

To: Community Development Board Members
From: Kyle Brotherton, Senior Planner
Date: October 12, 2021
Re: Clearwater 2045 Comprehensive Plan Update

The Comprehensive Plan is an adopted policy document that is required under Chapter 163, Florida Statutes, that sets a vision and direction toward orderly and balanced growth and informs and guides other plans, projects and programs to achieve that vision. Comprehensive plans are typically reviewed and updated every seven to 10 years, and the city's current Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2008. The Planning and Development Department initiated the Clearwater 2045 Comprehensive Plan update project last fall, contracting with HDR, Inc. and SB Friedman Development Advisors to provide land use, housing and mobility expertise.

The overall plan update is a two-year planning process, with anticipated completion in Fall 2022. The project is divided into five overall tasks: (1) Project Start Up, (2) Data & Analysis, (3) Visioning & Planning Framework, (4) Plan Drafting, and (5) Plan Refinement & Adoption. To date, Tasks 1 is complete, and Task 2 is substantially complete with the summaries of the data and analysis sections drafted. Task 3 is in process and will be the primary focus of the presentation.

Significant amount of community engagement was completed before the project team proceeded with preparing an updated vision and a preliminary framework to present to the Community Development Board and City Council for feedback, as called for in Task 3. Engagement activities were conducted between April and July 2021, reaching over 300 people. Participants were asked to discuss the current condition of Clearwater and their vision for the city, and were able to participate through a variety of formats, including Listening Sessions with community leaders and Community Conversations conducted virtually, in person, and specifically with youth. The project website – Clearwater2045.com – included an early survey asking “5 Key Questions”, as well as a questionnaire “Our Plan, Your Vision” (to close Sunday, October 17) asking participants to indicate which themes they think should be included in the proposed vision, which is described below. A detailed summary of the community engagement activities is provided with this memo which

highlights the concepts, issues and ideals that arose in each of the sessions, and the team will highlight findings from the vision questionnaire during the presentation.

The project team has taken the feedback and insights provided by the different participants and identified themes to create a vision for Clearwater 2045. Additionally, building on the current Comprehensive Plan's Citywide Design Structure, a place-based Preliminary Plan Framework is being developed to provide generalized direction addressing land use, development, and community character for types of places including neighborhoods and neighborhood centers, Downtown and the beach, and mixed use centers and corridors. The framework will define the preferred development character and design quality of these place-types across the city and will later be used to establish goals and policy statements and potentially density and intensity ranges by geographic area.

The project team will provide an update on the overall project's progress, discuss observations from the data and analysis and community engagement tasks that may be key drivers and considerations for the remainder of the planning process, and introduce a draft vision statement and preliminary framework, seeking direction and feedback on both.



Summary of Clearwater 2045 Community Engagement Activities

City of Clearwater Comprehensive Plan

October 2021

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Community Conversations

Take part in Clearwater's Comprehensive Plan 2045.

We want to hear your voice.

Join us for in-person community conversations to provide your input on the city's future.



Participa en el Plan Exhaustivo de Clearwater para el 2045.

Queremos escuchar tu voz.

Únete a nosotros para conversaciones comunitarias en persona, y danos tu opinión para el futuro de la ciudad.



Phase 3: Visioning & Planning Framework

The city of Clearwater's Planning & Development Department ("staff"), in coordination with HDR Inc. ("the consultant"), conducted extensive outreach and community engagement activities between April and July 2021 as part of the Visioning & Planning Framework Phase of the Clearwater2045 Comprehensive Plan Update. Several types of meetings were held to discuss the current condition of Clearwater and the vision for the city over the next 20 years. These include Listening Sessions with community leaders and a variety of Community Conversations conducted virtually, in person, and specifically with youth. A dedicated website, Clearwater2045.com, was also created to keep the public engaged throughout the planning process through short polls, questionnaires, photo contests, and other activities.

