

# Legacy Lafayette

Legacy Lafayette  
Summary of Discussion – Stakeholder  
Meeting (Community Character Topic)  
August 8th, 2019  
6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.  
Lafayette Public Library

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**Attendees:** Paul Rayl (City), Jana Easley (City), Britt Palmberg (RICK), Martin Landers (Plan Tools), Vicky Uhland, Roger Wilcox, Karin Bruegel, Seth White, Marsha Robichaux, Brady Van Matre, Annemarie Jensen, Guy Higgins, Mary Higgins, Stephanie Walton, Debbie Cook, Karen Raforth, Diane Lindahl, Grant Swift, Karen Norback, Bob Bruegel, Abraham Lopez, Malia Maunakea, Dave Heinrich, Nancy Nixon, Doug Connaroe, Carolyn Cutler, Jamie Harkins, Nicole Samson

**Note:** The summary below does not include every comment made during the meeting. These notes are intended to capture the key takeaways and comments from participants at the stakeholder meeting.

## Takeaways, Marsha Robichaux's group:

- Having a community comprised entirely of one economic group, clustered together, is not good. People of all sorts of different backgrounds are here, which is good.
- The City should pursue inclusionary zoning to enhance character
- What kind of branding should we pursue so that someone knows when they have entered Lafayette?
- Lafayette is known as a “bird city”. It would be good to see more vegetation. Right now there is a lack of biodiversity around Waneka Lake.
- The City should make it easier for people to move around. Right now, it is hard for people to see strollers and walkers.
- How can the City enforce standards on vegetation (for example, keeping vegetation from growing into the sidewalk)?
- The city needs better code enforcement, and information on this should be in the comprehensive plan. The codes should address issues such as being able to see around corners.
- Need to expand art work in the city onto trails and within open spaces
- The art on Public Road makes us unique.
- Concerning the need for an entertainment district – The east side of the city was dry until 1981. Entertainment was found “out in the woods” due to how the town was platted. The city could look into having entertainment or an amphitheater at Stem Ciders, and take advantage of the great views from there.
- The City could do more to provide spaces for youth who seek a place to play. Need more places for young adults and teenagers.

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- The city needs an architectural review committee.
- The development along Baseline is very hodge podge. Need to establish the form of Public Road down to South Boulder Road. The public realm around City Hall has deteriorated in recent years.
- The City needs wider sidewalks, even on Public Road. There are sidewalks that aren't fixed, and aren't wide enough.
- Need to really work on ensuring the maintenance of park spaces.

## Takeaways, Karin's group:

- Need to provide more of a draw for people, along East Simpson. Need more walkability and to enhance the experience for people traveling through this area. Where can people park in this area?
- Explore using the parking at King Soopers to provide space there for pedicabs or free transit facilities.
- City needs to explore ideas for "universal design".
- Need to explore how art could draw neighbors together.
- West of 287, this part of Lafayette doesn't feel connected to Old Town, and in some ways feels more connected to Louisville or Boulder. The City needs to explore ideas that will keep these folks in town for their business and play, making Lafayette a great choice for them.
- City needs to acknowledge that many people have trouble getting to places around town.
- Need to have more art around events. Need to put art in every part of town so that everyone in town feels connected.
- Need to protect and enforce building codes and protect open space for environmental features and wildlife.
- Need to pursue ideas that would be great for the City's carbon footprint.
- Need to celebrate the diversity in Lafayette, and make everyone feel at home.
- Need to expand the idea of inclusivity to senior citizens. Need to mention this very specifically within the comprehensive plan.

## Takeaways, Anne Marie's Group

- The group was in favor of having a high quality character in Lafayette. There was general consensus around the value of having diversity in the community, in terms of economics, age, and disabilities.
- A vibrant community includes young people.
- Having places for live/work and mixed-use development is an important part of the community. How can the comprehensive plan help incentivize mixed-use development?

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- How can the community provide better transitions from neighborhoods to commercial areas? Through the use of walkways, paths, etc. In some areas, steeper hills impede the movement from outside of neighborhoods, into neighborhoods.
- The idea of diversity includes blue collar aspects of the community, including machinery and manufacturing. The City needs incentives for economic innovators and incentives for economic diversity.
- Perhaps incentives and easier regulations could be used to create cheaper areas, away from Old Town, that could help to attract small businesses.
- The current comprehensive plan conflicts with itself in so many places now. Many values are conflicting in the comprehensive plan.
- In new residential development the city needs to really push for having a diversity of economics, abilities, etc. Really need to push the diversity.
- A circulator bus would allow people of different abilities to get around town.
- The group was not in favor of “cohesive design”. Rather, they want more “funky” with regard to how spaces are designed in Lafayette, as opposed to design guidelines that make everything look the same. Creativity should be encouraged.
- Disagreement on what to do with the Urban Growth Boundary. Many people didn’t want to see Lafayette become big, and they want the community to live within the current boundaries.

