



Public Engagement

"Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody."

– Jane Jacobs



CITY OF
LAMPASAS
TEXAS

Introduction

In Central Texas, smaller historic communities are growing as urban dwellers from cities like Austin and Killeen flee heavy traffic and overcrowded conditions. Lampasas residents desire to protect the historic, family-friendly character of their community, even while preparing to capture a share of this regional growth. This chapter discusses how residents feel about their community today, as well as how they believe the City should prepare for that growth.

Residents of Lampasas show a great deal of devotion to their hometown, extolling its small town character and virtues in all phases of the public engagement process. Many are second and third generation residents. While some reported moving away for college or to start their career, the hometown environment convinced them to return home to raise their families. Through a series of stakeholder meetings, a citywide survey, and open house event, residents reported a great deal of pride in this historic community, and satisfaction with the level of services it provides. Feedback from the community reflects a balance between enhancing its existing character, while setting the right conditions for growth that is anticipated in coming decades.



Community Engagement Process

OVERVIEW

A comprehensive master plan is not just a document. Preparing a successful plan depends on community involvement, from surveys to in-depth conversations with residents and stakeholders in Lampasas regarding their vision of the community's future. A comprehensive master plan should capture the wants and needs of its citizens and provide steps to achieve that vision. Public input provides crucial insight into the City's current and future needs.

Throughout this process, a variety of public involvement techniques were used to engage citizens' in identifying strengths and providing ideas for improvement. These strategies allowed people of all ages and backgrounds to express their opinions. The public engagement component of this planning process included seven stakeholder meetings, five meetings with the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC), an online community survey, a public open house, and two meetings with the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council. Below is a discussion of these efforts and a summary of findings.

SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

As part of the two-day project kick-off for the Comprehensive Master Plan held in June 2019, five stakeholder group listening sessions were held to identify community concerns, issues, and opportunities for Lampasas. Two additional stakeholder meetings were held in August to reach a broader segment of the population. Attendees included elected and appointed officials; City staff; economic development interests; downtown residents and business owners; and neighborhood representatives. Over 50 people participated in the meetings.

Attendees were asked to provide input on a variety of topics including, but not limited to: downtown, neighborhoods, housing supply, transportation resources, parks, recreation, and economic development, among other topics.

As part of these meetings, a series of key topics were identified which helped to frame the planning process as well as the final Comprehensive Plan. Some of the key topics are summarized on the next page.

LAND USE AND CHARACTER

- Large downtown district with distinct historic character should be preserved and rehabilitated to attract new businesses and a mix of uses;
- Historic homes and resort architecture are a significant draw;
- Community is compact enough to be walkable, but lacks sidewalks and safety features;
- Infill residential development is revitalizing several neighborhoods; and
- Gateways to the City would encourage more travelers to stop and experience the community.

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

- Key Avenue does not adequately represent the character of Lampasas;
- Need to find ways to capitalize on location at the convergence of multiple state highways;
- Expansion of Highway 281 will affect commercial districts and traffic through town;
- Traffic conflicts along Key Avenue and westbound connections to Downtown from 190 and 257 would benefit from improved signage, traffic management and alternate routes;
- Conflict between needs of local pedestrians, personal vehicles and truck traffic; and
- Enhance bike and pedestrian connections, including bike lanes and sidewalks.

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

- Alternative types of neighborhoods and housing stock are in demand (e.g., smaller home—smaller lot, mixed income, rental properties, etc.);
- Demand for homes suitable for telecommuting workforce;
- Not enough rental properties to meet demand; and
- Demand for housing is outpacing supply.

PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAILS

- Commitment to youth sports with athletic fields and park properties for multiple sports;
- Need supporting facilities in parks for festivals, such as pavilions and restrooms;
- The trail plan and development is at a standstill;
- Sportsplex can be used to draw more tournaments and regional events; and
- More Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation is needed.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

- Library facilities and programming are a great City asset;
- Seeking funds for water, streets, and drainage infrastructure improvements;
- Need for better communication between City and residents;
- Need for expanded infrastructure; and
- Need for a community center/senior center.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Focus on a coordinated marketing strategy for Downtown and historic district; higher paying jobs could retain and attract residents;
- Poor internet connectivity is a substantial barrier to attracting business and residents;
- Existing businesses serve the county and other surrounding communities; and
- Unmet demand for commercial and retail businesses, restaurants, medical offices, and hotels.

ONLINE SURVEY

A Citywide community survey was conducted as an online questionnaire. More than 750 residents responded. The survey asked citizens questions on a range of topics including:

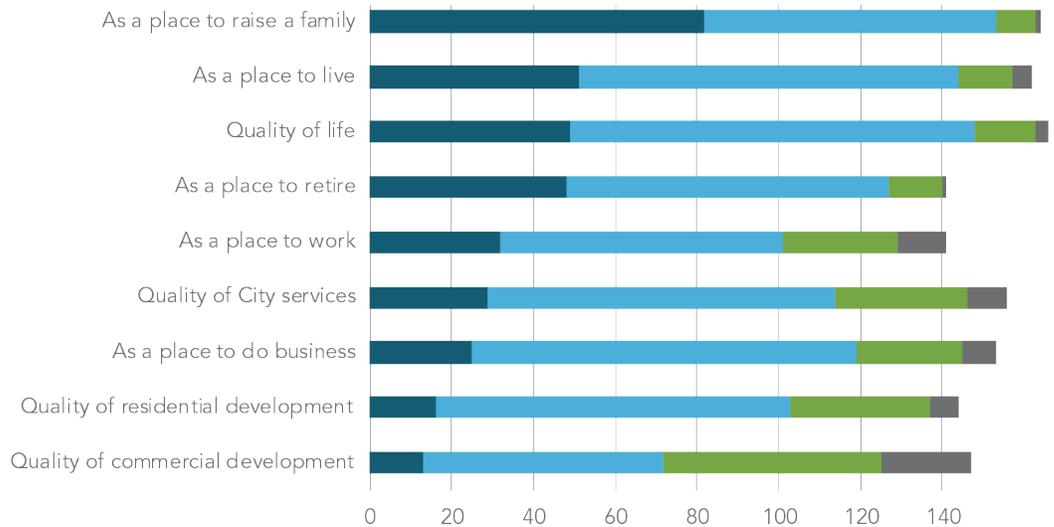
- Demographics;
- Quality of life;
- Satisfaction with City services;
- Transportation;
- Housing and neighborhoods;
- Parks, recreation, and trails; and
- Economic development.