Staff worked with the Public Communications team to develop an outreach strategy to inform citizens about upcoming events including messaging in citywide publications, media outreach, flyers, posters, social media blasts, email distribution, Council updates and City Manager reports, and similar methods. Throughout the engagement staff collected participants' zip codes as a means of determining whether participation was coming from across the city as a whole and used additional promotion in areas where there were smaller levels of participation.

Figure 1. North Greenwood Community Meeting



Summary of Participation

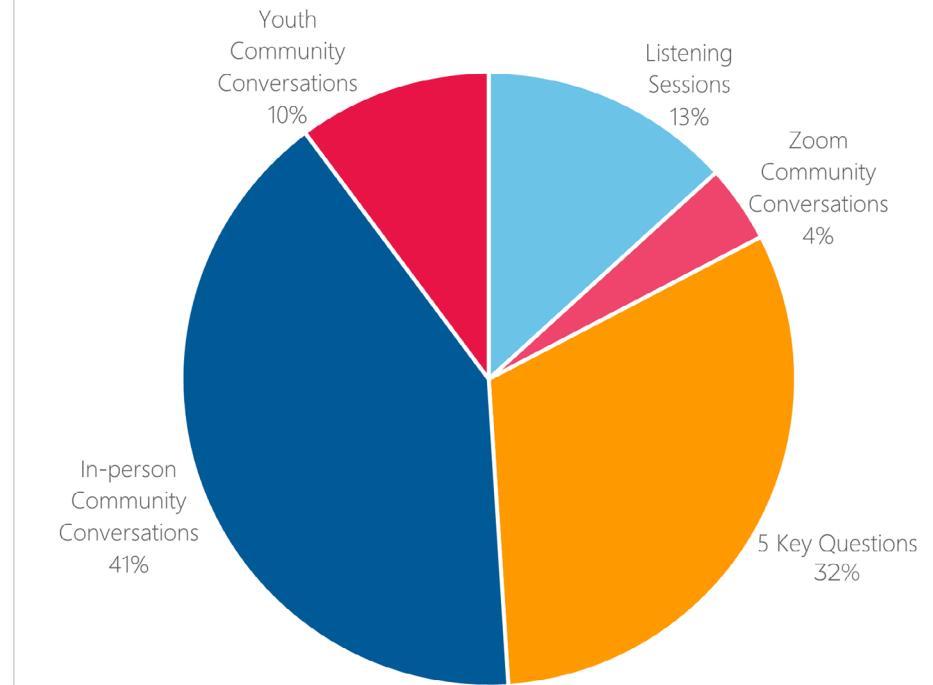
Throughout the course of the engagement phase of Clearwater2045 well over 300 residents participated in virtual, in-person, and online engagement opportunities. Some residents expressed their goals for the future of Clearwater at a single meeting while other were able to join the conversation at several opportunities. No matter the meeting format, diverse and impactful ideas were shared, important conversations were had, and city staff gained valuable insights of what Clearwater's residents want the plan to contain and address.

City staff, alongside the consultant, will use the knowledge gained from the engagement sessions as a guide for the creation of Clearwater2045. While the conversations and subjects were varied and wide-ranging, there were a number of concepts, issues, and ideals that continually arose, no matter the session. These through lines were as follows:

- Addressing transportation issues including safety, multimodal connections, congestion, bikability and walkability, public transportation options, etc.
- Fostering cultural, social, and artistic vibrancy in the Downtown area, as well as citywide. Increase the number of events (concerts, markets, etc.) and entertainment opportunities that appeal to a diverse age range of the community. Create a draw in the Downtown district with more local businesses and restaurants.
- Balancing the emphasis of city policy and programs between neighborhoods, the Downtown district, the beach, and other corridors.

Figure 2. Percentage of Participants

Percent of Total Participant Engagement by Meeting Format



- Continuing to invest in parks and public spaces, as well as recreational and athletic opportunities that appeal to and are available for all residents.
- Emphasizing sustainability in development and preservation of natural resources. Clearwater must protect the beauty of our surroundings through environmentally friendly actions, development, and use of the natural resources.
- Strengthen the local economy and economic prospects of residents through diverse and sustaining jobs, workforce training opportunities, business friendly policies, and promotion of local businesses.