## Takeaways, Dave Heinrich’s table:

- A diversity of housing is important. The existing code doesn’t allow for diversity of housing.
- Need to preserve mobile homes as a housing choice.
- The code needs to allow for buildings to provide for changes in uses as economic conditions change.
- The code needs to encourage buildings to be built that will change and adapt to different uses over time.
- Need more multi-modal street projects, including more capacity for buses, bikes, etc.
- Streets that provide for alleyways that have front porches and provide gathering spaces would be good. Informal interactions are important to better connect older and younger populations in Lafayette.
- Need to make sure that the comprehensive plan talks about maximizing social interactions
- Need to preserve open space
- Need to celebrate the history of women in Lafayette, in some way

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- People in the area are being driven out by escalating property taxes. There are some tools in place to help offset this trend, but the city needs a way to educate people about how to deal with rising property taxes in Lafayette.
- It is important to address what character means between different neighborhoods. This could include having signage designed for different neighborhoods.
- Need to explore using a Form Based Code and get away from the traditional zoning codes and classifications. The zoning code should allow a variety of compatible uses in the same areas. For example, it would be convenient to have offices located next to commercial uses.
- Need to examine parking requirements carefully, with regard to how they impact character
- The city shouldn't look to overly regulate architectural colors and materials. Leave it up to the people. Boulder looks highly regulated. It is important to not "over plan" in Lafayette.
- Important to emphasize connectivity and access between all areas in town and the various open space areas.
- The current comp plan has so many policies that contradict each other. Need to take a critical look at the document and pare the list of policies down. Need to decide the really important things to put in the comp plan, to guide the community.
- Lafayette is a small town where people can choose to have a slower pace of life. We don't want to be Manhattan.
- The key elements should include connectivity, walkability, etc.
- What things look like is cosmetic. The people and the diversity of the people in this town make Lafayette.
- Need to get young people involved in the process.
- In the old days, you could have a business located in your home, but that is not allowed now.
- The comprehensive plan should promote a more diverse, more creative, and less suburban community. The plan should allow a lot of different things, but should discourage some elements as well. What is "blue collar" anyway? It means fixing your car in your own driveway, or painting your own house. What is needed is noise parameters, but the plan should allow people to be creative and blue collar if they like.
- Affordability and self-sufficiency are at the core of this town.

## Additional Comments from Seth White:

- What would the doubling of population in Lafayette have on the character of the community? For most people, it would be devastating.
- Need a discussion about how big we want Lafayette to be.
- Perhaps there should be a limit on the number of residential units in town?

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## Additional Comments from Karen Norback:

- The plan should consider financial aspects. Sales tax from various commercial buildings can only be so large. Once we have reached a ceiling on commercial space, we will see the capacity in terms of how many services, etc. the city can provide.
- Need to keep fiscal balance at the forefront. People are being added to the community, but in the big picture the city can only support a certain number of additional residents, from a fiscal perspective.

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FROM COMMENT SHEETS

### How could the Comprehensive Plan promote the creation of a distinct, high quality Community Character as development or redevelopment occurs?

- We have a distinct character now, we just need to make sure it isn't lost. This includes open space, amazing history – women especially, ethnically diverse population, small businesses – especially on Public Road. Diverse in earnings, arts, housing, small town charm.
- Through a greater diversity of housing (including accessory dwelling units, tiny homes, and co-housing)
- Through protection of mobile home parks (perhaps through its own zoning classification?)
- Allowing building uses to change as economic conditions change. Encourage the design of buildings to do this.
- Multi-modal street projects only, with smaller streets. No big thoroughfare projects.
- Maximize casual social interactions
- Encourage alley ways, front porches, gathering places
- Maintain a small, hometown feel
- Multi-generational living
- Encourage and support diversity and inclusion
- Maintain the opportunity for those who are from here, to stay here
- Creating community through design, diversity of economics and for disabled, elderly, young people, mixed use, live-work spaces, connections between residential & commercial, manufactured blue collar types of commercial encouraged throughout the planning process (job generating), innovators – incubators, creates diversity. Standards for connectivity, code decisions to encourage economic diversity.
- Not “beige blight”
- Want open space, i.e. yards, for kids to play
- Economically diverse housing, e.g. one-quarter should be for low income

