Reflecting Raleigh

THE NEXT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Raleigh Planning

Neighborhood Change

Community Conversation Summary

This report consolidates key discussions, themes, and action points from all the tables at the Neighborhood Change Community Conversation event on April 22, 2025, at the Chavis Community Center. The event was a public engagement on housing and neighborhood change for Reflecting Raleigh: The Next Comprehensive Plan, hosted by City of Raleigh planning, housing, and community engagement staff. Attendees were randomly assigned to tables for three rounds of facilitated discussion. Volunteer table hosts asked participants the following questions:

- **Round 1:** How has your neighborhood changed over time?

- **Round 2:** How do you feel about your neighborhood having a wider range of housing types (townhouses, small apartments, etc.) to provide opportunities for younger families and aging in place, even if it means more physical change?

- **Round 3:** What is your vision for your neighborhood in the next 20 years?

Key Themes

Neighborhood Change Over Time

Participants observed rapid development and rising home prices, noting new subdivisions, townhomes, and apartment projects filling previously lower-density areas. This growth has led to affordability and displacement pressures. Key discussions pointed out:

- **Rising housing costs**: Increasing home values, taxes, and rents are displacing longtime residents and significantly altering neighborhood demographics.

- **Diverse housing types:** Mixed opinions were expressed, but many recognized the importance of varied housing options like townhomes, apartments, and accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to support affordability and aging in place.

- **Preservation versus new development**: Participants highlighted tensions between preserving the historical and cultural character of neighborhoods and accommodating new developments aimed at affordability and density.

- **Corporate ownership concerns:** Participants expressed concerns about large corporations buying homes, driving up prices, and limiting housing options for average-income residents.

- **Overdevelopment:** Concerns about overdevelopment, density, and loss of homeownership opportunities.

- **Neighborhood character:** Frustrations with tearing down historic homes and new development that alters neighborhood character.

- **Perceptions:** Perceived decline in property values due to infill development.

- **Developer dominance:** Developer dominance in land purchasing.

Neighborhood Accommodating Change

Participants emphasized the critical need for infrastructure and amenities that align with the neighborhood growth. Key points around the discussion included:

- **Infrastructure lag**: Traffic congestion, insufficient public transportation options, lack of sidewalks, and outdated utilities have not kept pace with housing development, leading to diminished quality of life.

- **Community spaces:** Participants expressed a strong need for increased parks, playgrounds, community centers, sports fields, libraries, and other neighborhood amenities to support residents of all ages.

- **Connectivity challenges:** Neighborhoods lack essential pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, limiting safe and convenient travel without vehicles.

- **Transit and Infrastructure Sentiment – Diverging Views**: While many participants supported expanded transit and multimodal infrastructure, some expressed opposition to public transportation based on perceptions of crime, cleanliness, and impacts on neighborhood quality. These views highlight the need for public education and dialogue around the City's long-term transit goals.

Neighborhood Identity and Equity Concerns

Participants across showed concerns about preserving neighborhood identity and ensuring equitable growth emerged frequently, Key takeaways include:

- **Community identity preservation:** Residents value maintaining historical integrity, cultural characteristics, and architectural consistency.

- **Displacement fears**: Participants repeatedly expressed concerns over gentrification pressures that threaten displacement, especially in historically marginalized communities.

- **Equitable investment and distribution:** City resources, infrastructure improvements, and public services need fairer distribution across all neighborhoods.

- **Opportunities:** Desire for land ownership and single-family home opportunities as a form of equity.

- **Developers vs. Residents:** Concerns that new housing types favor renters or developers over long-term residents.

- **Rapid redevelopment:** Loss of historic character and local control due to rapid redevelopment.

Safety and Accessibility

Safety and Accessibility for all residents was consistently highlighted as a priority. Key points:

- **Pedestrian and cyclist safety:** increased concerns about speeding traffic, poorly maintained sidewalks, unsafe crosswalks, and inadequate bike lanes.

- **Transit accessibility:** Emphasis on the need for safer, more accessible, and well-lit transit stops and stations, especially for vulnerable populations.

- **Inclusive accessibility:** Participants stressed the importance of designing infrastructure that accommodates individuals of all ages and physical abilities, including seniors and those with disabilities.

Communication and Engagement

Participants identified significant gaps in communication and community engagement from city authorities. Detailed discussion points included:

- **Improved outreach methods:** Current communication strategies about neighborhood changes are insufficient and lack transparency.

- **Transparent processes and education:** Participants emphasized the need for clearer, detailed explanations about development proposals, affordability definitions, and how decisions are made.

- **Trust building:** Stronger, ongoing relationships between the City and community residents are needed, particularly in historically underrepresented neighborhoods.

Conversation Themes	Tables
Expand affordable housing citywide	1, 4, 5, 7, 12
Mandate affordable unit set-asides	4, 5, 7, 12
Senior-friendly and cottage cluster housing	5, 7, 11
Concurrent infrastructure and housing development	4, 6, 7, 12
Expanded parks and community amenities	5, 7, 9, 11, 12
Improved public transit and connectivity	7, 9, 12
Enhanced pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure	7, 9, 11, 12
Strengthened neighborhood engagement and communication	1, 7, 12
Equitable distribution of city resources	4, 6, 7, 12