Results from the community survey can inform trends about opportunities and concerns in the City. A total of 757 survey responses were collected, equivalent to around ten percent of the City’s residents.

GENERAL QUALITY OF LIFE IN LAMPASAS

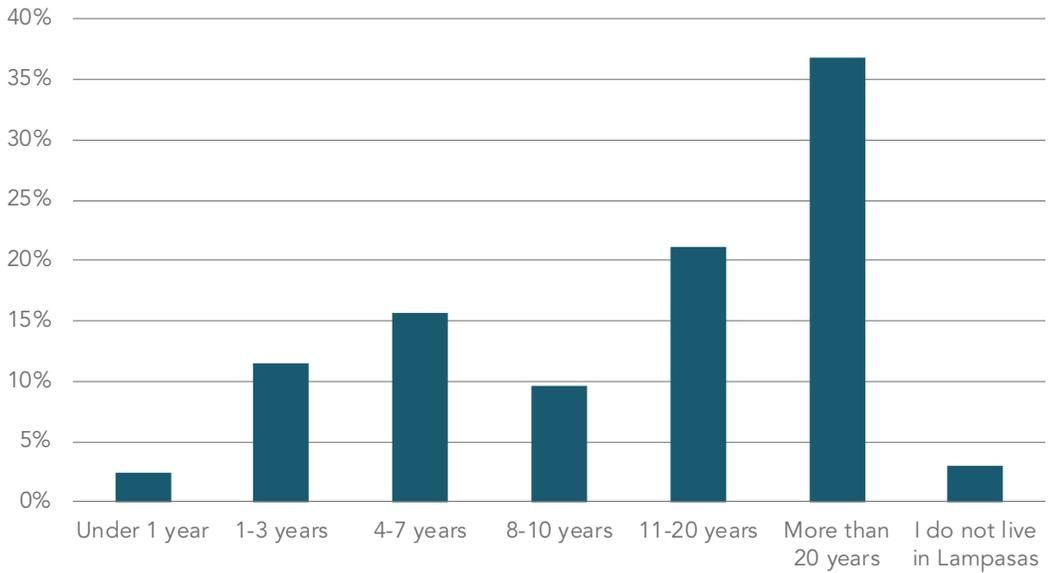
Citizens of Lampasas are largely pleased with the quality of life in the City. When asked about satisfaction on the specific topics below, including as a place to raise a family, a place to live, a place to retire and work, the majority of residents rated the City very highly. Survey respondents were most satisfied with Lampasas as a place to raise a family, and least satisfied with the quality of commercial development in Lampasas. See *Figure 3.1, Community Satisfaction*.

FIGURE 3.1, COMMUNITY SATISFACTION



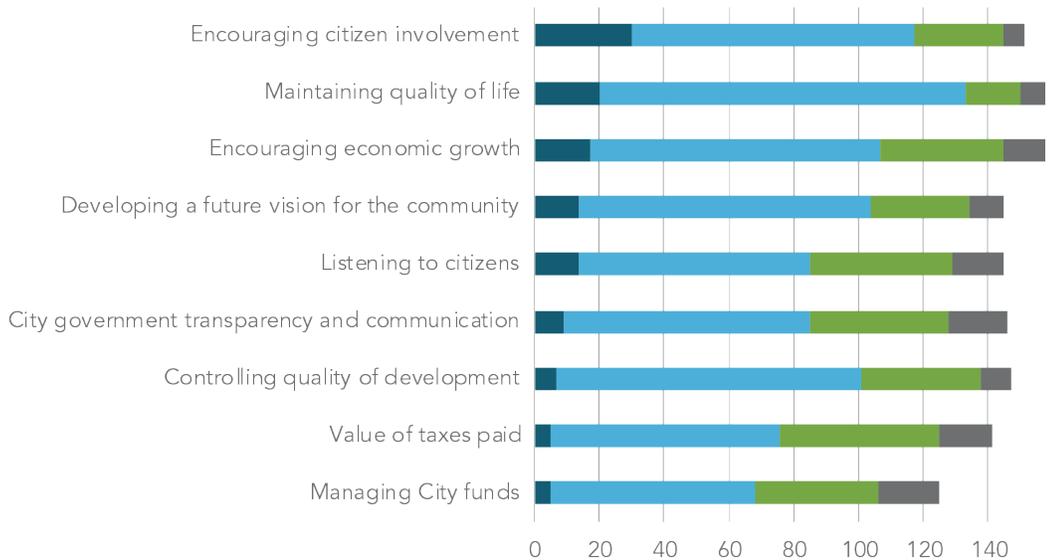
Responses reflected a depth of knowledge about the community as well. As illustrated by *Figure 3.2, How Long Have You Lived in Lampasas?*, long-term residents made up the largest block of respondents. Over 40 percent of respondents report that they have lived in Lampasas for more than 20 years. Those who have resided in Lampasas for between 11 and 20 years made up the second largest block of respondents, at over 20 percent. More recent residents, those who have been living in the City for under ten years made up more than 25 percent of respondents. Participants who have between four and 10 years in the City made up approximately 25 percent of the total. Relative newcomers to town showed their engagement in the community’s future as well, making up just over 10 percent of all respondents.

FIGURE 3.2, HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN LAMPASAS?



