

# NORTH END *Neighborhood* PLAN



## Workshop and Survey #2 Summary Report

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### Key Themes from Phase 2 Outreach

Below is a list of the topline findings from outreach conducted during “Phase 2: Vision” of the North End Neighborhood Plan. The two main components of the outreach were an in-person workshop and an online survey and comment map. The input from both the workshop and online survey was generally consistent. Summaries of comment from both types of outreach effort are included below.

1. Participants broadly supported the draft neighborhood vision, values and goal statements. Specific goal objectives were generally supported, although several objectives within each goal area will be revised based on input (see “Workshop Discussion” and “Survey 2 Summary” sections, below).
2. Workshop and survey respondents want to preserve the North End Neighborhood that they love. This does not mean they don’t want changes or improvements, but that all actions should be thought-out to ensure that they don’t conflict with existing and historical neighborhood qualities.
3. Most respondents support the idea of creating affordable and diverse housing options for the North End, but there is tension around how these ideas are best implemented and what actions the neighborhood should take around housing.
4. Accessory dwelling units (ADU’s) and short-term rentals were controversial amongst respondents, with many indicating a belief that these developments and practices were degrading the quality of the Neighborhood and contributing to parking deficits. Other respondents support ADU’s and short term rentals as they provided more flexible housing/lodging options but did not think the neighborhood should be incentivizing their construction.
5. Mobility continues to be a main area of concern for respondents. Finding ways to mitigate the impacts of traffic and associated safety risks is a high priority for workshop and survey participants.
6. Developing and expanding commercial/retail opportunities in the neighborhood was an area of contention for respondents. Many felt commercial/retail would make the neighborhood more congested, increase the demand for parking and contribute to negative feelings around change in the neighborhood. Others like the vibrancy and amenities businesses bring, which contributes to neighborliness and walkability.

7. Building neighborhood environmental sustainability and preserving natural and open spaces were highly desired by most respondents.

## Workshop #2: Description and Findings

The second North End Neighborhood Plan public workshop was held on March 12<sup>th</sup> at North Junior High from 5:00-7:00pm. The workshop featured open house elements but was primarily designed as a set of facilitated conversations around the plan's goal areas. Everyone who attended the workshop had the opportunity to participate in two half-hour conversations focused on plan's goal areas (Housing, Mobility, Placemaking and Engagement, and Sustainable Systems)

In total 33 individuals participated in the workshop and provided critical input on the draft plan goals and objectives. In addition to members of the Neighborhood Planning Committee, the workshop was staffed by specific content experts who helped facilitate the small group discussions. Below is a brief description of the workshop elements and results by station.

Workshop materials and posters can be found online at <https://www.cityofboise.org/northendplan>

### **Open House Elements**

For the first 30 minutes of the workshop, participants were asked to review and respond to draft plan elements including the vision statement, neighborhood plan core values and draft goal areas. Of attendees that interacted with the materials, nearly all participants supported the proposed vision, values and goals.

### **Workshop Discussions**

The results from the four discussion tables are shown below. Participants were able to take part in the two stations that they were most interested in.

### **Housing**

Participants in the housing discussion were asked to react to and discuss proposed plan objectives. Participants were also shown different housing types similar to those already available in the North End and asked their opinions about if these housing types were needed, fit with the neighborhood, and where they might be located. People were generally supportive of the goal statement – *Preserve the historic character of North End homes while balancing the need for diverse and affordable housing options* – as well as the ideas articulated in the draft objectives, but expressed some concerns that there are conflicting perspectives on what the most important issues and best policies are.

Feedback on the objectives included:

- *Affordability and diversity:* We should emphasize that the North End already provides diverse and affordable housing options, and has since it's creation. What the neighborhood should focus on is *continuing* to provide it. Also asking other neighborhoods to do their part on providing diverse and affordable options. Also, with the popularity and housing prices of the neighborhood, "affordability" is somewhat relative, and increasingly a challenge. Other feedback included separating these ideas of affordability and diversity into two objectives. There was support for the idea of "affordability."
- *Historic:* Suggestions included prioritizing this objective over the other ones, and also going beyond the word "preserve" to something more proactive such as "incentivize."