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- Branding at the town entrances
- Walkability around Simpson and Public Road
- Building codes
- Want to be able to include far flung aspects of our city to feel a part of Lafayette, beyond Old Town
- Universal (ADA) design is important

## What does “Community Character” mean to you? What is the role of the Comprehensive Plan in creating strong Community Character (such as cohesiveness of design, arts and culture, and ethnic diversity), for different areas of the City?

- Open space, history (including the history of women), arts, diversity
- Have we asked developers to do more for the disabled, low income, or the elderly? Our comp plan should be firm on criteria for meeting these needs, residentially.
- Art, and not just in Old Town
- Creative playgrounds like Silver Creek
- Increase vegetation around Waneka Lake
- Making it easier for people to move around
- Friendly, quiet, family-oriented
- Variety of age, race, folks that hold on to differences that others lack
- Some towns have actual “mascots”, such as “Artie the Aardvark” for the arts commission.
- What do you think of when you think of Lafayette? Art and diversity. Keep this.
- Gentrification is happening. It is concerning. Can some of the gentrification be prevented by the residential code, with respect to the size, scale, building envelope, guidelines on how homes look, limits on additions to the scale of homes?

## How do you believe Community Character could differ across the various areas of Lafayette?

- Education about property tax support and other resources for lower income residents
- Identify individual character districts perhaps?
- Unique history
- Diversity – Ethnic, Economic, Age
- Open space buffers between Lafayette and adjacent communities
- Fairly well preserved Old Town, including both residential and commercial
- Art, culture, diversity, tourism – really focus on owning a distinct difference versus other area municipalities

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- I like the idea of multiple, defined sets of neighborhoods with the ability to define the character of their neighborhood
- Encourage zones for new businesses where costs are lower.
- All communities should be walkable, wheelchair and scooter friendly. Local circulator bus!
- Artwork extended into trails and open space, e.g. tiling on trail overpasses
- Entertainment district on the South Boulder Road area; Improve walkability
- Art, sculpture, events in different parts of town, not just at the Festival Plaza
- New developers versus those that have been here a long time. People on the west side of 287 often never go to Old Town and don't feel connected – how can we connect them?

## What tools (such as design guidelines, changes to zoning regulations, etc.) do you think could be used to enhance Community Character?

- Form Based Code
- Permit compatible uses in most districts
- Take out minimum parking requirements on a case by case basis
- Don't regulate architecture, materials, colors
- Limit expansion of roads. If you design for larger car volumes, will get it. You get what you design for. One thing Boulder has done right is to limit the size of the arterials coming in and out of the city. Part of Lafayette's feel is that we don't have an endless series of massive suburban intersections connected by bloated arterials. We have 287, and that's it – all other major roads are substantially smaller and contribute significantly to the feel of the town. Go to Centennial or Lakewood to see what the opposite looks and feels like.
- Aggressively protect our mobile home parks. These are the #1 sector of our affordable housing stock, and also the most vulnerable. All of them are located on sites which would be extremely attractive to be scraped and rebuilt with market rate complexes. Put strong language in the new comprehensive plan which provides clear instructions to developers – and most importantly city staff and boards – on what they are to do in this regard. Preservation of our mobile home parks is a HUGE issue in the ongoing issue of affordable housing. Also, explore options for mobile home owners to buy their own lots. This encourages retention and investment in the city. See East Chester Street and East Emma Street, just west of Burlington, for a great example. This kind of vision will promote diversity on many levels (economic, ethnic, for example).
- Reaffirm, redouble our commitment to open space, especially our buffer zones. If we merge more with Louisville, Broomfield, and Erie, we will lose a critical piece of our identity and character. Go to Westminster and just try to figure out where it ends and Thornton begins!