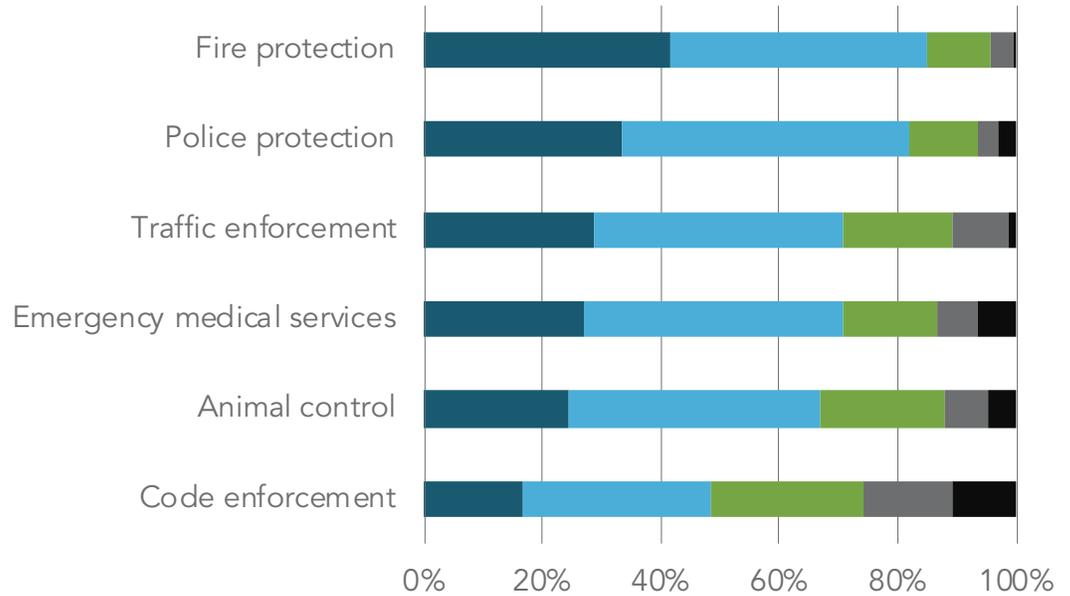
Survey respondents provided more in-depth feedback about the reasons behind their responses showcased in *Figure 3.1, Community Sanctification*, with the survey’s question about community performance measures, as highlighted in *Figure 3.3, Community Performance Measures*. Three of the top three reasons that citizens are satisfied with life in Lampasas include the way in which City government encourages citizens to be involved, as well as its efforts to maintain quality of life, and encourage economic growth. Although responses were still largely positive, the City received a lower rating on controlling the quality of development, the value received for tax dollars, and the City’s management of its funds. None of the questions, however, received a greater than 50% rating of dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

FIGURE 3.3, COMMUNITY PERFORMANCE MEASURES



Survey respondents also stated that the City provides high quality services with respect to public safety, as illustrated by *Figure 3.4, How Satisfied Are You With City's Public Safety Services?* When asked about their satisfaction with City services, more than 80 percent of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with police and fire protection. Traffic enforcement and emergency medical services and even animal control are also rated highly, with over 60 percent expressing that they were either very satisfied or satisfied with these services. The area where citizens indicated the greatest need for improvement is in code enforcement, in which approximately 25 percent responded that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the City's efforts to enforce its own regulations.

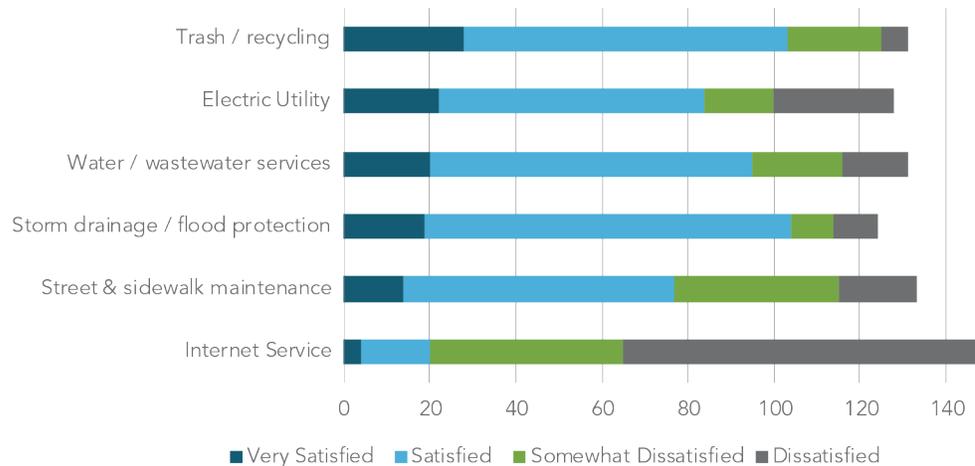
FIGURE 3.4, HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH CITY'S PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES?



UTILITY SERVICES

Survey respondents were asked how satisfied they are with the City's local utility services. *Figure 3.5, Utility Services*, shows that survey respondents are most satisfied with trash/recycling, electric utility, and water/wastewater services. Survey respondents are least satisfied with their internet service. This is consistent with what we heard in stakeholder groups and the open house as well.

FIGURE 3.5, UTILITY SERVICES



TRANSPORTATION

The online survey identified transportation safety, street conditions and maintenance, pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, and public transportation as the highest priorities to be addressed for transportation. Over 80 percent of respondents reported in *Figure 3.6, Street Condition and Maintenance*, that this activity is very important. An even larger percentage of the population reported that safety is a top priority, see *Figure 3.7, Transportation Safety*. Lampasas is very fortunate in the Central Texas region in that over 40 percent of respondents enjoyed a commute to work of less than five minutes.

Pedestrian and bicycle accommodations were important or very important to 67 percent of those responding, as illustrated by *Figure 3.8, Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodation*. While wayfinding signs were indicated to be very important in the stakeholder focus groups hosted at the beginning of this process, *Figure 3.9, Wayfinding Signs*, shows that while still considered to be important, they do not appear to be as critical of an issue for the general public. A still significant, if smaller, number of respondents also indicated that they feel that public transportation is very important.

