

Asheboro LDP
Focus Group Minutes
April – May 2021

1. What are the community's ideals concerning how Asheboro should grow and develop? Think about Economic Development, Growth Management, Community Appearance, Environmental Stewardship, and Infrastructure.

- Attract a good workforce – families (provide a good foundation), good education for families and professional development.
- What would entice returning graduates to use their degree.
- How can Asheboro support the Greensboro-Randolph Megasite?
- Entice young folks to Asheboro, hear from young people.
- Involve the NextGen group in the community.
- All
- Dog parks, greenways, outdoor areas, green spaces – give young people a reason to stay
- Small town, but with greenway like projects
- Commercial construction feedback is a lack of undeveloped buildings, warehousing, which is limiting growth.
- Affordable housing (apartments and townhouses) for the middle-class
- Water extended into certain areas (east and west)
- Lack of commercial buildings
- Lack of public transportation
- More of a partnership between the developers and city; streets by city, water by developers
- Growth Management: Awareness of farm land being lost; concentrate on in-fill; re-develop properties that would not take farmland.
- More development around Zoo; SportsPlex; south Asheboro
- Economic Development – Industrial growth; downtown development/growth (bank building)
- Community appearance – keep planters looking good; focus on plants and trees in downtown
- Infrastructure – better sidewalks (repair or replace old ones); urban trail/greenway; eastside of Asheboro (more sidewalks to help them walk into town); more seating along sidewalks; more dining options available along sidewalks and open space.
- More outdoor dining such as Taco Loco.
- Bring more people outdoors.
- Asheboro has not grown that much; getting bigger companies to come; restaurants like Texas Roadhouse, Cracker Barrel; more hotels.
- The City has done a great job with downtown.
- The Zoo City SportsPlex will be a huge asset.
- Encourage more restaurants to come to the area.
- Asheboro should be more concerned with median income.
- Problem keeping young adults because of nothing to do here.
- Problems with gang activity; not many ways to capture their time.
- The City wants to take everything into account.
- North Asheboro could use more synergy – more uniform look – more structure
- Econ. Development and Growth Management
- Bring in more professional people or plants to leave
- Young professionals need housing – not a lot market rate apartments – not a place for them to go
- Not using the Zoo to Asheboro's advantage – trails, greenways, YMCA
- Housing – multiple costs ranges – multifamily
- Infrastructure – a site that makes sense, but infrastructure is not available
- Curious long term – where is makes sense to extend utilities near the bypass

- Development could go east past mall towards Franklinville
- Investments in Randolph Mall – benefits nearby properties
- More locals come out now that traffic is diverted
- Dixie Drive could take of itself
- Redevelopment plan with NCDOT
- Get back to requiring sidewalks with new development
- Economic Development
 - Tourism
 - Bypass on southside (growth near highway)
 - More growth area on south
- Infrastructure is limiting growth

2. Where will growth occur? Primary growth area, secondary growth area, economic development area, long-range growth, rural conservation, open space corridor.

- *Maintain greenspace, wildlife corridors, etc.*
- *Increase diversity in the community – what kind of industries, different races,*
- *What diversity means to the community?*
- *What are we doing on a cultural level, arts, creativity, etc.*
- Extending existing water lines to areas; east and south
- Commercial growth toward northern part of the city
- US 220 corridor
- Tourist dollars to supply funding for low income projects
- Sportsplex how will it affect development?
- Think outside of Asheboro: Seagrove as an example.
- More development should happen to the north towards Randleman
- Noted: the amount of storage buildings coming in.
- Randolph Community College is an asset to the community.
- Randolph Community College could get help from Asheboro to fund the small business center.
- The City could help more non-profits.
- More outside city limits for industrial development
- Not a lot of space available for large scale development
- Growth near highway
- Rural conservation is needed in the southside (farmland & woods)

3. What do you think of first when I say the City of Asheboro?

- Downtown
- Downtown (antique shopping)
- NC Zoo (20 years ago) – now downtown
- Congested traffic downtown
- NC Zoo
- NC Zoo
- NC Zoo
- Nice people
- Hometown pride (living here and making it better)

- NC Zoo
- NC Zoo (sculptures near highway)
- Small town; warmth; friendliness; strong sense of community; more unity (ex: with minorities); more working together.
- NC Zoo
- NC Zoo
- NC Zoo

4. Which of the following categories interests you the most? (Economic Development, Growth Management, Community Appearance, Environmental Stewardship, and Infrastructure).

- Econ. Development (professionally)
- Environmental Stewardship (personally)
- Community Appearance
- Hard to separate these categories for the overall good of Asheboro – all so connected
- These areas are so intertwined
- The appearance
- Econ. Development
- Economic Development
- Economic Development – future of Randolph County
- Econ Development
- All of them

5. Thinking about those categories that interest you, is there anything that is needed in Asheboro to improve those categories? (e.g., housing, business parks, parks, quality of life?)