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- It seems some people are tiring of “all Old Town all the time” and I understand that. However, for first two-thirds of Lafayette’s existence, Old Town was Lafayette. The remaining 90 percent of present day Lafayette has been built since the 1970s. Old Town is a unique and fascinating area and most (but not all) of our history is reflected there. But of all residential areas in town, it is by far the most vulnerable to being lost. Same goes for the Old Town commercial districts. Actively work to keep what we have here in the coming decades. For example:
  - Add strong language to the comprehensive plan that loudly advocates for re-using and restoring historic buildings. Make this obvious and clear to city boards, city staff, and developers.
  - Set a goal of having at least one historic district in Lafayette by 2023. Boulder has eight of these, and even Arvada has two. And there neighborhoods and areas are thriving..and protected!
  - Create more signs, plaques, and monuments at places of historic interest, to show people what happened here before their moving van showed up. Knowing something about the history of this town, and the people and events that came before me, makes me feel connected to this town at a very personal level.
  - The new comp plan should contain – if it can – some kind of cap on Lafayette’s population. Even though we have an urban growth boundary, Lafayette could easily balloon to 40,000 or 50,000 if we are clumsy and don’t pay attention. To what happens in coming years. Write down all important components of “character” that people identified, and imagine the devastating effect that a doubling of our population would cause to all of them. I would suggest a cap on total residential units as a possible way to limit our ultimate population size.
  - Under no circumstances should we extend the urban growth boundary.
  - Review the entire comp plan and look for instances of contradictory and/or conflicting goals, and resolve the conflicts. The comp plan has so many policies that board members, planners and developers can literally find policies to support any proposed project. Streamline the plan and cut the fat. Create a more focused, clear, and concise set of policies to support our established list of goals. These policies should be a reflection of the most important core goals and values that citizens have expressed in the past, and are expressing now. Also, revisit the list of goals itself
- Encourage urban canopy
- Connecting neighborhoods with trails
- Green spaces in neighborhoods
- Do not expand the urban growth boundary



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- Assist seniors to age in place
- No “cohesive design”. Prefer diversity, incentivize funky with zoning
- Establish an architectural review oversight committee
- Establish inclusionary zoning
- Art at different new developments to make them feel part of the city
- Universal ADA design allows for old, young and those and disabilities to live in the community

## How can the Comprehensive Plan help promote Community Character efforts (for example, enhancing public streetscapes, installing public art, enhancing signage)?

- Activate Lafayette
- Better “bridging” of 287
- Connectivity between different areas
- Art throughout
- Build on the idea of a resilient city – are we prepared to bounce back after a shock or stressor?
- Keep the urban growth boundary. Don’t become big. Have a growth limit.
- Baseline is a hodge podge. Should the character of Public Road be extended to Baseline?
- Enhance South Boulder Road at the City Hall area, along with the area between city building and the new bus station
- Add pavilions to parks
- Murals around storm drains
- More murals on big blocks of concrete (such as the side of King Soopers, overpasses on 287 and other ugly spots of concrete)
- Universal design
- Art on open spaces and parks

## What other ideas do you have for the Community Character topic?

- Have a conversation with Youth Advisory Committee on this topic (and others)
- Look at similar sized communities, e.g. Golden, for examples
- Look at the Stapleton development
- Wider sidewalks, improved enforcement of walkability (e.g. more tree trimming) and maintenance
- Art is the glue that helps hold us together for many, for others it is where they live, their church, their race, etc.
- Events and physical structures, murals, etc.

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- How can we capture people driving through on 287 or on Baseline?
- Preserve open space
- Protect Waneka Lake
- Hold on to our own culture around the ideas of age, race, ethnicity, countries, language
- East Simpson should be a draw for walkability
- What makes us unique?
  - Open space and connections to open space, agricultural, rural feel
  - History, including the history of women. Build on that, it is a central part of our identity
  - Diverse economically and in character
  - Protections for mobile home parks, where people can own their own lots. The city can help step in with mobile home zoning.
  - Accessory dwelling units and tiny homes
  - No big thoroughfares; smaller streets
  - Design for multi-modal, pedestrians, bikes and transit, bus. Connectivity of trails
  - Arts – across communities
  - What maximizes casual social interactions
  - Any new project or development should have front porches, front yard gathering spaces, and sidewalks. Buildings along the fronts of lots with parks in back. This is a cornerstone for residential.
  - Need to encourage alleys in new developments. Rear access.
  - Need education about property tax assistance that is available, in order to preserve ethnic diversity, lower income populations, senior populations
- How to bridge 287? Ensure connections between east and west
- Highlight the different areas. What does each neighborhood look like?
- Mixed use offices – allow and encourage compatible uses outside of downtown
- Look at parking requirements on a case by case basis.