

What do residents want in the Collierville 2050 plan? See final report



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Collierville officials and residents heard a final report May 14 at Town Hall about how residents want to plan and shape the Town into the future.

Topics included vision, land use, economic development, housing, transportation, connectivity and activity spaces youth to name a few.

The Town held “2050 design week” May 12-14 as part of the Collierville 2050 comprehensive plan. Residents, business owners and stakeholders participated in a series of interactive design events to gather public input about the various planning topics.

“We had a successful amount of public engagement,” Michael Clark, director of community and economic development for Collierville, said.

Dawn Thomas, project manager of Fortworth, Texas-based consultant Freese and Nichols, recapped the findings during a nearly hour-long presentation before Town staff, Collierville Board of Mayor and Aldermen members and some residents in council chambers.

Freese and Nichols, an urban planning, engineering and architecture firm, serves as the project team lead for the comprehensive plan.

Key takeaways included enhancing Collierville's identity, adding more bike trails, offering more family events such as live music, creating more affordable housing for essential workers, providing walkability and connecting neighborhoods to build community.

“We heard a lot about outdoor recreation as well as a lot about family-focused gatherings, events, activities and entertainment spaces,” Thomas said. “We did hear about housing for all. Walkability was a big theme really throughout that you’ll see as I continue to talk about takeaways. Connectivity and inclusiveness was not just about connecting places with sidewalks or trails. It was about making sure that the community is connected to one another.”

The report also showed strong support for walkable and mixed-use development, an increased demand for recreation, trails and green space as well as a need for more community activity centers.

How should growth look in Collierville?

Resident input also showed a tie in votes in people wanting to see "moderate growth" and "significant growth," based on information gathered during the week's sessions.

The "moderate growth" development scenario includes offering neighborhood shops and town offices in areas with neighborhood schools, creating affordable single family housing and considering traffic needs before approving more mixed commercial areas. The scenario also included developing apartments away from core residential neighborhoods.

The "significant growth" development scenario included building more houses under \$400,000 for teachers, firefighters, police officers and nurses and keeping neighborhood commercial development off of major roads that would be dangerous to walk or ride a bike.

“We’re going to continue to work with the steering committee and staff to understand the feedback that we received and also to basically try and take the best parts of scenario two and three to combine into a future land use or future development map that is representative,” Thomas said.

Recruitment important for economic development

When addressing economic development, Thomas said feedback included making housing affordability for young families an economic development priority. Residents also wanted to continue supporting traditional business recruitment and retention to generate tax revenue and diversify the tax base, according to the report.

Feedback showed residents generally support mixed-use development throughout the community.

Evolution of downtown a priority, transportation woes

Residents agreed Downtown Collierville should evolve. The presentation highlighted the need to address downtown parking issues, enhance pedestrian safety with improved sidewalks, handrails and improved traffic

patterns. Input also revealed that residents would rather have small businesses and local entrepreneurship over big-box or large chain development.

To calm traffic, residents prefer buffered bike facilities and pedestrian refuge islands along roadway segments as well as on-street bike facilities and roundabout intersections. Some participants also desired alternative routes to busy Poplar Avenue, some calling the roadway, too congested and unsafe.

“From the folks, that we heard from there’s an interest in exploring different transportation options and that’s kind of exciting,” Thomas said. “We asked folks also to identify, relative to transportation, their three top priorities. This surprise me a little bit because when we were here in December, there was a lot of conversation about Poplar Avenue.”

Youths want more activity spaces

Freese and Nichols staff connected with Collierville High School students involved in extra-curricular activities and student government to ask them what they want to see in Collierville.

Students said they think the mall at Carriage Crossing is safe and clean. However, a consensus showed students believe the mall lacks stores, events and activities that give opportunities for leisure and fun experiences, such as skating rinks or skate parks.

“There are more than enough old people shops, but maybe not enough young people shops,” Thomas said from talking to the youth about Carriage Crossing.

“What people in that younger age bracket are really starting to want is they want a destination experience. They don’t want to just go one place and do one thing. They want bold reuse strategies. That might look like a drive-in theater or a water park. There’s plenty of space out there (at Carriage Crossing), which possibly could become one of those things.”

Only two of 30 students raised their hand when asked if they'd come back and live in Collierville after college to start a career, Thomas said.

“These were thoughtful kids, and they realized that coming back to Collierville is an expensive proposition, so those are some of the things we were talking about,” Thomas said.

Collierville resident Chuck Lesnick chimed in to suggest in order to attract more young families or young people back to Collierville, the Town needs to decide the type of businesses and industries to establish in the suburb.

“Germantown has the medical district, and it is thriving,” Lesnick said. “Now, what kind of industry and where in the town can we develop the infrastructure for that, and you’ll keep people here.”

The goal is for the comprehensive plan to be adopted by March 2027.

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