FIGURE 3.6, STREET CONDITION AND MAINTENANCE

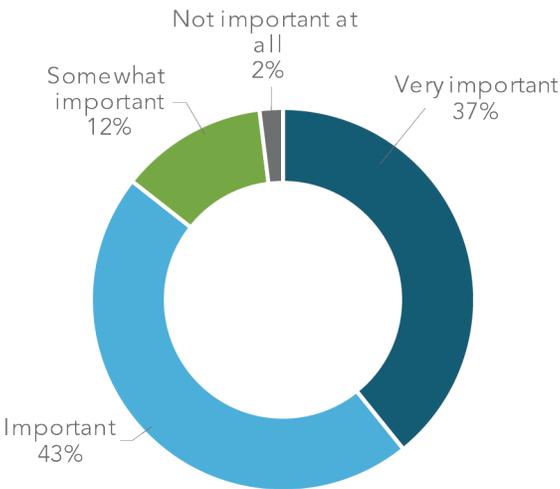


FIGURE 3.7, TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

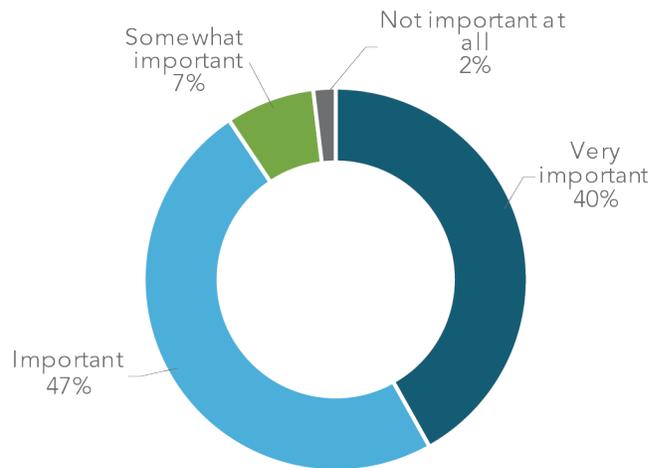


FIGURE 3.8, PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE ACCOMMODATION (E.G., SIDEWALKS, CROSSWALKS, TRAILS, ETC.)

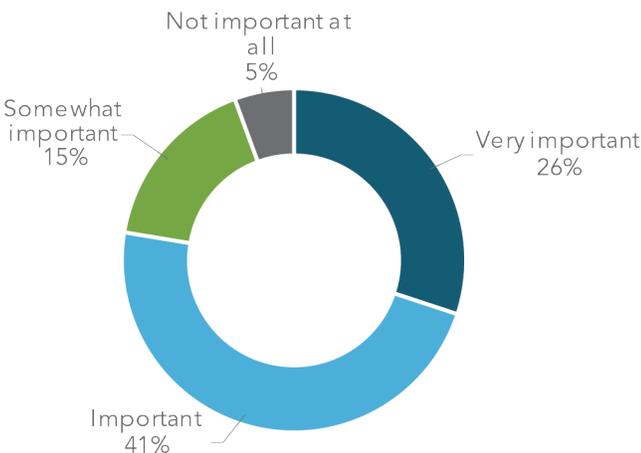
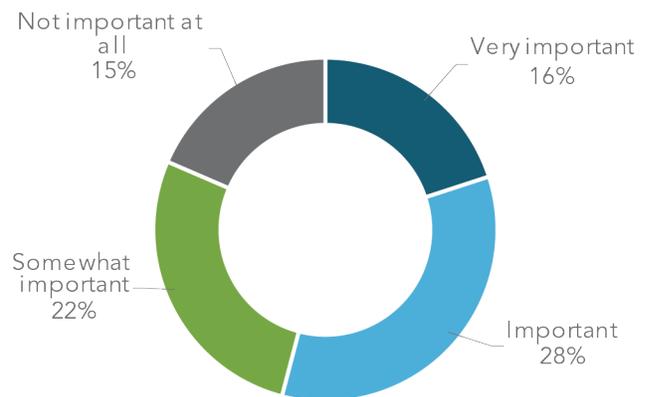


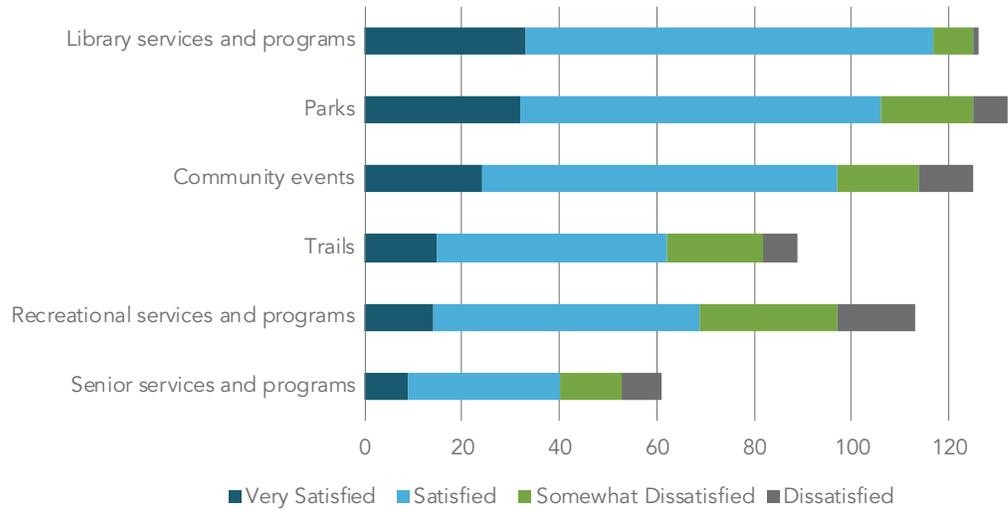
FIGURE 3.9, WAYFINDING SIGNS (I.E., SMALL SIGNS IDENTIFYING IMPORTANT DESTINATIONS)



PARKS, RECREATION, AND TRAILS

Lampasas’ three most highly ranked recreational and cultural services are parks, library services and community events. See *Figure 3.10, Recreational and Cultural Services*. Respondents indicated a need for improvement in the trails network and the quality of recreational and senior services. Families with children living at home rated the library slightly higher, and registered a slightly higher level of dissatisfaction with community events, trails, recreational, and senior services than did the population at large. While the response to all of these services is largely positive, the results indicate room for improvement in all of the services addressed by the survey.