- Asheboro is larger than just downtown – the north is not appealing as downtown. More emphasis on the northern part of the city.
- The Zoo City Sportsplex should be promoted heavily.
- Does Asheboro have the infrastructure to handle these things?
- Making sure on and off ramps are kept up through the city (Community Appearance) – paying attention to the details.
- Something good: City Garden park featuring natural areas
- Infrastructure: broadband issues (Randolph County Digital Alliance)
- More Downtown Events.
- Dog Park at SportsPlex.
- The eastside of Asheboro could use more assistance.
- Better recycling
- Encourage/promote people to walk and bicycle
- Encourage people using their own water bottles
- Get sidewalks into neighborhoods
- Urban trails/greenways
- Older houses in or near downtown area; houses could be better preserved or kept up.
- Stretching out the boundaries of downtown improvements

- Pretty good job so far
- Maintain a good balance of industrial and housing (variety & affordable)
- Infrastructure Master Plan
- Community safety (Easter weekend?)
- Growth Management
- Environmental Stewardship; open-space preservation/farm land preservation
- Economic Development x 5
- Infrastructure
- Community Appearance
- In Downtown – inconsistency in regulations (signs, streetscape)
- Signage for downtown is inconsistent with Dixie Dr.
- Community Appearance
- Infrastructure
- Economic Development
- Community Appearance
- Environmental Stewardship
- Infrastructure
- Community Appearance
- Environmental Stewardship
- Infrastructure
- Economic Development x 3
-

6. What do you see as strengths in Asheboro - things you want to keep the same or have maintained?

- Downtown
- Love the downtown area – new restaurants, etc – partner with the existing antique shops – the downtown is growing in popularity, people desire to visit
- Any effort to help youth: Village of Barnabas.
- The mayor and town manager have been good at keeping things up to date, and approachable.
- Community; sense of coming together; build on this; pull all communities together; bring something valuable to the community
- Asheboro (city/chamber?) has been good at working on this.
- People in Asheboro value diversity (Taco Loco)
- Relationship with the Zoo
- Sense of community
- Good place to life, work, and play
- Coordination effort with NCDOT (developments and roadway infrastructure)
- Works well with County
- Good leadership (Mayor & City Manager)
- NC Zoo
- Small-town feel

- Downtown
- Uwharrie National Forest nearby
- A very business-friendly community (permitting, city management, etc.)
- There is a “yes” mentality
- The city is very approachable and willingness to cooperate
- Strengthen downtown area and continue to encourage the revitalization of old buildings

7. Is there anything that isn't working – things that need to change?

- Walkability is good downtown, but not in other areas
- Taking space that is not great and making it useful and attractive (Atlanta Beltway is an example)
- Problems with gaps in sidewalks; feeling unsafe walking (too near to traffic)
- More housing is needed aimed at NextGen people and families (use old mills, older buildings) Churches and non-profits are on the cusp of helping people in need
- Traffic is becoming an issue on Fayetteville Street (peak time, 3pm to 5pm) – Cox Street has too many potholes
- Downtown proper is very good, but areas outside are not appealing to the eye, Cox Street sidewalks are not very good; bad walkability; traffic lights to traffic is not bottlenecked.
- Extending the downtown improvements a few streets out
- More restaurants to come in.
- Eastside needs assistance for (Eastside daycare, gym). The old African-American high school.
- More activities involving Lake Lucas and surrounding area
- Past plans for a trail?
Disconnect with minority communities (Hispanics used as an example)
- Concerns for the hospital
- A better historic preservation focus for downtown
- Workforce – not sure if pipeline of workers is working well (how do they capture those staying and wanting to enter workforce?)

8. What locations would be appropriate for new development (commercial, industrial, residential)?

- An ugly building behind Brusky's (sp?) – going south on Fayetteville that could be useful for new properties.
- Old K-mart
- US 220 corridor for manufacturing
- Not a lot of rail space left in Asheboro
- East of town for commercial, but needs water and sewer
- South of town, west; land is needed for development (residential)
- More development in areas not near Greensboro.
- Development along train tracks.
- Median salary.
Mall area on east side along US 64 for commercial development

- North area for more commercial development (ex. a grocery store)
- Southside with commercial and industrial
- Eastside for residential
- US 220 corridor for industrial
- Westside for commercial
- Zoo City Sportsplex area (residential)
- North Fayetteville/North Fayetteville (commercial)
- Airport (industrial)
- There are still some opportunities along I-73/74 for industrial opportunity
- Foreign Trade Zone near airport?
- Industrial: north of downtown
- Old US 220

9. Are there any low-hanging fruit improvements you'd like to see changed tomorrow if you could? What about improvements that may take more time to accomplish, say 10 or 20 years out?

