

## General Plan 2020 Focus Group Kick-Off Meetings

*Grouped by topic. Includes comments from all groups at both kickoff meetings. Staff comments (as expressed at the meetings) are in italics. Post-meeting clarifying comments are in brackets [ ].*

### **b) Is Round Rock growing in a way that will make it an attractive and enjoyable place to live and/or work in 20 years? In what ways, or why not?**

- Denser pockets of development; we are expanding but limit sprawl =>
  - Mixed use, more density in nodes
  - Truly walk able community.
- Need for pedestrian – oriented activities locally (neighborhood)
- No – too much over-commercialization of areas next to neighborhoods
- Placement of commercial businesses should be within subdivisions
- No – neighborhoods need to be designed with more open space and recreational facilities
- Connectivity is key to link neighborhoods together and to link to commercial
- Subdivision design- cul-de-sacs
- Encourage an appropriate interface/compatibility in outlying areas that abut the county and other cities.
  
- Yes – shopping opportunities have improved
- Avery Center & Downtown Master Plan, Medical, Colleges are attractive.
- Positive: New development standards and landscaping in retail
- Traffic corridor => room for improvement on crossing corridors;
  - engineering, aesthetics, utilities, working within regulations
  - Make experience for end users more enjoyable- trees, sidewalks, etc.
  - Balance with costs to private developers.
- Emphasize capital improvements – need to maintain older infrastructure.
- Need to anticipate pedestrian and bike facilities in roadway design. Don't want to have to retrofit as Austin is currently doing.
  
- Must diversify type of housing => higher density.
  - Affordable housing and housing people can afford are two different issues.
  - Housing for different professions (high end- professional to entry level housing)
  - Housing for different life stages (e.g., senior housing in an active community, not just assisted living)
- No – multi-family housing and townhouses that have been built are unattractive and lack character – distinctive design should be required

- Planning and improvements downtown are improving
  - Downtown is core or heart of a City despite pockets of development elsewhere.
  - Where's the support? Businesses keep closing. Need critical mass (how can we get that?)
  - Inflow and outflow to core (of downtown) is awful
    - Need better means in/out of the downtown [this was in relation to traffic]
  - Lots of potential => timing, funding, promotion (these are challenges to existing and new businesses)
  - Arts and Entertainment District (this was a question/suggestion)
  - Something other than retail and restaurants
  - More value per trip (given that downtown is a difficult area to access, people need more return for that effort than just lunch or dinner. This goes back to the need more options idea, and that people should be able to do more downtown)
- We need to consider the impact of the projected student population.
- Retailers may not offer benefits- need "smart" recruitment at City level.
- Historic preservation – there's not enough tax incentives to maintain buildings.
- How much are we paying to subsidize commercial development?
- City has better focus on long range planning which is a positive in and of itself
  
- Negative: Rehab older existing parks (Lake Creek); upgrade pavilions etc. Chisholm Valley Park
- City needs more neighborhood parks, pocket parks/lack of recreation facilities on west side of town.
- No - social services have not kept up with the population increase
  
- Group agreed that city monies should be spent to acquire lands for open space conservation – best to encourage conservation easements/land conservation. The highest and best use of land may not mean developing it to the highest density possible
- No – the City and the School District should cooperate to provide open space for all to use
- Natural areas/green spaces being paved over
- No – water conservation needs to be implemented in order to control the wasting of water – there should be incentives for conservation, reuse of water and native plants
  
- Indoor/Outdoor entertainment options
  - Professionals (e.g., hospital or higher education) come from other/larger cities (they expect to have quality entertainment options) – we have some venues but need to grow more.
  - Build the arts options, but must be midsize, not competing with Austin or Georgetown [there was discussion about Austin's "high end" arts, such as the Long Center, not the live music aspect, and Georgetown's theatre]
    - Find our niche - what will people want and support.

- Will demographics of the community support this niche (ex. Sun City is the sole audience for Georgetown, and determines what the theatre does/performs).
- No – a wider variety of ‘sports capital’ type events need to be developed to make them more inclusive for all ages
- Negative: More locally owned restaurants
- Place continued emphasis on variety of business/entertainment spread out through community (there was a lengthy discussion of whether entertainment should be dispersed throughout the city or concentrated within “entertainment districts”. The group reached no consensus on this.)
- Old Settlers appropriate location to encourage “Sports Capital”
  
- Quality of Schools – they are great and have maintained that quality even as the district continues to grow in population and demand
  - Challenges for additional facilities and to maintain quality as we continue to grow
  - More joint options for CORR and schools?
- Street improvements under construction near the Baca Center will help a lot.
- We need a real downtown with a real identity / landmark
- Fix the “K” on the water tower – it looks like “Round Rock”
- Can we do something to keep water flowing around the round rock?
- Take better advantage of what Brushy Creek can offer – both parks and commercial connection [e.g. restaurant patio]
- Be more proactive with neighborhood commercial, both in old and new neighborhoods. Old neighborhoods are getting isolated from services. So are new neighborhoods. There is nothing nearby.
- When commercial is built on the edge of a [residential] neighborhood, there is no pedestrian connectivity to it – it tends to be blockaded and access is indirect
- Continue with diversifying commercial options in the city
- All the variety of sporting events are attractive, like the Junior Olympics. This is a good direction, but it would help to have more cultural/arts/entertainment. We don’t really have a venue for these.
- Is it better to have a consolidated entertainment district, or dispersed facilities? Concentrated districts tend to be more successful, and it’s easier to plan parking etc for areas with lots of people.
- We need a competitive swimming facility.
- There is a problem with crime in Austin’s entertainment district – it’s gotten worse in the last few years. It needs to be planned and managed carefully. We will have a student population but we shouldn’t try to compete with 6th street.
- Austin has a theme. We need signature events (Pflugerville has Wursthfest). What do you think when you think of Round Rock? We need a focal event – what’s “the thing”?
- We have better opportunities to develop a theme in Round Rock than in neighboring communities.

- We need to be careful not to let property values exclude/displace long term/moderate income residents.
- We need to have a regional approach to transportation planning – not retrofitting.
- We need better minimum standards for neighborhood quality/code enforcement. HOAs should be subject to at least the same minimums.
- We need more community participation like this.
- Need to allow electric motors on trails in the City ordinance
- Maintain and upgrade quality school system
- Extend park system
- Walking trails [Positive]
- Landscape standards for development [Positive]
- Include police and emergency services in long range planning
- Old Settlers Park[Positive]
- Baca [Positive]
- Symphony [Positive]
- City activities [Positive]
- No more than 7 stories; maintain suburban land use pattern
- How large is too large?
- Need to integrate and convert bike lanes and paths
- 620 is not pedestrian friendly
- Need regional trail system
- Lack of male teachers in RRISD
- Dress code in schools with teachers
- Lack of sidewalks and lighting
- Lack of a draw [to] downtown
- More diverse stores and specialty shops
- Improve signage for police, hospitals, and other public facilities
- Lack of Public art
- Need a larger Farmers market in a better location than a parking garage