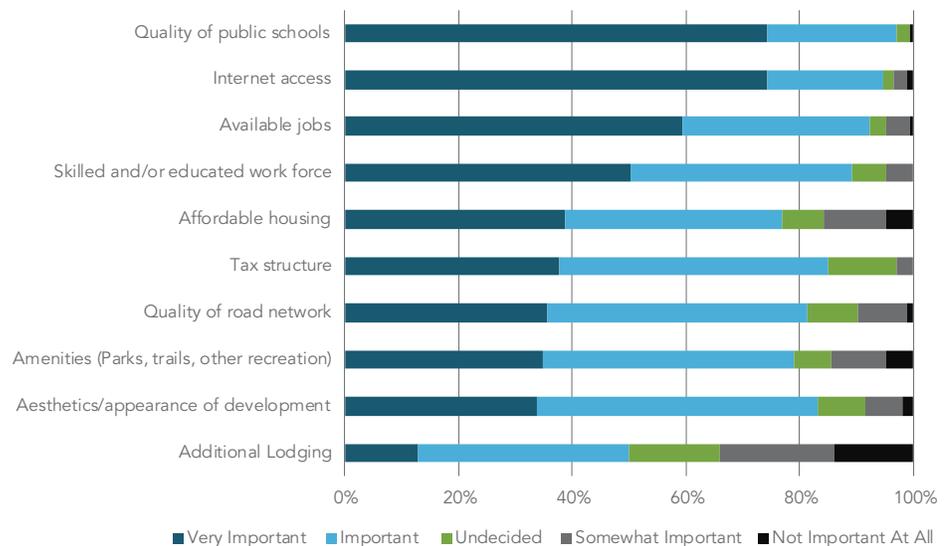
FIGURE 3.10, RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL SERVICES



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Survey respondents were also asked to identify the top three most important things needed to encourage more investment and vitality in downtown. Their top three selections were better entertainment options, preservation of historic buildings, and enhanced streetscapes. See *Figure 3.12, Downtown Priorities*.

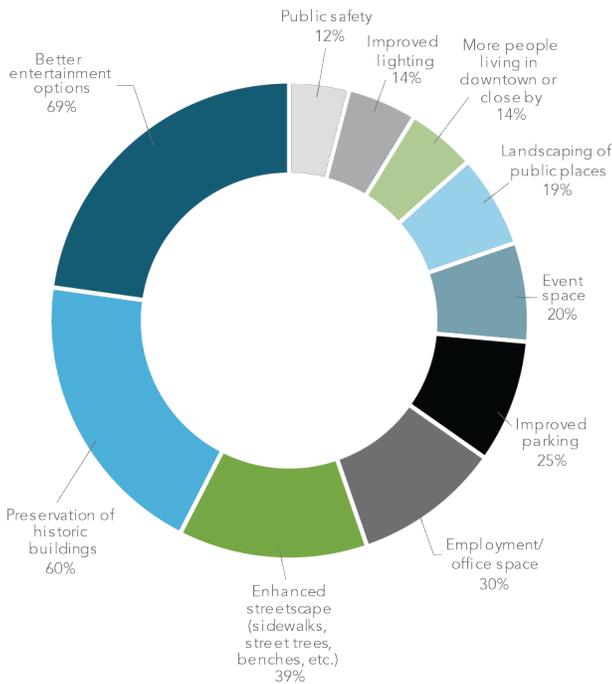
FIGURE 3.11, IMPORTANCE OF THE FOLLOWING FACTORS FOR FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT

Residents see Downtown as the heart of Lampasas. *Figure 3.12, Downtown Priorities*, indicates how residents would like to prioritize continued investment, including improving entertainment options, (especially after hours), restoring historic structures, and enhancing the downtown environment through improvements to the streetscape, including sidewalks, landscaping, and places to sit and enjoy their surroundings.

FIGURE 3.12, DOWNTOWN PRIORITIES

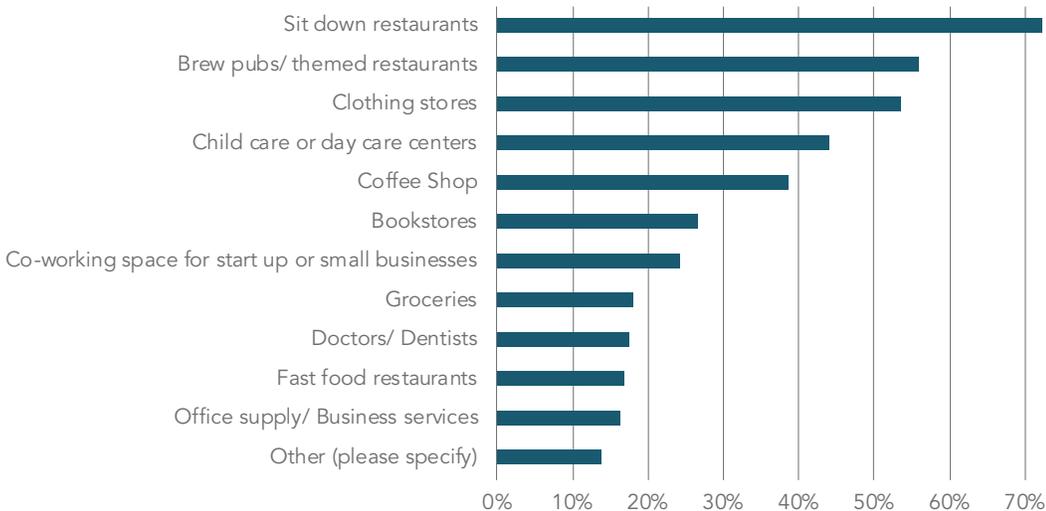


Several other objectives for Downtown that enjoy a relatively high level of support include providing new and improved office space and parking, including an event space Downtown as a location for festivals. Many communities in Central Texas are seeking to return their Downtowns to 24-hour use, where people live, work and play. To that end, 19 percent of respondents wanted to see more landscaping of public spaces and 14 percent indicated that increasing housing opportunities in and near Downtown is desirable. To make that 24-hour use more attractive, improved lighting and public safety are also important priorities.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

In a number of venues in the public engagement process, residents expressed the need for new opportunities to shop and meet the daily demands of their household without leaving Lampasas. The responses in *Figure 3.13, What Kind of Businesses Would You Like to See in Lampasas?*, illustrate some of the commercial opportunities residents would like to see located in Lampasas.

