



INPUT REPORT

This Input Report highlights the most common recurring comments and concerns expressed by the community during the goal setting phase of the 2030 Update through two community wide events. Additional input related to housing, gateways and growth scenarios will be considered later in the comprehensive planning process. The first event, “On the Table”, was held October 2, 2018 and the 2nd event was an online survey open from July to October 2018. Seven distinct themes have emerged from the input, which will be used to guide the development of the 2030 Plan Update. Those themes that address issues not being updated in this effort will be considered during future element updates.

- Maintain the family-oriented, small-town feel
- Continue to encourage high-quality development
- Enhance citizen participation and engagement
- Focus on housing and affordability
- Enhance economic development opportunities
- Maintain and add to the existing quality parks and recreation
- Improve and diversify the transportation network

OUTREACH EFFORTS

At the beginning of the Update, a Public Engagement Plan was adopted which outlines goals, strategies and opportunities for the community to be involved with the Update. The On the Table Georgetown and an online survey were developed to meet the following goals of the Public Engagement Plan:

- Provide participation opportunities where people are already gathered
- Maximize existing networks
- Facilitate as much meaningful input as possible
- Gain representative participation
- Remove/lower barriers to participation

The flexible format of On the Table Georgetown allowed existing networks to facilitate their own discussions about the future of Georgetown. The online survey allowed the city to gain representative participation from each zip code in the planning area. Both opportunities lowered barriers to participation by allowing residents to take the survey at their convenience or host a discussion at their own homes or place of business. The next section of the report provides details of each input opportunity, the input received and the methods used to analyze the input and develop themes.

“ON THE TABLE” EVENT AND INPUT OVERVIEW

The City of Georgetown reviewed best practices for public engagement and implemented the “On the Table” community engagement strategy created by The Chicago Community Trust¹, a nonprofit organization that has worked to increase meaningful civic engagement. Instead of one traditional public meeting hosted by the City, the On the Table model allows participants to host discussions at their own home or office with friends, family, coworkers, neighborhoods, church members, or other groups of approximately 8 to 12 people, and report the information back to the City via photo, email or drop-off.

The small group discussions were intended to occur all on the same day, throughout the city for a citywide public engagement day. The City hosted the citywide Engagement Day on Tuesday, October 2, 2018, which coincided with National Night Out. While community members were encouraged to participate in the exercise during that day, the toolkits were also available for input through October.



To maximize existing networks, the City partnered with six key community groups:

- Georgetown Independent School District
- Chamber of Commerce
- Southeast Georgetown Community Council
- Southwestern University
- Georgetown Ministerial Alliance
- Georgetown Health Foundation.

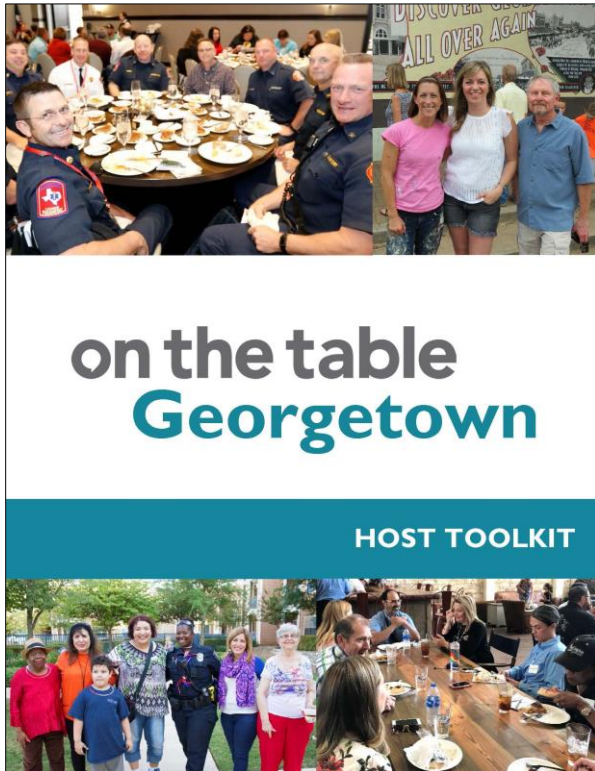
A representative from each organization met in the months before the event to plan and reached out to their members to promote event participation. Each organization acted as a “Super Host” by offering meeting space to the public for discussions at certain times throughout the day at various locations.