More detailed information on each engagement opportunity and the findings are summarized below. The “Dot-Mocracy” activity at the various Community Conversations, which helped to visually display resident’s favorite parts of the city and the areas that may need improvement, is provided as Attachment A. Attachment B shows a geographic distribution of the participants for the In-Person sessions, and Attachment C is a table of the timeline of the engagement process.

Listening Sessions

Staff worked with City Council to identify community leaders representing various groups, cultures, and organizations to invite to a series of small group Listening Sessions facilitated by the consultant in May 2021. Over 30 community leaders from local neighborhood associations, the Latino community, the African American/Black community, and the development/business community participated. These sessions were used to introduce the planning process, discuss ideas for the future of the city, and solicit feedback regarding strategies to engage the community throughout the process of updating the city’s Comprehensive Plan. They were the first in a series of public engagement activities used to learn more about community issues, ideas, and visions for the City’s future.

The following common issues or concerns were raised:

1. Clearwater Beach
 - City’s focus on beach development, public investment, and tourism, as well as beach traffic and parking.
 - Suggestions offered regarding circulators, water taxi, and other forms of public transit to relieve beach congestion.
 - Beach employee transportation and parking challenges.
2. Housing Affordability
 - Housing affordability in the city and the loss of mobile home park units and the impact on those displaced.

3. Downtown Clearwater

- Interest in Downtown improvement, e.g., improved streetscapes and more housing Downtown for beach visitors/workers.

4. North Greenwood Community Development

- Disinvestment; displacement; over-policing; lack of access to jobs and housing affordability; and representation on City Council and boards, and committees.

5. Development

- Direction of recent development and the conflicts that arise in transition areas, e.g., commercial to residential.

6. Mobility

- Potential for transit to better connect destinations and ease congestion. Several shared concerns about transit service inefficiencies, including low frequency of service and multiple transfers to access destinations.
- Desire for improved walkability, safety, and pedestrian comfort.
- Mobility challenges along east/west corridors. Expressed mixed support for complete streets improvements including along Drew Street.

7. Community Outreach, Support, and Communication

- Disconnect between what the city offers and what the people in the community need. Stated it was difficult to get information about benefits available to the community.

- City staff and Council members not responsive to community concerns. Desire more open lines of communication desired between the city and community (stated by a few participants).

8. Greenspace Conservation/Parks & Recreation/Natural Resources

- Want Comprehensive Plan to include research on health benefits of access to nature, i.e., effects on mental and physical health.

Figure 3. *Listening Sessions Agenda*

1. Introductions

2. Background on the Plan

3. Discussion Items

A. Key Challenges & Opportunities

- Livability
- Competitiveness
- Resilience

B. Ideas for Change

- Land Use & Development
- Neighborhood Conservation
- Mobility & Accessibility
- Resilience & Sustainability
- Equity & Inclusion

C. Areas of Focus

- Ideas for Shorter Term Actions

D. Ideas for Outreach & Engagement

- Ensuring Diversity & Representation

4. Next Steps

- Website - www.Clearwater2045.com
- Uniquely Clearwater Photo Contest
- Community Conversations

Zoom Community Conversations

In an effort to maximize public participation while adhering to COVID-19 restrictions that limit in-person gatherings, staff conducted virtual meetings called Community Conversations with small groups via the Zoom platform. Community members were encouraged to sign-up to participate using Sign-Up Genius. Seven Zoom meetings were held in May and June 2021 with a total of 20 participants.

Participants on the Zoom meetings engaged in open discussion about the future of the city. They were asked one question at a time and allowed up to 15 minutes for discussion before moving to the next question. Staff facilitated the conversations and took general notes, with the intent that comments would not be attributed to a particular individual to encourage open and honest dialogue. The three questions posed to participants were:

1. When you share information about Clearwater with others, what do you tell them about our city? What makes the city unique?
2. What are two or three priorities that the city should address in the next 5-10 years as it plans for the future?
3. If funding were not an issue, what is your vision of Clearwater in 5-10 years?