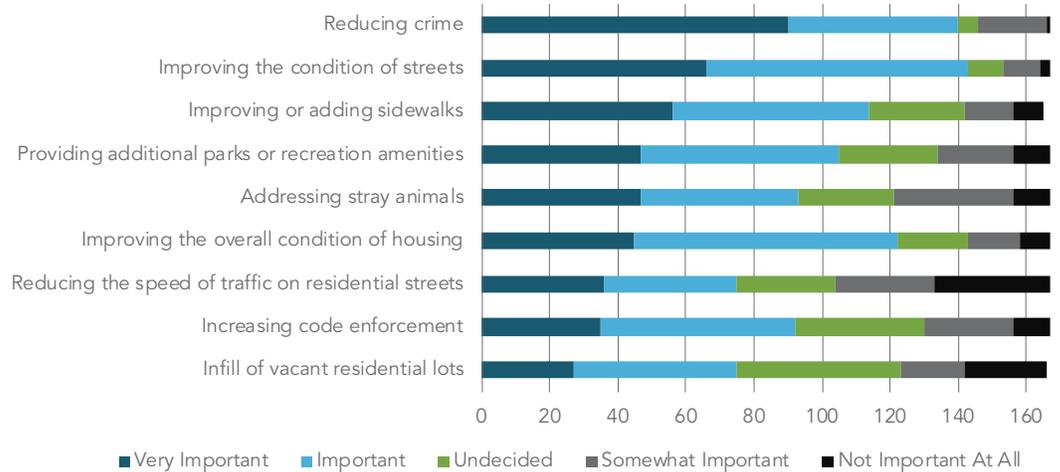
FIGURE 3.13, WHAT KIND OF BUSINESSES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN LAMPASAS?



PRIORITY ISSUES TO ADDRESS

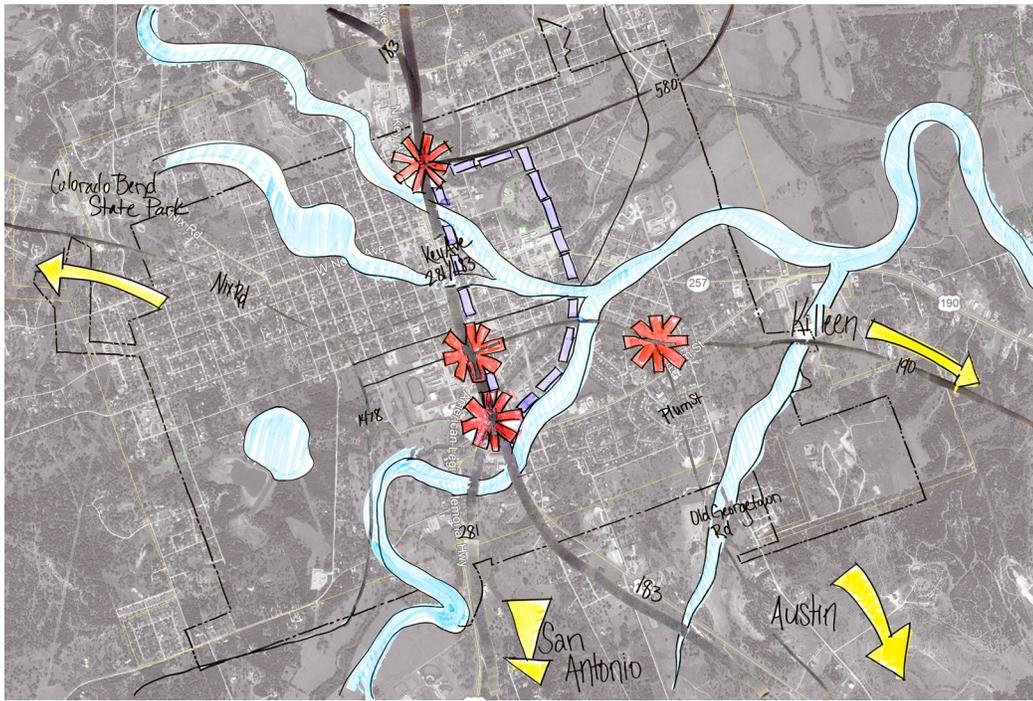
To conclude the analysis of these survey results, a summary of the top priority issues that citizens would like to see the City address in this comprehensive planning process are shown below. These responses reflect not only what is important to citizens, but also the urgency with which they feel these issues should be addressed. In *Figure 3.14, How Important is it for the City to Address the Following Issues in the Near Future?*, citizens rank their highest priority as reducing crime, followed by improving the condition of streets, and adding sidewalks. Additional analysis of this question was completed to determine differences by household composition. One of the most notable differences was that families with children at home placed a higher priority on parks and recreation, while retired citizens expressed greater concern about slowing traffic. Improving the overall condition of the City's housing stock rose high on the priority list as well, which may also be related to the need to increase code enforcement.

FIGURE 3.14, HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR THE CITY TO ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING ISSUES IN THE NEAR FUTURE?



The high participation rate in this survey provides a reliable measure of the community's needs and desires for the future, and was a valuable resource in the preparation of recommendations for the plan's vision and goals.

FIGURE 3.15, OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CPAC)

Throughout the planning process, a 15 member Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee provided key input and oversight of the development of the Comprehensive Master Plan. The purpose of the CPAC was to provide a balanced community opinion on important City issues and to help articulate citizens' vision for the future. In addition, the CPAC was tasked with reviewing and responding to feedback on draft deliverables and Plan chapters as the plan progressed. The CPAC met on five different occasions, including the project kick-off, three times to review and provide feedback on Plan chapters, and as part of two large joint meetings of elected and appointed officials to fully vet the Plan prior to it proceeding through the public hearing process. The CPAC comments and feedback were essential in developing a Plan that captured the essence of where Lampasas wants to be in the next 20 years.

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

As set out in Section 213.003, of the Texas Local Government Code, the Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) is supposed to review the Comprehensive Plan before it is adopted or amended. Since they are also the City-designated appointed body which advises the City Council on plans, programs, policies, and short- and long-range strategies, it is important to ensure that their experience and feedback are incorporated into the process. As such, the P&Z was involved at three key points in the process, including three joint meetings with the City Council, and during the P&Z public hearing. As part of their involvement, the P&Z voted to recommend approval at their public hearing on **TK**.

CITY COUNCIL

As the elected and legislative body of Lampasas, the City Council provided early strategic direction and feedback in the middle of the process. Similar to the P&Z, they were involved at three key points including three joint meetings with the P&Z and during the City Council consideration of adoption. The City Council voted to approve the Comprehensive Master Plan on _____.