- *Lot size:* The building-to-lot ratio was also discussed, with some expressing concern on the size/scale of some of the houses being allowed compared to the lot size; these are overshadowing smaller houses and look out of scale. On the other hand, the need for larger houses for growing or extended families was recognized. “Smaller lots” should not be expressed as if it is a universal objective across the neighborhood.
- *ADUs:* Accessory dwelling units were seen by some as a real threat to the neighborhood fabric, when used as short-term rentals and when the number of ADUs climbs too high. Others said short-term rentals should pay into the hotel tax and could benefit the neighborhood and City. Still others said they could be useful long-term rentals that help people afford to stay in the neighborhood, or provide places for extended families to live. Many felt that ADUs should have adequate parking requirements.

Comments on other topics included:

- *Design:* People appreciated the adherence to design standards such as having houses address the street, include porches and be close to one another. Participants liked the idea of considering strong design standards throughout the neighborhood (not only in the historic areas), and thought these should be re-examined.
- *Compatible housing types:* Larger-scale multi-family housing was seen as something most appropriate on the edges of the neighborhood, as currently zoned. All housing types shown except for the highest-density housing was seen as compatible with the neighborhood. Some participants also felt that there was a difference in acceptance between a homeowner applying for a building permit versus an investor or developer.
- *Transportation:* Most participants saw housing as intimately tied to transportation. Some of the ways this is connected include: higher density increases traffic (assuming new residents will drive); higher density can increase parking needs (assuming new residents own cars), which puts a limit on density; the fact that the entity that controls zoning and land use is different than the entity that oversees streets, sidewalks and transportation was seen as a difficulty and adds to the complexity of policy development.
- *Private property rights:* Participants felt that given property rights, the need to protect the greater neighborhood should be balanced with property rights, giving property owners the ability to largely do what they would like to with their property.

## **Natural Spaces & Sustainable Systems**

Participants in the Natural Spaces & Sustainable Systems were asked to react to and discuss proposed plan objectives. In addition to being presented with the Natural Spaces and Sustainable Systems content, participants were given specific project examples that could help “green” the North End. Example projects fell into categories of mitigation (slowing the rate of climate change), adaptation (taking steps to live with the effects of climate change), or conservation/stewardship.

City staff from the Parks and Recreation and Planning and Development Services Departments helped to facilitate the Natural Spaces and Sustainable Systems discussion. Overall, participants agreed with the objectives for both goal areas. When prompted with questions about objectives that stood out and what, if any, projects should be included in the plan, most participants focused on the following three areas:

- *Tree Canopy:* Participants cared deeply about the North End Tree Canopy and supported objectives focused on preserving and enhancing it. One participant suggested that the

neighborhood develop a list of preferred streets trees (as permitted by ACHD) to be included in the neighborhood plan.

- *Xeriscaping and Native Species:* Participants discussed the desire to replace water-intensive turf with xeriscaping and/or native plant species in their yards. Project suggestions included creating a “How to Guidebook,” promoting the North End Native Plan Preserve as a teaching/demonstration garden, and creating a list on the NENA website of “Organic/Pollinator-Friendly” landscapers.
- *Park Improvements:* Attendees also focused on the parks in the neighborhood. Many were very pleased with the large parks (Camels Back and Elm Grove) though there was some discussion without consensus if a dog off-leash hours should be piloted at Camels Back Park. Many participants expressed desire to activate or reimagine McCauley Park and the Oregon Trail Site at Dewey Park (Hill Road and 15th Street).

## **Mobility**

City transportation planners facilitated the mobility discussion and began with a short brief about specific policies and engineering strategies that are often used to create streets designed for people not cars. Included in this discussion were topics like Vision Zero, lower speed limits, and traffic calming measures.

Participants supported the mobility goal and particularly liked that it elevated mobility options other than the vehicle as a priority. Regarding the objectives, participants expressed support for most of the objectives apart from two. Participants could not agree about mobility objective #2, - *Encourage pedestrian only/protected areas that are in the heart of the neighborhood commercial centers (Hyde Park)*. Participants believed that it would create more parking and traffic problems on neighboring streets.

Furthermore, though participants supported transit, they wanted objective #4 to have a more regional focus. Many felt that walking and biking were better transportation options within the North End but that supporting investment in transit regionally (such as along State Street) could be a solution to mitigate some of the effects of regional traffic through the neighborhood.

