



Visioning Session

July 31st, 2024

Hill Studio & Arnett Muldrow

Community Engagement Summary

Summary

- **Project Kickoff**
 - Open to the public
 - ~30 – 40 attendees
- **Community Survey**
 - Live from May 29th – July 24th
 - 451 responses
- **Focus Groups**
 - Two focus groups on each topic; eight focus groups total
 - **Housing**
 - **Community Amenities**
 - **Outdoor Recreation**
 - **Small Businesses**
- **Stakeholder Interviews**
 - Representing:
 - Large Employer
 - Local Events
 - Town Manager
 - Town Mayor
 - County Economic Development
 - Historical Society
 - Youth
 - County Parks and Rec
 - Hargrave Military Academy

Survey – Summary of Respondents

Relationship to Chatham

- **63%** of respondents live in Chatham
- **39%** of respondents work in Chatham
- **44%** of respondents have lived in Chatham for more than 20 years
- **20%** of respondents have lived in Chatham for 2-5 years

Age

- **24%** of respondents are between 25-34 years of age
- **17%** of respondents are between 45-54 years of age
- **17%** of respondents are between 55-64 years of age

Ethnicity

- **79%** of respondents identify as White; **10%** of respondents identify as Black

Gender

- **52%** of respondents identify as female; **43%** of respondents identify as male

Education

- **35%** of respondents hold a Bachelors degree
- **26%** of respondents hold a Masters or PhD

Income

- **16%** of respondents earn more than \$150,000 annually
- **14%** of respondents earn between \$100,000 and \$149,999 annually

Survey – Main Takeaways

Respondents appreciate...

- Chatham's sense of community
- Quaintness
- Walkability
- Local businesses like Callands, El Caz, J&Ts, Shadetree
- The library
- The presence of Hargrave and Chatham Hall
- Scenic beauty

Respondents wish for...

- More restaurants (notably a breakfast option, brewery or tasting room, family-friendly eateries, and an icecream shop)
- Greater access to local produce and goods
- More childcare options
- More senior services
- A hotel
- Affordable and diverse housing options
- Community gathering spaces
- More things to do/entertainment options

Survey – Main Takeaways

Respondents envision a Chatham that...

- Has expanded small businesses and restaurants in a vibrant downtown
- Is a destination for day trips and provides multiple entertainment options
- Has affordable and diverse housing opportunities
- Retains its historic aesthetic and small-town charm, but with modern amenities
- Supports entrepreneurship and small businesses
- Provides family-friendly amenities and activities
- Celebrates its history and cultural heritage
- Is economically diverse
- Has strong community engagement
- Remains safe and community-oriented

Focus Groups - Main Takeaways

Community Amenities

- There is a desire for enhanced community amenities, particularly child-friendly spaces
 - Community gathering areas
 - Community events
- Affordable childcare is highly desired
- Access to local produce/goods desired
- Accessibility within Town is a concern
 - Transportation a top priority
 - Desire for improved walkability and trails
- There is a desire to promote historical sites
- There are partnership opportunities with Hargrave and Chatham Hall

Focus Groups - Main Takeaways

Outdoor Recreation

- Local parks are highly valued, and there are opportunities for improvements/enhanced amenities
- The County-run Community Center is an amazing amenity, but could be utilized better
 - Weekend hours?
 - More events for youth
 - Consistent event times
- New or improved amenities desired
 - Splash pad
 - Expanded walking and hiking trails
 - More parks (particularly on North end of Town)
- Opportunities for public use of Hargrave and Chatham Hall amenities

Focus Groups - Main Takeaways

Housing

- COVID-19's impact
- Affordability and availability of housing is a significant concern
- What housing types are appropriate for Chatham?
- There is increased rental demand
- People are looking for modern amenities
- Significant need for senior housing
- New housing should be compatible with existing housing
- Opportunities for second floor downtown housing
- What can we learn from Danville's efforts to encourage housing development?
- How can Chatham attract builders and developers?

Focus Groups - Main Takeaways

Small Business

- Small businesses need more support
 - From the Town, County, other businesses, and residents
- Desires for specific businesses
 - Co-op market for local goods and produce
 - Breakfast place, icecream shop, brewery
- How can we ensure new businesses can survive?
- Need for more marketing of downtown area
 - Explore funding opportunities
- Opportunity to establish Chatham as a destination
- Desire for a uniform, strategic effort amongst businesses and throughout downtown