FIGURE 3.16, WHAT WE'VE HEARD SO FAR

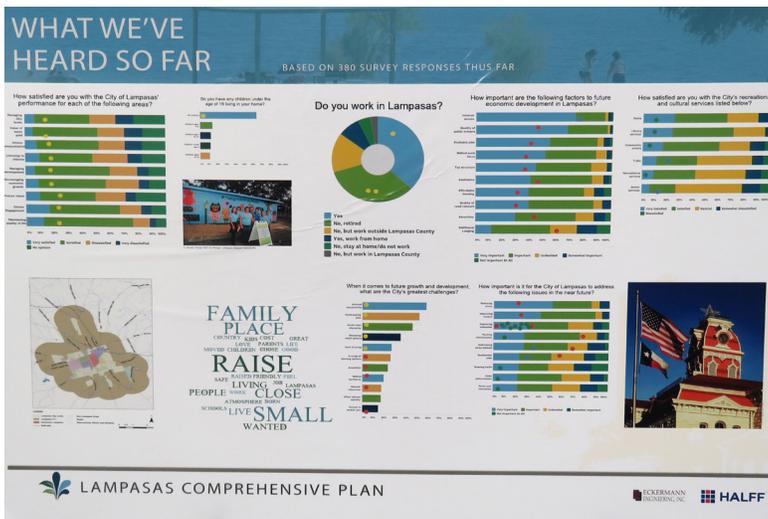
SUMMARY OF PUBLIC MEETINGS

Following the initial collection of public goals and opinions through the stakeholder meetings and online survey, Lampasas hosted an open house to solicit feedback from the public at large.

This open house was held on the evening of August 29, 2019 and was attended by over 50 people. Participants came to the Old Middle School Cafeteria to learn more about the comprehensive planning process and to provide their own vision for the City's future.

At the time of the open house, results of the community survey were shared with citizens, giving them insight into their neighbors views of the City's needs and goals for the future. Preliminary community survey results are shown in *Figure 3.16, What We've Heard So Far*. They were then given the option to provide their own feedback on areas of need in the City, such as housing, transportation, downtown redevelopment, economic development, parks and recreation, and infrastructure improvements. At each station, participants voted for their own top priorities with colored stickers and provided written results on the boards.

Key results from the first open house are summarized below.



HOUSING IN LAMPASAS

Community survey results indicated that citizens believe Lampasas needs to modernize and expand its housing stock, and that the City should encourage some new types of housing that are more affordable for young professionals, families, singles and seniors. As illustrated by *Figure 3.17, Needed Housing in Lampasas*, participants in the City’s open house confirmed that there is a very high demand for all types of housing in Lampasas, and that it is a challenge to provide the amount and type of housing options that new and potential residents are seeking.

Participants expressed a need to continue adding to the City’s stock of traditional single family homes that offer more modern features. However, there appears to be untapped demand for housing options suited to residents at different stages of life who would prefer a smaller housing unit with fewer responsibilities for maintenance and landscape upkeep. These options are often known as the ‘Missing Middle’. Residents expressed an interest in cottages and tiny houses. Rental alternatives such as duplexes and apartments are also seen to be in short supply, and participants indicated that the City’s retiree population could benefit from options that cater to seniors, including assisted living.

When asked what types of housing may be needed for future populations to make Lampasas a full life-cycle community, top answers included:

- Traditional lot single family;
- Cottages and tiny homes;
- Senior, retirement, or assisted living; and
- Apartments.

DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT

Revitalizing Lampasas’ historic Downtown continues to enjoy a high level of public support. At every stage of public engagement, residents expressed that Downtown and the Courthouse Square are critical to the City’s distinct identity, and that the City should place a high priority on connecting residents and visitors to Downtown, see *Figure 3.18, Downtown Lampasas*. The top four priorities identified for Downtown improvements were:

- Streetscape enhancements;
- Incentives for redevelopment of historic structures;
- Extended hours for businesses and restaurants; and
- Unified promotion of Downtown’s Attractions.