When identifying projects, participants agreed with the projects included on the handout but also focused on the following topics:

- *Improvement of intersections:* Neighbors felt strongly that intersections across the neighborhood were a problem for all transportation users. Projects focused on increasing visibility at intersections were highly desired such increasing lighting at crosswalks, painting crosswalks, painting no parking zones along intersection curbs, and posting “No Parking” signs.
- *A comprehensive neighborhood-wide traffic calming approach:* Participants felt that calming just one corridor within the North End was not an effective way to increase safety within the whole neighborhood. Participants felt that due to the neighborhood street grid, traffic problems are just relocated to another street when a singular street is “calmed” through redesign. Participants wanted projects that would affect the neighborhood comprehensively to calm all traffic (networks of bulb outs, stop signs, neighborhood wide reduced speeds etc.).

## **Placemaking and Neighborhood Engagement Summary**

Participants at the Placemaking and Neighborhood Engagement discussion table generally supported these two goal areas and associated objectives, however there was some disagreement on the best way to create places that improve the neighborhood. Some of the participants in the discussions really loved the way the North End neighborhood had become a popular destination bringing in new restaurants, active spaces and lively individuals, while others felt that the Neighborhood was losing much of what made it special in the past, a quiet neighborhood with local serving businesses and friendly neighbors.

Participants in this conversation were very interesting in creating neighborhood capacity through small acts of neighborliness, such as offering to share a glass recycling bin, or hosting pop-up picnics with neighbors they might not otherwise get to know.

These conversations around placemaking and neighborhood engagement were supported by a representative from the City of Boise's Energize Our Neighborhoods Program.

Project ideas and actions discussed included:

- Outdoor neighborhood movie nights
- Neighborhood art installations
- Alleyway beautification
- Community gardens, pollinator gardens – improved landscaping throughout the neighborhood
- Shared glass recycling between households, single dumpsters for multifamily residences to open up spaces that would be filled with individual garbage and recycling bins
- Historic walking tours and preserved photo progression of the neighborhood
- Friendly neighborhood competitions such as holiday decorating, clean-up days.
- Increased neighborhood outdoor activities by improving trailheads, creating kid friendly spaces in the foothills and moveable supervised playgrounds
- Pop-up picnics in neighborhood yards (activate spaces that are typically not public spaces).

## **Survey #2: Description and Findings**

The second North End Neighborhood Plan survey was open from February 23 to March 31, 2020 and received a total of 143 responses. The survey was designed to collect feedback from the Neighborhood on the draft vision, values, goals and objective statements. Additionally, the survey was designed to collect feedback about specific projects the neighborhood would like to see implemented. These project suggestions will be utilized in creating a list of priority North End Neighborhood actions.

Below is a brief summary of key themes and findings from the survey responses. Draft materials including the specific language presented at the survey and workshop can be found at <https://www.cityofboise.org/media/9773/neneighborhoodplan-goals-objectives-r.pdf>

### ***Neighborhood Vision and Values***

90.9 percent of respondents believed that the draft vision statement captured their vision for the future of the North End. Those who did not indicate support for the vision generally cited small issues with the language and a belief that the statement did not respond to changes the neighborhood is facing from increased visitation, nearby development and traffic impacts.

Respondents generally supported the three values statements

1. **Walkable** – 99 percent of respondents either strongly agreed (86%) or somewhat agreed (13%) that this was a value statement that should be included in the North End Neighborhood Plan
2. **Inclusive** – 89 percent of respondents either strongly agreed (70%) or somewhat agreed (19%) that this was a value statement that should be included in the North End Neighborhood Plan.
3. **Stewardship** – 95 percent of respondents either strong agreed (78%) or somewhat agreed (17%) that this was a value statement that should be included in the North End Neighborhood Plan.

### ***Neighborhood Goals and Objectives***

Survey respondents were asked to review and respond to six neighborhood goal areas and associated objectives designed to achieve the goals. A summary of input for each goal area and associated objectives is shown below

#### **Housing**

89 percent of respondents either strongly agreed (61%) or somewhat agreed (28%) that the housing goal of *“Preserve the historic character of North End homes while balancing the need for diverse and affordable housing options”* was an outcome the North End Neighborhood should be working toward. The Housing objectives were the least supported amongst all goal areas by respondents and are shown ranked from most to least supportive in the following list.

1. Preserve the historic homes and architecture of the neighborhood (77% strongly agreed)
2. Promote affordable and diverse housing options in the neighborhood (52% strongly agreed)
3. Encourage smaller homes and lots when properties are being developed and re-developed (43% strongly agreed)
4. Incentivize the use of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and other small/nontraditional housing options as long-term affordable housing options (35% strongly agreed).

