End SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results)

Participants were asked to respond to four questions as part of post workshop discussion groups, or in their workshop “passport” which provided basic information about the workshop and served as a raffle ticket. Below are the four questions that participants responded too, as well as a summary of the responses.



Neighborhood Presentation and SOAR Breakout

1. What are the North End Neighborhood’s greatest strengths?

- Strong and developed tree canopy
- Access to many amenities, businesses and activity centers
- Diversity of housing options
- Diversity of residents and visitors
- Access to parks and trails
- A welcoming and friendly community
- Good schools that are walkable to many residents
- Engaged community members
- A unique history

2. What opportunities do you see where the North End Neighborhood can improve?

- Traffic mitigation and traffic safety improvements
- Ways to reduce congestion
- More spaces for recreation and opportunities
- Improved multi-modal transportation opportunities
- Community outreach to new Americans
- Improvements to the access of affordable housing and livable wages
- Increased housing options
- Opportunities for youth to become more involved



3. Toward what big-picture vision should our neighborhood aspire?

- A safe and cohesive neighborhood that is friendly and welcoming
- A neighborhood open to change that adapts and thrives
- A neighborhood that values and encourages diversity
- A neighborhood that values trees, greenspaces, and sustainability
- Hyde park as a pedestrian only area
- Fewer single user vehicle trips
- Retention of the historic feel of the North End Neighborhood

4. What specific results would you like to see?

- Reduced traffic volume, speed and congestion
- Limited or reduced development in the foothills
- A broader mix of housing types and opportunities
- Sustainable designs including solar panels, stormwater mitigation techniques and community gardens

Phase 2 Online Survey and Map Comment Form Summary

The Phase 2 North End Neighborhood survey and geographic map comment form were available online from December 18, 2019 to January 27, 2020. In total the survey received 478 unique responses and an additional 111 responses were received on the geographic comment map. The survey and comment map were available online at the project webpage

www.cityofboise.com/northendplan

Respondent Information

- 94% of survey respondents are residents of the North End Neighborhood, many of whom commute through the neighborhood, work in the neighborhood and have children attending schools in the neighborhood.
- Just over 89% of survey respondents own their home, and the remaining ~11 percent indicated that they were renters. The North End Neighborhood has approximately 48% owner-occupied housing units, which indicates that the survey responses are more heavily biased towards the homeowners in the neighborhood. This summary recommends additional outreach to renters for future outreach efforts.
- 96.8% of respondents indicated that they lived or worked in the North End Neighborhood. When asked to indicate what subarea of the neighborhood they lived in:
 - 42% indicated East
 - 31% indicated West
 - 10% indicated North West
 - 8% indicated the Near North End
 - 7% indicated Harrison Boulevard



The North End in the Past, Present and Future

Survey respondents were asked to let us know what words or short phrases best describe the neighborhood as they viewed it in the past, how they view it now, and what they hope to see in the future. The most common and representative responses to these questions are shown below.

The North End in the Past

- Historic – homes, history and architecture.
- Friendly – Neighborliness was valued greatly
- Eclectic and diverse in both people living in the neighborhood as well as commercial and residential development.
- Quaint, quiet, and beautiful
- Affordable for all residents including the working class
- Safe
- Active – Recreation opportunities, neighborhood events, engaged citizens

The North End in the Present

- *Historic* – Respondents still feel as though the neighborhood has retained its historic character but many also believe that this is slowly deteriorating with demolitions, and redevelopment in the neighborhood.
- *Friendly and Neighborly* – Respondents generally felt that the neighborhood is a friendly place to be with helpful and considerate neighbors, however some respondents started noting that congestion, new development and growth have started to erode the friendly charm of the neighborhood and short term rentals have left residents feeling more disconnected from others in the North End.
- *Trendy and hip* – Respondents felt that the North End has transitioned from the quaint and quiet neighborhood to a highly sought-after neighborhood that attracts trend setters and unique businesses.
- *Becoming less affordable* – One of the most common themes from reactions to the North End today was that it is becoming harder to live comfortably in the neighborhood, and that the North End no longer supports a diversity of socio-economic classes and the “working class family” is priced out of the area for the most part.
- *Experiencing Shifting Traffic patterns and volumes* – Respondents generally felt that the neighborhood was still walkable, bikeable and safe, however growth in the neighborhood and surrounding areas has resulted in increased traffic volumes, speeds and levels of congestion.



The North End in the Future

Responses to the future of the north end were generally optimistic and highlighted the hopes and fears of respondents about the same topic areas discussed in the past and present responses.