Residents were able to register to participate on the 2030 Plan Update website, which listed the times and locations of discussions open to the public. A promotional video was made and posted to the City’s social media sites. Neighborhood representatives who signed up for National Night Out were contacted and offered information about the event. Planning staff spoke at several civic group meetings and provided details about the input opportunity. A training was held a week before the event on September 26, 2018 for any resident to get more information and for registered groups to pick up discussion materials.

on the table
Georgetown
REGISTER HERE

¹ More information about the development of the initiative at: <http://onthetable.com/>, Reports available from research partner University of Illinois at Chicago’s Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement at: <http://2017.onthetablereport.com/>

“Toolkits”, or handouts, to facilitate group discussions were developed and made available at the Planning Department office, via email, and download via the City’s website. “Host” and “Youth” toolkits were customized for the intended participants. Each toolkit included an introduction to the comprehensive planning process, tips for facilitating a constructive meeting, a step-by-step checklist, a sign-in sheet, a list of conversation starters, and a notes page to record input.



NOTES

Use this page to jot down a few ideas you want to share from your table.

What were the most important things discussed at your table?

What are your group's big ideas?

Other notes:

Our goal is to have one sheet of notes returned per table. Please submit this sheet to the City of Georgetown Planning Department (406 W. 8th St. or ott@georgetown.org) no later than October 3, 2018. This form is available electronically at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/onthetablegeorgetown>

Facilitator/Organization Name: _____ #YourGeorgetown2030

Meeting Location: _____ #OnTheTableGeorgetown

Meeting Date: _____

Number of Guests: _____

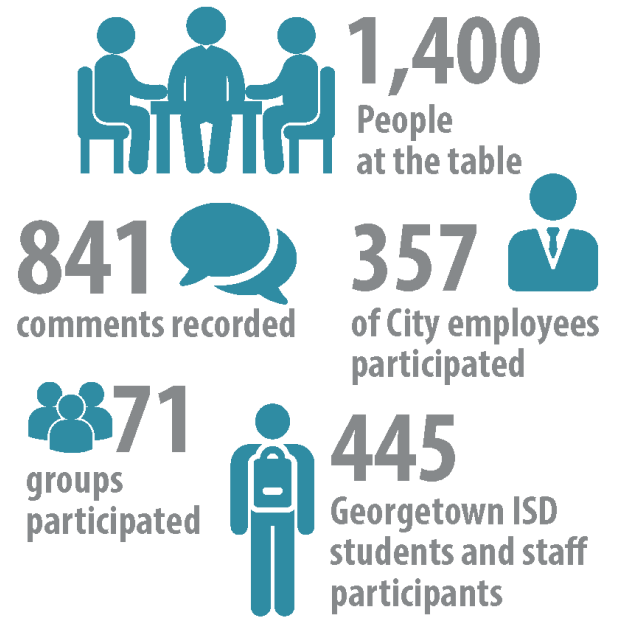
Participants were prompted to discuss a series of conversation starters, which included questions such as:

- What are the biggest issues our community faces?
- What would you say if you were bragging on Georgetown?
- What are your favorite cities and why?
- What aspect of Georgetown is most important to preserve as we grow?