Short Term

- Sidewalks
- Education of the rules of with cars and pedestrians
- Appearance (litter)
- Short-term: catching people off the bypass; make those people stop; county made mistake to build rest stop outside of city; development is needed close to exit ramps.
- Short-term: sidewalks and better road conditions (better maintenance)
- Improve downtown; Sunset, Worth – improve Fayetteville and Salisbury (narrow); Salisbury could use streetscaping.
- More activities for young people (food truck, murals for Instagram); events for families. Eastside: if someone could indicate, this situation could change next week. Mr. McNair. Problems with zoning issues.
- Non-income-based apartments in or close to downtown (Lexington, NC as an example).
- More housing opportunities for management-level professionals.

Long Term

- Greenways
- Appearances
- Long-term: continued economic growth; infrastructure; buildings ready to develop
- Long-term: four lanes on Zoo Parkway
- Long-term: traffic flow away from Zoo Parkway
- Long-term: connecting farms in the urban/rural divide; improve Farmer's Market (getting more farmers to sell there)
- Tourism – hotels in area, but there could be more (heads in beds)
- Agricultural center
- NC Zoo expansion (resort type hotel)
- Long Term: pouring into the youth.
- The seeking a solution to the drug and suicide problem.
- how much the Zoo is going to grow and support businesses

- More heads-in-beds from the Zoo
- A larger soccer complex?

10. What other ideas or concerns do you have?

- Good point was made about engaging property owner – exterior appearance; are there things they can do with exterior appearance that would be low cost
- City of Asheboro/Randolph Hospital needs to maintain the hospital
- Alamance County/Orange County handshake agreement: Randolph County should agree with Guilford County; tax rate changes, etc.
The city should take advantage of Little Lakes area
- Concerns about bypass: new signage to direct people into Asheboro to stop
- Different types of lodging in Asheboro; more upscale and/or newer options
- Restaurants open on Mondays
- What are we doing in other parts of the city? Northside & eastside
- Infrastructure/Corridor Planning
 - Dixie Dr. through Asheboro
 - Fayetteville Dr.
 - US 49
 - Zoo Parkway between Zoo and Bypass
- Provide more opportunities for community gardens, and promote them once they have been established.
- Cattle is a large part of the Randolph County economy, but there is no place to sell them.

1. What partners or institutions need to be involved to ensure success? (Please include contact information if available)

- NextGen
- Downtown group through the Chamber
- People outside of the normal groups (ex. business owners)
- Eastside Local Development
- Eastside Improvement Association
- YMCA
- Randolph Community College
- Asheboro Randolph Chamber
- Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen
- Village of Barnabas
- Asheboro Chapter Boys & Girls Club
- Emmy's House
- Chamber of Commerce
- City/county working together

- TDA/Economic Development
- Community groups
- Eastside group(s)?
- Leaders in Hispanic communities
- Churches and schools
- Randolph County
- RCC agricultural program
- Ag businesses – re: Southern States
- Farm Bureau Board Members
- Housing Coalition
- Major non-profits

2. With this plan, Asheboro is working to update its vision statement. The current statement is: *Over the next twenty years, we envision land development in our community will lead to a strong, diverse economy and a high quality of life for all our citizens. Individual pieces of the “land development puzzle” will fit together to promote a quality environment, to preserve the assets and resources we value most, to stimulate development in the most appropriate places, and to enhance and maintain the beauty and livability of our community.*

- **What words or phrases stick out to you?**
 - Likes “high quality of life” and “diverse economy”
 - Likes “quality of life”
 - Likes “preservation”
 - Needs more about the work needed
 - Too many buzzwords; average person would not be able to understand
 - “To stimulate development in the most appropriate places.” x 2
 - “To stimulate development in the most appropriates places”
 - “to preserve the assets and resources”
 - This vision statement could come from anywhere...it is not Asheboro specific...too generic
 - Needs to be more defined for Asheboro
 - “wants to be prepared for large-scale development”
 - Too long?
 - Align with the county’s strategic plan
 - High quality of life for all citizens; beauty and livability of our community; a place for all citizens
 - Sounds good
 -
- **Do you think this statement represents the future vision for Asheboro?**
 - Asheboro has more racial diversity, and the statement needs to reflect this.
- **If not, what about it could change?**
 - Needs to mention a diverse population
 - Will the average citizen understand it?
 - Get feedback from
 - Too complicated

- A broad and/or simpler vision to understand
- What resources and values? (needs specifics)
- What does this mean? How could be wordsmith – “Individual pieces of the...”
- Shows a clear vision
- Could say “natural” resources
- Could say something about “water quality” or “resources” (could be also recreational)
- Used a lot of words, but saying nothing; needs to be more concrete; needs to say what the plan is; how we are going to get there
- Sounds like a politician that is avoiding commitment