#### **Mobility**

89 percent of respondents strongly agreed, and 7 percent somewhat agreed that the Mobility goal to *“Provide safe, convenient and pleasant walking, bicycling, and transit options”* was a desired outcome of the neighborhood planning process. The specific mobility objectives were generally supported and are shown ranked from most to least supported in the following list.

1. Keep the neighborhood streets safe by reducing speed and advocating for well-designed traffic calming measures (86% strongly agreed)
2. Enhance and develop infrastructure for bicyclists and pedestrians (84% strongly agreed)
3. Improve access to and support investment in public transportation within the neighborhood and throughout the Treasure Valley (73% strongly agreed)
4. Encourage pedestrian only/protected areas that are in the heart of the neighborhood commercial centers (Hyde Park) (68% strongly agreed)
5. Encourage less single occupant vehicle (SOV) trips (57% strongly agreed).

#### **Natural Spaces**

91 percent of respondents strongly agreed, and 5 percent somewhat agreed that the natural spaces goal to *“Conserve, enhance and protect experiences with nature at every scale.”* was a

desired outcome of the neighborhood planning process. The specific natural spaces objectives were the most supported objectives amongst the six goal areas and are shown ranked from most to least supported in the following list.

1. Conserve open and green spaces within the neighborhood (91% strongly agreed)
2. Preserve connections and access to trails and foothills (90% strongly agreed)
3. Preserve and further develop the neighborhood tree canopy (88% strongly agreed)
4. Improve parks, including Elm Grove Park and Camel's Back Park (79% strongly agreed)

### **Sustainable Systems**

75 percent of respondents strongly agreed, and 20 percent somewhat agreed that the sustainable systems goal to *"Promote infrastructure systems that are forward-thinking and focused on sustainable living and climate resilience"* was a desired outcome of the neighborhood planning process. The specific sustainable systems objectives were generally supported and are shown ranked from most to least supported in the following list.

1. Mitigate the effects of stormwater runoff through ecologically responsible techniques (83% strongly agreed)
2. Encourage the development of community gardens and pollinator programs (82% strongly agreed)
3. Increase the rate of recycling, reuse, and composting while decreasing the waste stream to the landfill (81% strongly agreed)
4. Encourage the use of environmentally friendly site improvements such as pervious paving and 'Green' building techniques (79% strongly agreed)
5. Offer incentives for the use of sustainable energy (68% strongly agreed)

### **Placemaking**

78 percent of respondents strongly agreed, and 14 percent somewhat agreed that the placemaking goal to *"Protect, celebrate and build on our neighborhood's legacy of creating exceptional, beloved public spaces."* was a desired outcome of the neighborhood planning process. The specific placemaking objectives were only partially supported and are shown ranked from most to least supported in the following list. Note: This goal area had the least supported objective throughout all six goal areas "Expand opportunities for retail and dining in the neighborhood", to which only 28% of respondents strongly agreed.

1. Maintain existing historic districts (80% strongly agreed)
2. Provide public community gathering spaces that are accessible to people of all ages, abilities and socioeconomic levels (60% strongly agreed)
3. Enhance awareness of and interaction with interpretive and cultural assets (58% strongly agreed)
4. Ensure public gathering spaces (parks, streets, alleys, etc.) are enlivened by public art and events (55% strongly agreed)
5. Welcome visitors to the North End and mitigate impacts of visitation on special places (51% strongly agreed)
6. Expand opportunities for retail and dining in the neighborhood (28% strongly agreed)

### **Neighborhood Engagement**

78 percent of respondents strongly agreed, and 17 percent somewhat agreed that the neighborhood engagement goal to *“Create opportunities for meaningful neighbor-to-neighbor connections and maintain the North End’s capacity to address neighborhood needs together.”* was a desired outcome of the neighborhood planning process. The specific neighborhood objectives were generally supported and are shown ranked from most to least supported in the following list.

1. Engage residents, area businesses and schools, and the North End Neighborhood Association, as well as other stakeholders, in local, regional and statewide decisions affecting the neighborhood (80% strongly agreed)
2. Maintain an active and engaged North End Neighborhood Association that reflects the needs and values of the neighborhood (78% strongly agreed)
3. Highlight and promote local businesses and neighborhood services (74% strongly agreed)
4. Provide programming opportunities for neighborhood engagement (54% strongly agreed).

Given the feedback received from the Workshop and through the survey, the project team will revise goals and objectives accordingly. A full list of all comments received through the workshop and survey will be posted on the project website.