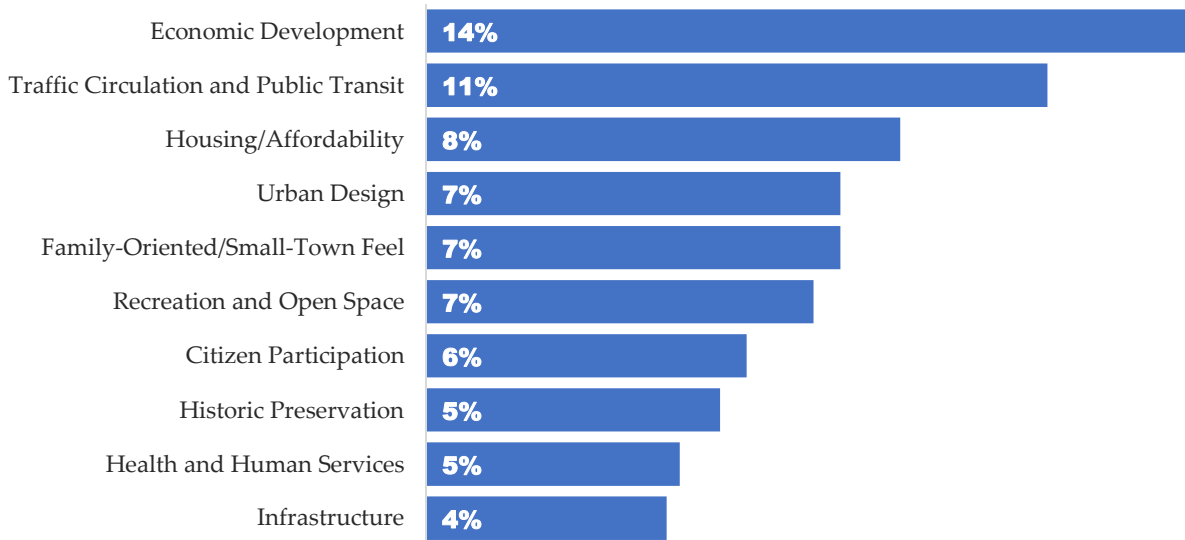
Following a group discussion, a notetaker documented the most important takeaways and ideas from the discussion on the Notes page that was then sent back to the city via email or drop off. The notetaker was also able to enter the information digitally through an online survey tool.

On the Table Community Response

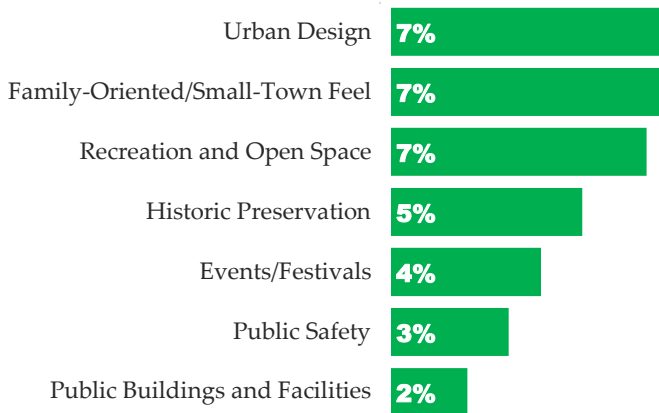
In all, over 1,400 people participated in On the Table discussions throughout the city, collaborating in 71 groups and providing 841 unique comments. Almost half of the over 700 total city employees participated in sharing ideas for 2030. Volunteers from many departments led discussion groups throughout the day. The school district was able to facilitate discussions across grade levels, including second grade, middle school and high school classes, and also facilitated discussions with faculty and staff. Southwestern University had over 60 students participate in discussions in an effort led by the University Communications department and Student Government Association. Several large neighborhood groups in Sun City were able to host discussions during their National Night Out activities. The collective input results are shown in the following charts and graphics.



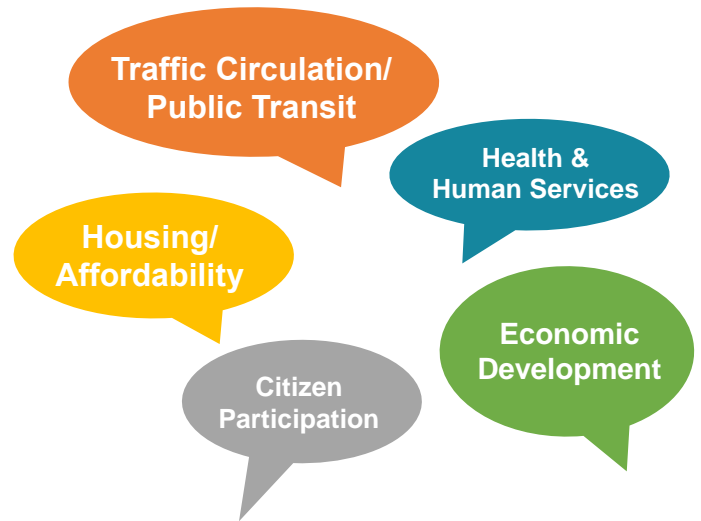
Top TEN most frequently-mentioned categories