- *A strong and inclusive community* – The sense of neighborliness and community is perhaps the most valued characteristic of the North End Neighborhood, and respondents want to see this trend continue. Some feared that this sense of community was at risk due to changing socio-economic characteristics of the neighborhood and a growth of short-term rentals and ADU development.
- *Diversity of housing options, income levels and residents* – Many respondents envision a future for the neighborhood that features a diversity of people (age, genders, races, political and religious beliefs), housing types and income levels. These hopes for the future were mirrored by fears that the neighborhood would continue to become less affordable, pushing out the unique diversity that makes the neighborhood special.
- *Vibrant, walkable and bikeable streets* – a neighborhood where residents choose to bike and walk because the streets are safe and activated with a network of multi-modal connections that make it easy to access amenities and employment centers. Automotive transportation should not be the first option considered.
- *An area with a preserved and protected history* – Respondents envisioned a neighborhood that protects its history and structures. Many respondents felt that this future was at risk due to current trends of demolition, redevelopment and increasing property taxes.
- A neighborhood defined by a thriving tree canopy, vibrant open spaces and well utilized and protected parks and green spaces. Respondents strongly felt that the future of the neighborhood should be thoughtful of the natural resources of the neighborhood (trees, parks, trails, community gardens, etc).
- *Sustainable* – Sustainability and environmental preservation were regularly mentioned in respondents hopes for the Future of the North End Neighborhood.

What are the most pressing challenges facing the neighborhood?

Survey respondents identified many challenges facing the North End Neighborhood. Highlights of these challenges include:

- **Traffic and Parking** – The most commonly cited challenges facing the North End were around an increasing rate and volume of traffic through the neighborhood. Growth in and around the neighborhood has caused an increase in the amount of vehicular traffic moving through the neighborhood, which puts additional strains on the safety of walkers, bikers and school aged children accessing neighborhood school facilities. Similarly, growth has put additional strain on parking in the neighborhood.



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- Harrison Boulevard, 13th Street and 15th Street were the most commonly mentioned as experiencing the most challenges related to traffic and parking.
- **Affordability (housing and cost of living)** – Respondents broadly felt that the neighborhood is becoming less affordable. Increasing costs of housing and rising property taxes are reducing the socio-economic diversity in the neighborhood. Lower income and often younger families are not able to afford housing in the neighborhood, and long-time residents may be struggling to keep up with the increased costs of living and changes to property taxes.
- **Property taxes** – This is worth mentioning alongside affordability, as many respondents are frustrated with the changes to property taxes within the County, citing that neighbors cannot afford their homes with this increased expense.
- **Growth and density** – Most respondents who indicated growth as a challenge did not do so in a way that broadly opposes growth and density in the neighborhood, rather they are worried that growth and density from new development will erode the quaint and unique character of the North End. Participants expressed that ensuring that growth and higher density development occurs in a thoughtful way at the correct locations is critical to overcoming this challenge while still allowing for new housing opportunities and promotion of an affordable North End.
- **Destruction of important neighborhood history** – Respondents who discussed the importance of preserving the neighborhoods unique history are concerned about the rate of demolition/significant changes to historic structures in the North End.
- **Impacts of development and traffic on the Foothills and Ridge to Rivers Trails System** – A trend amongst survey responses indicates that unchecked growth and new development in and around the foothills is a concern for North End residents. Respondents who discussed this topic see development continuing to sprawl into the foothills area, which increases traffic in the neighborhood, and undermines the preservation of the foothills as open spaces and recreation/preservation areas.

What are your **BIG IDEAS** for the neighborhood?

Respondents suggested hundreds of ideas to improve the neighborhood ranging from small scale temporary installations to County wide policy changes that would reshape the planning landscape of our community. This summary cannot list all of the great ideas suggested by survey respondents, and instead highlights the most common themes amongst the suggestions. A complete list of comments is available, and these comments will be used to populate a list of potential implementation strategies for the neighborhood to consider at a later point in this process. The North End Neighborhood Planning Team is keeping a running list of all mentioned projects and action ideas to help inform the next phase of plan development. Big Ideas suggested included:

- Traffic management
- Public transportation access and infrastructure
- Streetscape improvement
- Pedestrian and bicycle improvements



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- Affordable housing and policies to protect/encourage cheaper rents/mortgages
- Changes to City zoning code and historic preservation policies
- Reduced property taxes
- Land Preservation and protection
- Ideas for local businesses, restaurants and activity centers
- Neighborhood events and temporary space activations
- Conversion of some street segments to pedestrian only zones.

Interactive Online Comment Map

As of mid-day on January 28, 2020, 111 comments have been left on the Interactive Comment map that launched simultaneously with the Phase 2 Online Survey. Of the 111 comments, 44% were related to transportation, 37% were for an “other comment” and the remaining 19% were split between recreation, housing/land use and special places in the neighborhood. Comments covered a wide range of topics but were most commonly focused on the following themes.

- **Traffic and safety** – identification of areas that are either unsafe, need improved infrastructure, or have been negatively impacted by changes to traffic patterns.
- **Identification of places the neighborhood loves and values** – Parks, event spaces, schools and important/unique places.
- **Opportunities to improve retail and commercial opportunities** – Specific ideas, improved access, or desirable streetscaping improvements.

The map below shows a visual distribution of comments.

Areas with the greatest amount of comments include:

- Harrison Boulevard
- 13th Street and Hyde Park
- Elm Grove Park
- The Foothills
- 8th Street and the Boise Co-op area
- Boise High School, North Junior High and Longfellow Elementary

