



# Reflecting Raleigh

THE NEXT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Raleigh  
Planning

## Sustain-A-City: Infrastructure and Services

### Community Conversation Summary

This report consolidates key discussions, themes, and action points from all tables at Sustain-A-City: Infrastructure and Services on June 5, 2025. The event was part of the public engagement series for Reflecting Raleigh: The Next Comprehensive Plan. Attendees were randomly assigned to one of ten tables for three rounds of facilitated discussion following a brief presentation on Raleigh's infrastructure and services. Volunteer table hosts posed guiding questions in each round:

- **Round 1:** Consider the city services you receive and have access to as a Raleigh resident. What specifically do you like? What would you change? Which additional services and resources would you be willing to pay more for?
- **Round 2:** Which two of the three are most important to you: density of development, quality of services and infrastructure, cost of property taxes? What do you think the relationship is between development density, public services and infrastructure, and cost of property taxes? How do you think Raleigh should guide development over the next 20 years to ensure we're adequately and equitably serving residents?
- **Round 3:** After hearing the state of the city presentation, what do you think are the biggest challenges for serving new and existing residents as Raleigh grows? What do you think are the biggest opportunities? Did anything surprise you from any of the content presented tonight or last week?

## Key Themes

### "Smart" and Sustainable Growth

Residents recognized that Raleigh is growing quickly and expressed desires to be strategic about how and where that growth occurs. Many supported "smart growth" practices that focus on improving quality of life by concentrating density in specific areas while ensuring infrastructure is ready for a growing population.

- **Strategic density:** Many people are willing to accept higher density if it brings walkability and good services, but they want this density to be limited to certain places like downtown. A few residents requested that the City seek feedback from neighbors and facilitate conversations with developers before making new development plans.
- **Balancing tradeoffs:** Residents said it is challenging to balance the trade-offs between density, services, and taxes. They raised concerns about higher density leading to increased living costs and expressed a significant need for more schools and childcare. However, many residents said they would be willing to have higher density if it meant more sustainability and walkable neighborhoods.
- **Build with character:** People want new developments to be well-constructed and beautifully designed. They suggested creating incentives for developers to include mixed uses and green spaces to enhance quality of life. Some residents suggested using infill development and tiny homes to increase density while maintaining a sense of character.

### Key Quotes

- "We spread out and it is impacting our quality of life. We are not a 15-minute city, you have to get in the car. I would rather be in a denser space with better services."
- "Controlled growth is a challenge. The area is well cared for, but there is a shortage of schools and childcare everywhere."
- "To me, it doesn't seem like we have a traffic problem, but future growth could cause problems. We have to pack more people in areas like downtown where there are businesses. I am [also] supportive of places like Ironworks. State workers moving out [of downtown] during COVID left a gap, but young people want to live downtown. Having [denser] centers outside of downtown, where people can walk, is important."

### Walkability and Accessibility

Residents want safer, more walkable neighborhoods with better pedestrian infrastructure and easier access to get around without a car. Many support higher density and neighborhoods where they can walk to meet their daily needs if it leads to improved sidewalks, bike lanes, and transit connections that make the city more accessible and livable for all.

- **Pedestrian safety:** Residents are concerned about pedestrian safety and want stronger traffic calming measures, better crosswalks and sidewalks—especially near bus stops—and separate paths for scooters and bikes. Some participants shared a

need for improved communication from the City about public safety initiatives like the alternative police response program. One table shared concerns that trash and recycling bins can be in the way for cyclists.

- **Alternatives to car travel:** People want better alternatives to driving, including more frequent and accessible bus service, covered bus stops, a GoRaleigh app, and easier access to free senior passes. Some suggested rain service and removing parking minimums to support non-car travel, and a few asked for more transit options between Raleigh and its neighboring municipalities.
- **Walkable neighborhoods:** Residents want neighborhoods where they can walk to affordable groceries, parks, and greenways. They would support higher density if it helps create vibrant, mixed-use areas where people can live, work, and play.

### Key Quotes

- "Everyone needs a car here. Making things denser and more walkable, with a range of services and better transportation options. We don't want the city to become choked with traffic. How do we bring the entire city back together and make it more walkable/functional? The city is better without a car. More bike infrastructure, and more public transportation."
- "If it's gonna give us sidewalks, I'm okay with mixed use buildings."
- "We do have bike lanes, but we want more [to fill out] incomplete connections. Seeing the new bike lanes makes me think [the city] is planning, but I do not always see people using the bike lanes. Maybe the plans [for the bike lanes] are online."