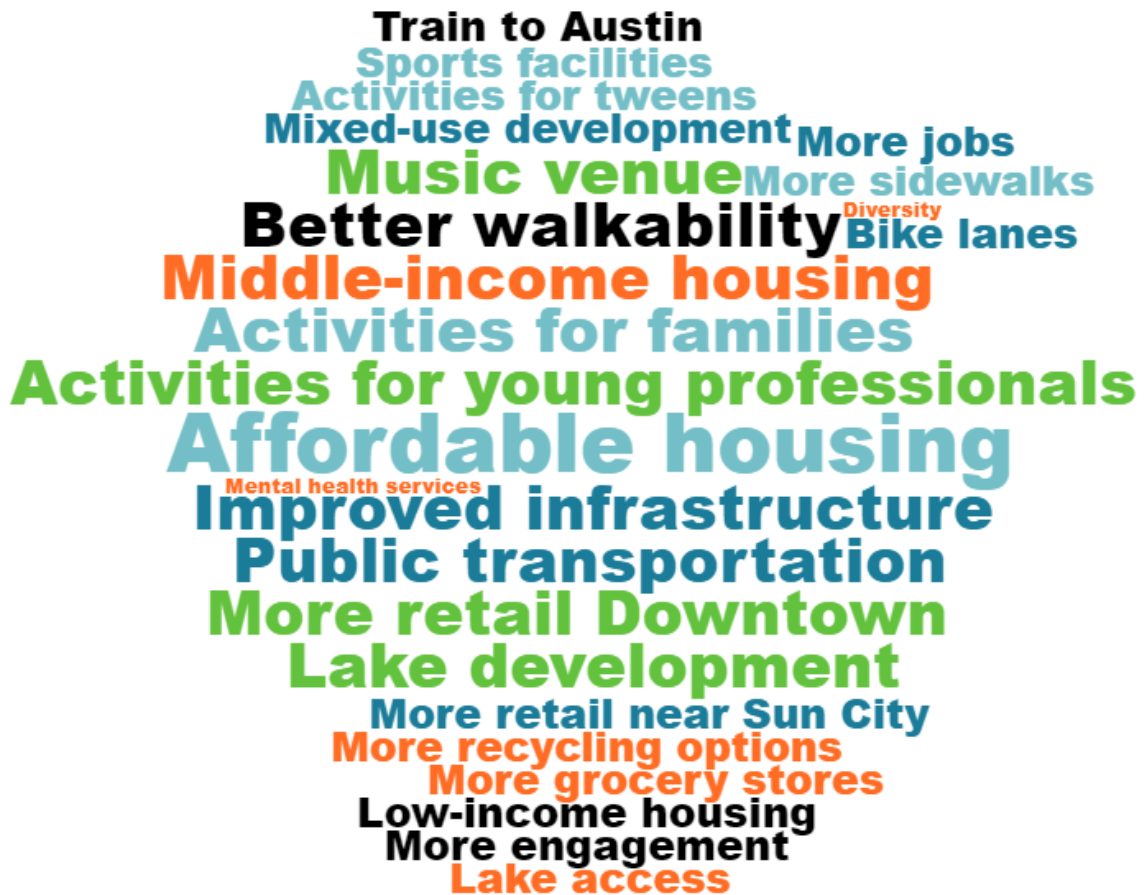
What do you BRAG about Georgetown?



What are your CONCERNS for Georgetown?



What's **MISSING** in Georgetown?



On the Table Input Analysis

To quantitatively analyze the results, the responses returned to the City were collected and entered into a spreadsheet, which coded each individual comment with a corresponding category derived from the fourteen elements of the comprehensive plan prescribed in the City's charter (e.g., economic development or housing). Five additional categories were added based on the volume of comments related to that idea. These categories were: education, general growth, family-oriented/small-town feel, diversity and events/festivals.

Each comment also received a score for a general positive (+1), neutral (0), or negative (-1) connotation. The responses were tallied through an overall count of references (top ten), the most positive comments (brags), and the most negative comments (concerns). A fourth type of comment received was the identification of desirable activities or developments (what's missing), which are organized generally by the font size representing the frequency of comment. The full listing of comments can be found as an appendix to this report.