FIGURE 3.17, NEEDED HOUSING IN LAMPASAS

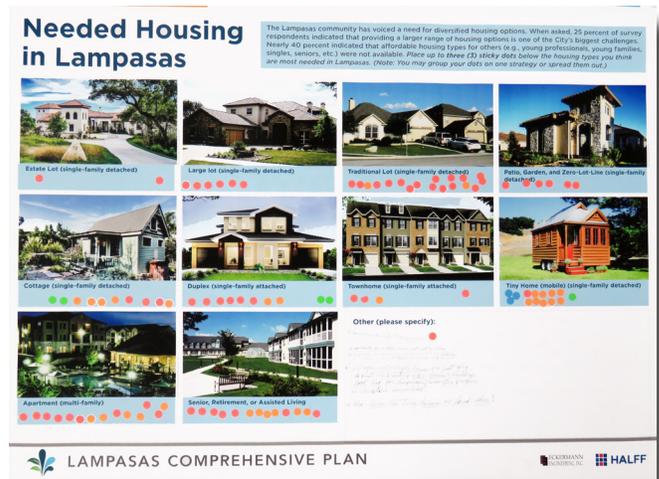


FIGURE 3.18, DOWNTOWN LAMPASAS

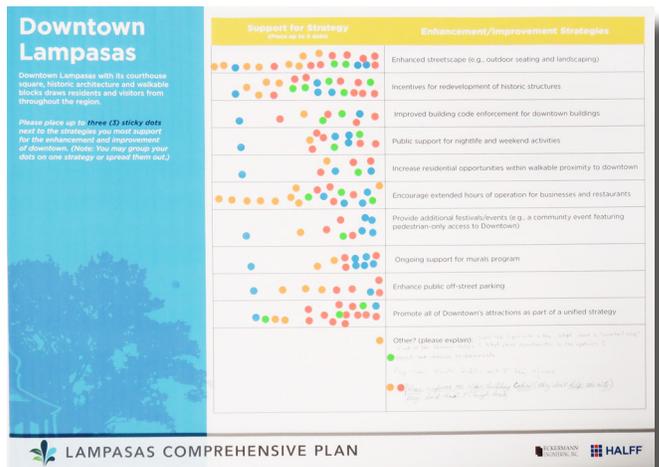


FIGURE 3.19, TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

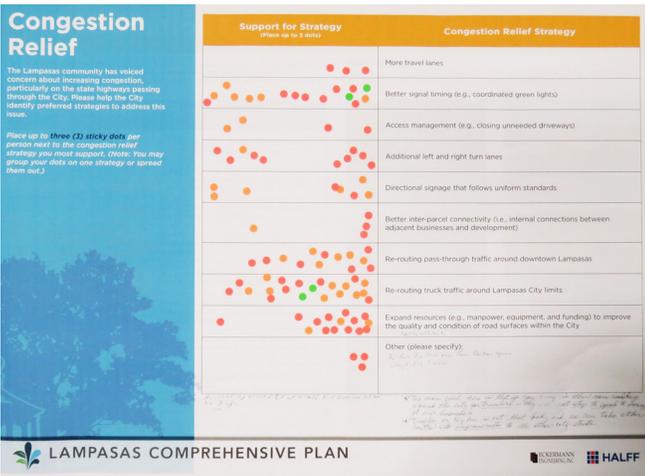


Participants praised the renovation of structures like the Keystone Hotel and suggested they would also like to see a higher level of code enforcement to protect the integrity and appearance of historic structures, as well as continuing support for the murals program downtown. One of the most consistent themes cut across several recommendations was the importance of bringing more people downtown, through festivals, extended hours of operation for businesses, and even creating new opportunities to live and work near Downtown.

TRANSPORTATION AND CONGESTION RELIEF

Lampasas is a crossroads. Resolving conflicts between local travelers on City streets and pass-through traffic on U.S. and state highways, is a top priority that citizens would like the Comprehensive Plan to address. Participants in both stakeholder focus groups and the open house shared their insights about the location and nature of this conflicts, as well as the strategies they believed would be effective to address them. See Figure 3.19, Transportation Safety.

FIGURE 3.20, CONGESTION RELIEF



With regards to transportation concerns in Lampasas, citizens indicated that the following concerns are their top priorities.

- Truck routes that remove heavy truck traffic from neighborhoods and Downtown;
- Improved sidewalks and expanded sidewalk network; and
- Adopting a Complete Streets policy, to encourage all streets to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists.

Planning for pedestrians appeared as a priority in multiple responses. Residents also showed interest in a variety of improvements, such as expanding an off-street trail network and providing additional opportunities for school children to walk or bike to school. While speed bumps were not a popular option to slow traffic, participants expressed support for the following traffic calming strategies to make streets safer for drivers and pedestrians alike, including:

- Center landscape medians;
- Pedestrian refuge islands in the center of multi-lane streets; and
- Curb extensions / bulb outs at intersections.

While TxDOT’s imminent improvements to the intersection of U.S. 183 and 281 will begin to address some major points of conflict in the City’s transportation network, there are several areas of town where congestion is still a major concern. See Figure 3.20, Congestion Relief. The following mobility strategies and public investments were recognized as promising opportunities to provide congestion relief for the City, including:

- Re-routing truck traffic around the City limits;
- Re-routing pass-through traffic around downtown;
- Expanding resources to improve road quality; and
- Better management of traffic flow with signals and turn lanes.

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

As illustrated by Figure 3.21, Infrastructure Improvement, improving infrastructure in Lampasas is also a high priority for citizens. Attendees emphatically expressed their support for upgrading the City’s access to high-speed internet service. In the open house, community survey and multiple stakeholder focus groups, participants cited unreliable access to high speed internet as a primary obstacle for the growth of new business, telecommuting residents, as well as general quality of life. Improvements to Key Avenue and the City’s water infrastructure ran a close second as a priority. Drainage improvements ranked high on the list as well.

URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURAL PREFERENCES

A visual preference survey was conducted as part of the open house, evaluating the public sentiment regarding the quality and extent of the built environment. This assessment included overall street view, building form and architecture, landscaping, and signage along the Key Avenue corridor. This information can help shape updates to development regulations in a way that reflect the preferences of the community character.

Attendees displayed a preference for varied architectural form, and a safe, landscaped pedestrian environment. For overall street view, there was a preference for the highest quality choice. The preferences for building form and architecture were evenly distributed among the top two choices. The second highest quality signage type and the highest quality landscaping choice were preferred.

Commercial Building Form And Architecture

Figure 3.22, Commercial Building Form and Architecture, shows that the majority of open house attendees, 72 percent, would like to see the following design character for commercial architecture in Lampasas in the future. See the top photo on the left.

- Enhanced pedestrian experience;
- Articulated building offsets, both horizontal and vertical;
- Accentuated architectural details (e.g., roof overhangs, structural awnings); and
- Pedestrian-scaled signage.

The bottom photo on the left displays an auto-oriented experience with articulated vertical building offsets. Architectural detailing is present on the canopy and awnings.

Based on the responses from open house attendees, residents prefer not to continue to add auto-oriented strip centers for commercial development in Lampasas.

FIGURE 3.21, INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT

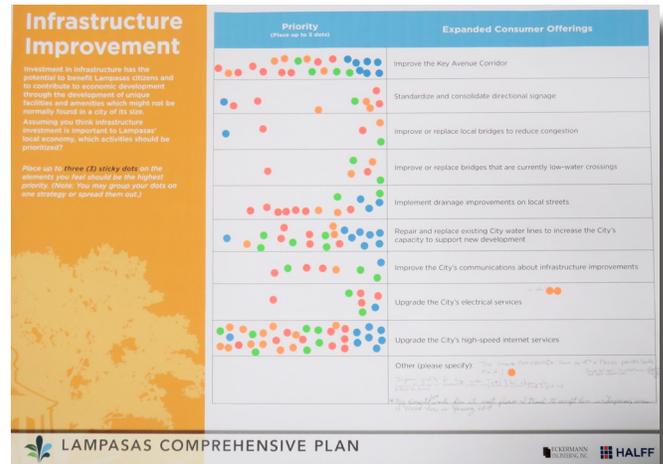


FIGURE 3.22, COMMERCIAL BUILDING FORM AND ARCHITECTURE



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