## High Quality City Services

Residents appreciate services like trash and leaf pickup but worry they may not keep up as the city grows. They also want a city-wide composting program, better ways to learn about city services, and clearer information on how to engage with City staff and leadership.

- **Current services:** There is interest in continued services like leaf pick-up and appreciation for existing services such as trash, sewer, and non-emergency customer service staff, though some worry these may not keep pace with population growth.
- **Composting:** Several residents asked for a city-wide composting program and suggested offering incentives to encourage participation.
- **Communication and transparency:** Participants would like to see more events for public education and engagement about city services. A few residents expressed frustration that rising property taxes have not led to visible improvements in their neighborhoods, and they want to see the outcomes of those tax changes. One participant suggested the City make handouts or cards with information about local leadership, city departments, and service providers.

## Key Quotes

- "If they started offering [compost pickup]... our waste facility is reaching capacity and compost is the third biggest contributor to greenhouse gases."
- "The bus comes by, but the bus stops are very spaced out. It would be nice to have more access."
- "We need information cards for community engagement that let folks know the name of the mayor and councilors, maybe council district specific, main numbers for department services, etc, and they can be distributed at community centers."

## Affordability

Residents are worried about rising property taxes, especially for seniors and people living on fixed incomes. Older residents are concerned about being "priced out" of their homes, and young adults are worried that homeownership may be out of reach. Residents want the city to have a variety of housing types—like apartments, condos, single-family homes, and multi-family homes—so that living in Raleigh stays affordable for everyone.

- **Support for seniors:** Residents are concerned about rising property taxes for fixed income residents. Several tables mentioned seniors and retirees specifically. Residents who supported low-density neighborhoods often said they were concerned about new developments leading to higher costs of living.
- **Affordable for all:** Participants desired a balance between single-family homes and other types of housing like condos, apartments, and multi-family homes as the city continues to grow.

## Key Quotes

- The elderly can't afford to pay the higher taxes. Even with the growth, you have to be considerate of those whose wealth isn't increasing."
- "People shouldn't be penalized financially for taking care of their homes. The nicer looking and better the condition of the house, the higher the tax rate."
- "I am a mom that worries about childcare getting really expensive [with growth]. My sister pays almost \$2,000 per month in childcare."

## Trees and Green Space

Residents want the city to protect older trees because they help save money on stormwater systems and are more mature than newly planted trees. They also like Raleigh's parks and want more green spaces nearby, especially if new buildings are taller or denser, since having trees and parks makes neighborhoods nicer to walk in.

- **Keep older trees:** Residents asked that the city preserving existing tree coverage to help save money on stormwater infrastructure. They also asked that developers prioritize keeping older trees, since new trees take more time to grow.
- **More parks:** Residents appreciate Raleigh's parks and would like to see more added, even if they are small. However, they are concerned about issues like vandalism, trash collection, and the need for recycling options.

- **Close to greenery:** People shared that if there must be more high-density development, they will accept it if means more access to parks, greenways, and trees. Residents enjoy walking around their neighborhoods more when there is nature nearby.

### Key Quotes

- "More trees are always great, but preservation is better. Attach stories to these trees so we know what they are. It has a name, a story."
- "Taking into consideration how we are protecting our environment, I am interested to now how we are making sure we are also protecting our public spaces."
- "I would be interested in seeing, as we develop, how are we focusing on the environment and sustainability?"

## Community Recreation

Residents appreciate existing community gathering spaces where people can come together and spend time. They want more fun events and entertainment for all ages, especially for families, pre-teens, and seniors, so that everyone in the community has ways to connect and enjoy time with their neighbors.

- **Existing options:** People mentioned appreciation for existing destinations like North Hills and Ironworks as positive examples of community gathering spaces.
- **Something for everyone:** Residents expressed a desire for more entertainment options, community events, and festivals, especially those that are welcoming to families, pre-teens, and seniors.

### Key Quotes

- "Walkability is great when you have things to walk to"
- "We have a great arts scene and lots of venues. We have a great airport, great restaurants. We have world class entertainment and great amenities. Tons of job opportunities, lots of tech and growing companies. College students graduate and stay. Raleigh is a great place to show visitors a great time."

Conversation Themes	Tables
"Smart" and sustainable growth	All ten tables
Walkability and accessibility	All ten tables
High quality city services	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10
Affordability	1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10
Trees and green space	1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 10
Community recreation	2, 4, 5, 6, 9