ONLINE SURVEY AND RESPONSES OVERVIEW

The City conducted an online survey, which was open from July 20, 2018 to October 31, 2018. The survey was provided as a link on the City website's front page and advertised on social media, in weekly city news emails, and the Georgetown Reporter that went out in utility bills. The survey was also available to be taken on iPad kiosks that were placed in the Georgetown Recreation Center, Georgetown Public Library, and Georgetown Municipal Center. Survey participation was available through both kiosks and paper surveys taken to outreach events including the Music on the Square event in Downtown Georgetown, the Words on Wheels mobile library and at multiple speaking engagements.

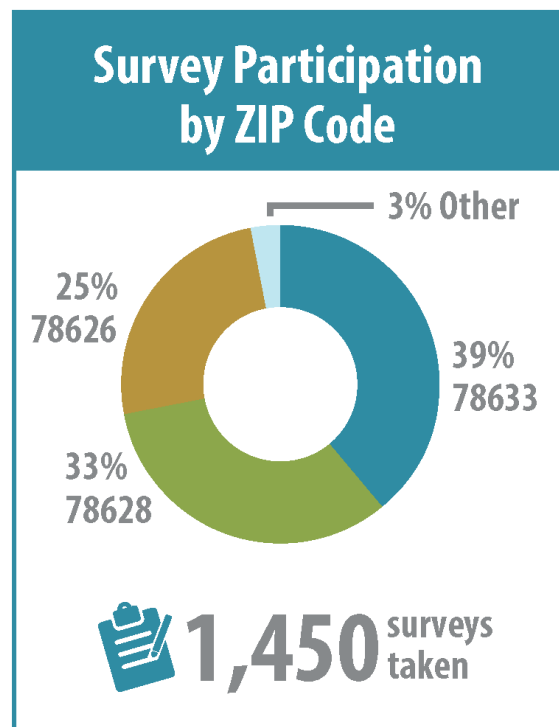
The online survey questions included:

- Why did you choose to live in Georgetown?
- What do you like most about living in Georgetown?
- Which places do you visit most in Georgetown?
- What is your connection to Georgetown?
- If you live here, for how long?

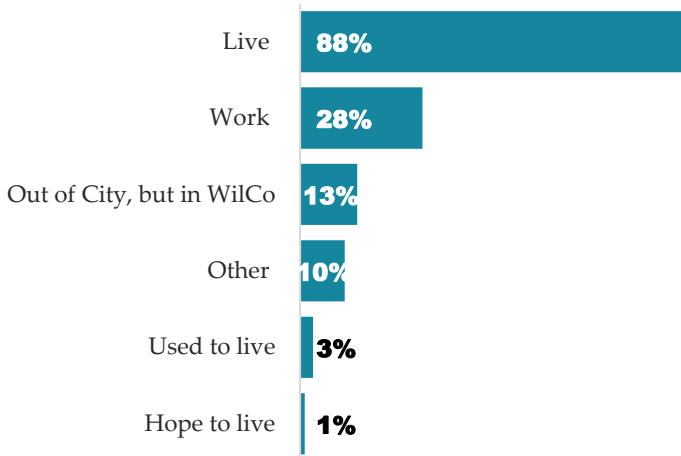
The online survey asked participants what Georgetown should look like in the year 2030. This question allowed an open field for the respondent to enter their own comments.

Online Survey Community Response

The online survey received a total of 1,455 responses, which included 1,322 online responses and 133 responses from survey kiosks and printed paper surveys. The results of the input are shown in the charts below.



