

Lancaster 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

June 6, 2022 - 6:00pm

Meeting Summary

Attendance

Steering Committee Members Present: Ben Levine, Kim Lineberger, Melissa Thornton, Mike Neese, Jon Hardy, Michelle Evans, Brad Bucy, Melvin Stroble

Steering Committee Members Absent: Britt Blackmon, Brian Hernandez, Susan DeVenny, Audrey Currey

County Staff Members: Ashley Davis, Rox Burhans

Benchmark Planning Team: Jason Epley, Vagn Hansen, Bridget Callea

Guests: One guest in attendance

Welcome

The meeting began at 6:10 pm with introductions from those in attendance.

Project Updates

The Benchmark team provided updates on the number of people who've interacted with the project website, seen posts on the project Facebook page, and joined the email list. They then shared information about upcoming public meetings, which will be held on June 28th and June 30th. Steering Committee members discussed concerns about reaching the Hispanic population, as Spanish translators cannot be provided by the County. Steering Committee members also expressed concern about having meetings in Greater Lancaster and the Panhandle, but not in Southern Lancaster. Due to current County staff availability, it was determined that a meeting cannot be held in Southern Lancaster at this time. However, the need to further engage with this segment of the population will be discussed following these meetings.

Visioning & Guiding Principles

Based on a combination of background research, Steering Committee input, community survey results, stakeholder listening sessions, and draft vision statements from the Steering Committee, the Benchmark team drafted a potential vision statement for Lancaster County. They explained that the Vision statement would be relevant for the entire County and would direct the guiding principles, which would also be germane to the entire County. Implementation Strategies, which will fall underneath the guiding principles, will be developed for Lancaster County as a whole, as well as for each of the sub-regions of the County (the Panhandle, Greater Lancaster, and Southern Lancaster).

Steering Committee members were relatively pleased with the vision and guiding principles, but spent a little over an hour discussing edits which should be made. There was much discussion about including education, commerce, mobility, and environmental concerns. After much discussion, the original draft vision statement was restated to:

“Lancaster County strives to respect and celebrate its diverse community by continuously planning for the future through education, environmental protection, promoting healthy lifestyles, sustainability, and providing exemplary services.”

In terms of guiding principles, there was a lot of discussion about the details which fall under the guiding principles. These are summarized below.

GROWTH: There was a lot of discussion about utilities and their impact on the future growth of the County. Brad shared that the water and sewer facilities can serve the 30,000 or so permitted units in the Panhandle, and that the sewer capacity throughout the County is around halfway utilized. This means that the County should be okay to support growth through around 2050, assuming that current growth trends and technology surrounding sewer exist. It is possible that improvements in technology or changes in growth patterns may alter this estimate. Additional discussion focused on how different development styles affect this and that there is a cap on development that will be hit at some point.

BALANCE: There was some discussion about portions of the County which have not yet been “hit” by large scale development. The Steering Committee discussed different solutions to protecting the rural character of these areas (buffering, zoning, additional open space requirements, etc.), but were also concerned about private property rights and the ability to make a profit off land. There needs to be a balance between these two competing interests.

VIBRANCE: It was requested that tourism be considered under Vibrance (particularly travel sports and recreation tourism). It was requested that the Vibrance statement be directed at

residents AND VISITORS, to capture this aspect. There was also a request to focus on recreational centers.

SERVICE: While the segment of the statement which said “with our partners” was aimed at encouraging cooperation with non-governmental entities, Steering Committee members wanted to ensure that we spell out the entities such as Lancaster Water and Sewer Authority, Lancaster County Schools, and others that are not controlled by the County in the implementation. It may also be important to include infrastructure under services.

SUSTAINABILITY: Steering Committee members requested that sustainability be expanded to include human resources and other things beyond environmental issues (resiliency, staffing, services, etc.). There was also specific conversation about clean energy and better communications about environmental impacts of fertilizer, pet waste, etc.

PROSPERITY: Steering Committee members felt like healthcare was missing and that it may fit under prosperity. They also want to provide specific strategies for affordable housing. There was some discussion about the recent increasing in building materials and thus cost of construction. Homes which are currently being built and were hoping to start at \$250,000 are now going to start at \$350,000. Manufactured homes rent for around \$800 a month in the County, and these are all concerns regarding long-term housing affordability.

MOBILITY: Comments were made emphasizing that mobility should focus on the entire spectrum of mobility options, not just pedestrians or singular industries. It was also requested that transportation infrastructure investments be included in mobility.

Next Steps

At the end of the meeting, Benchmark reminded the Steering Committee of the upcoming public meetings and encouraged them to invite neighbors and friends to attend. The next Steering Committee meeting date has not yet been determined.

Committee Member Comments and Discussion

Members thanked Benchmark and staff for their work, and took public meeting flyers to share with their networks.