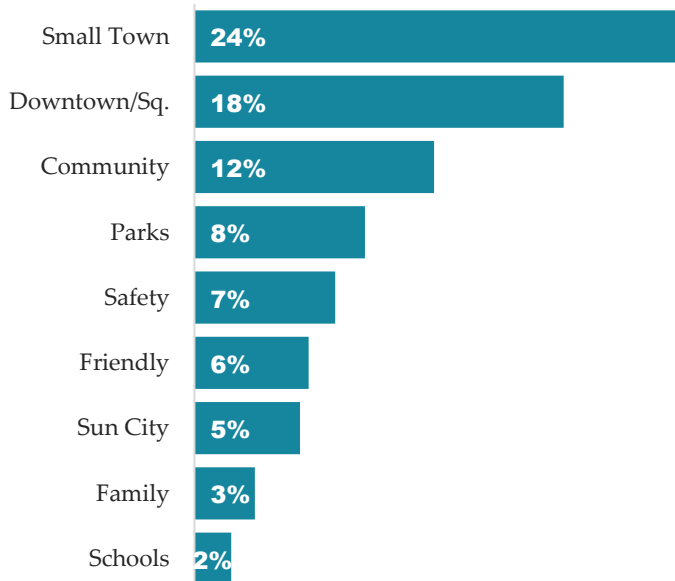
Connection to Georgetown



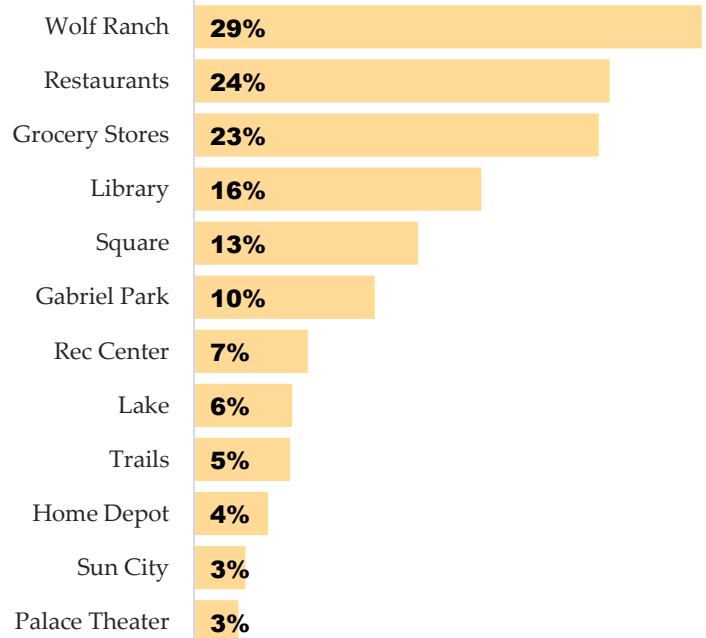
Why did you choose to live here?

1. Small Town
2. Sun City
3. Family
4. Schools
5. Proximity to Austin
6. Quality of Life
7. Employment
8. Affordable
9. Round Rock
10. Low crime

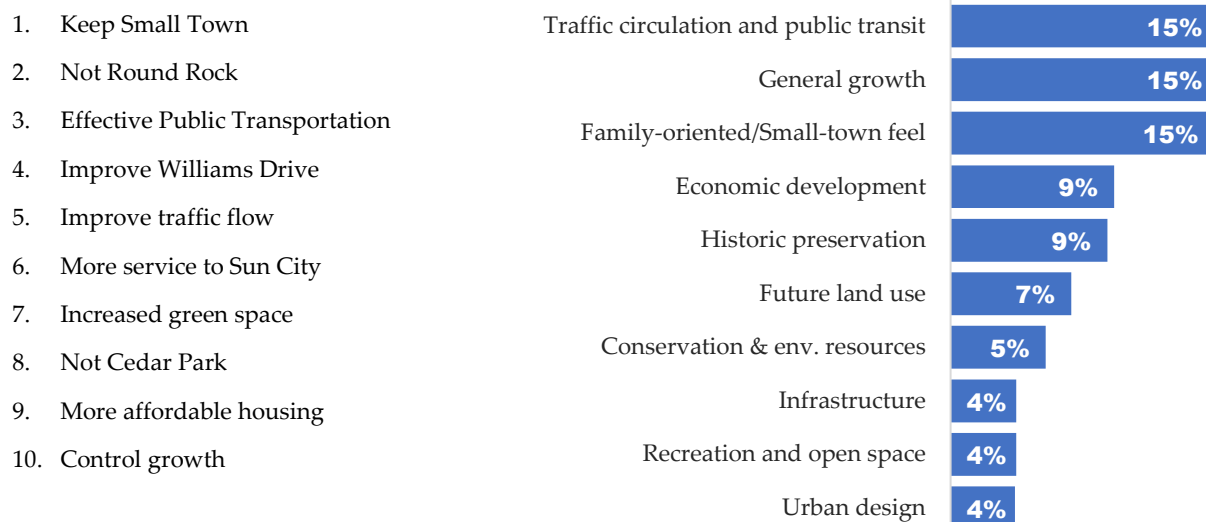
What do you like most about living in Georgetown?



Which places do you visit most?



In 2030, what should Georgetown look like?



*Top ten most frequently mentioned categories

Online Survey Input Analysis

The online survey was created using the Survey Monkey online survey tool. Features of the tool include analyzing the most frequently used phrases to open ended questions. Bar charts and numbered lists were created to represent answers to the questions based on the Survey Monkey analysis. Survey Monkey provided a quantitative analysis of the questions except for the question, "In 2030, what should Georgetown look like?" The City ran the responses to this question through the software application WordStat that produced the most frequently occurring phrases. To provide consistency and basis for comparison, the comments were also coded in the same manner as the On the Table comments: the recorded responses were collected and entered into a spreadsheet, which coded each individual comment with a corresponding category to the fourteen elements of the comprehensive plan prescribed in the City's charter (e.g., economic development or recreation and open space). Each comment also received a score for a general positive (+1), neutral (0), or negative (-1) connotation. Five additional categories were added based on the volume of comments related to that idea. These categories were: education, general growth, family-oriented/small-town feel, diversity and events/festivals.

INPUT THEMES

The following themes emerged from the public input gathered from the two input opportunities. These themes, in conjunction with additional public input received throughout the comprehensive planning process, will guide the development of this 2030 Plan Update.



Maintain the family-oriented, small-town feel

1. Given the inevitable growth of the community, it is crucial for the City to preserve this small-town feel to maintain a strong sense of community.
2. It should be a goal of the City to promote the incorporation of family-friendly development.
3. Host and promote family-oriented events.



Continue to encourage high-quality development

1. Residents are proud of Downtown Georgetown and its appearance. Residents love how vibrant and walkable the downtown area is and mentioned how they like the historical buildings and local shops.
2. Many residents felt that Georgetown should not reduce development standards to attract development. Instead, they felt Georgetown should maintain high development standards while still promoting more affordable development.
3. Many felt that there should be more sidewalks implemented around the City. In addition, many felt that current sidewalks should be improved.



Enhance citizen participation and engagement

1. Residents noted that it would be beneficial to the community to be notified as to when public events take place, allowing for greater community participation. Combining social media with more traditional forms of advertising would allow for more people to know about opportunities to provide their input.
2. Citizens explained that they would like to be better notified of the results of events involving public input. Although this information might be available to the public, residents explained that it is important to advertise it in such a way that most residents in the community are made aware.
3. Pursue more opportunities to engage the community, including utilizing school events and festivals.
4. Communicate better on future and current development happening in the community, including utilizing social media.



Focus on housing and affordability

1. Rising housing prices have aided in creating a high cost of living, increasing to the point where many residents feel as though they might not be able to live in Georgetown in the near future.
2. There is not enough variety of housing types within the City. For example, developments could be permitted in more areas of the City.
3. Many residents suggested the use of incentives to help create a more affordable community.
4. Some participants expressed concern regarding the provision of low-income housing and preferred to focus on middle-income housing.



Enhance economic development opportunities

1. Residents like the large variety of local businesses and restaurants throughout the community. Many noted that part of Downtown Georgetown's distinct charm involves the large amount of local businesses in the area.
2. Improve Georgetown's efforts to attract and accommodate younger generations. More nightlife and entertainment in Georgetown will attract college students and other younger professionals.
3. Recruit higher-paying employers/tech companies to combat the rising cost of living.
4. Develop the eastern areas of Georgetown to match the level of amenities available in other portions of the City.



Maintain and add to the existing quality parks and recreation

1. Expand the existing trail network to connect to areas throughout Georgetown.
2. Improve access to parks and open space by allowing free entry. Many explained that Garey Park is not affordable and that all parks should be free to residents.
3. Many residents suggested an increase in the amount of open space throughout the community. More specifically, many liked the idea of adding parks to existing and future neighborhoods.



Improve and diversify the transportation network

1. Many residents expressed the need for better public transit within the City. Some residents are unaware of GoGeo transit and feel that the service should be better advertised. Conversely, others explained that they would prefer the addition of a light rail system, such as a trolley.
2. Residents desire some sort of commuter rail that runs to Austin and surrounding areas.
3. Traffic light synchronization should improve to help alleviate traffic congestion.
4. Although traffic congestion has become an issue throughout the City, many residents have explained that Williams Drive needs significant improvements.