Top priorities mentioned by participants included:

1. Addressing transportation issues such as walkability, transit, and congestion.

Examples of what we heard:

- More walkability in the city
- Traffic concerns, increase multi modal transportation opportunities

2. Emphasizing sustainability in development and preservation of natural resources.

Examples of what we heard:

- Sustainability should be promoted and supported (development, energy, water, etc.)
- Nature preservation/restoration

3. Promoting community character through diversity and inclusion.

Examples of what we heard:

- Beautiful and diverse city with immense possibilities
- Be more inclusive for everyone - religion, disabilities, backgrounds, etc.

4. Offering destinations for entertainment, restaurants, and the arts particularly in Downtown.

Examples of what we heard:

- An active Downtown with reduced vacancies – both residential and commercial
- Local music/art venues in Downtown area, similar to the Capitol Theatre
- Residential density within the Downtown corridor

5. Providing opportunities for a balanced life with suitable jobs, housing/ neighborhoods, and education.

Examples of what we heard:

- Opportunity to energize and invest in our neighborhoods

Youth Community Conversations

Staff held four Youth Community Conversations with middle and high school aged leaders at recreation centers between June 21 and June 28, 2021 to get their perspective on the city today and their desires for the future. These meetings were held at the Long Center, North Greenwood Recreation Center, Morningside Recreation Complex, and Countryside Recreation Center. Approximately 50 youth participated in the discussions.

The purpose of the Youth Community Conversations was to gather feedback from Clearwater's younger voices. The next generation will ultimately inherit the future, so it was important to the city that youth residents have an opportunity to lend a hand in shaping it.

Figure 4. Youth Engagement at Countryside Library



Staff led each group through three activities. The first was a mapping exercise to identify where each participant lives by zip code, which also helped orient them to key geographic locations within the city's planning area. The second exercise asked them to share their thoughts on what they like about the city today as well as places or things they tend to avoid. Activity three asked the participants to identify what is missing in Clearwater and what the future might look like from their perspective. Responses were written on post-it notes and shared with the group.

The top youth priorities centered around:

1. Addressing transportation issues such as walkability, biking, and congestion.
2. Providing destinations for youth to enjoy events, attractions, food, and sports/parks.
3. Ensuring a resilient economy including ample job opportunities, supporting the technology sector, and implementing programs and opportunities for business growth.
4. Improving and expanding educational opportunities.
5. Focusing on environmental resiliency, beautification, and aesthetics through greenery and art.

The following table provides examples of youth-identified items that came from the discussion and sticky-note exercises during activity three.

Table 1. Youth Priorities

What is Missing?	What Makes You Want to Stay?	What is the Future of Clearwater?
Skate Parks	Clearwater Marine Aquarium	Clearwater to be an attraction
Indoor sports fields	Schools	Less car use and more walking
More recycling	Nice weather	Having the best beach in USA
Food pantries	Outdoor sports facilities	Safe place to live
Good food/more restaurants	Foods at the beach	Less blight
Culinary school	Countryside & Clearwater malls	More housing
Theme park	Access to nature	More places and events to walk to
Greenery	Local food	Less pollution
More art	Sports facilities	More help for people with disabilities
Better sidewalks	Family	Dancing and singing programs
More plans and nature walks	Neighborhood cookouts & parties	Clean and nice neighborhoods
Not enough places to shop	Biking and walking	Community & family events
Things for kids to do	Clearwater Threshers	Less racism
Jobs	Golfing	Bike lanes & trails
Affordable places to live	Moccasin Lake Nature Park	Art
Higher education/trade school	Recreation centers	More tech
Green energy	Affordable food at mall	University/Tech schools

In-Person Community Conversations

Over the course of two weeks in July 2021, staff conducted a series of in-person Community Conversations at libraries and recreation centers across Clearwater. This maximized the opportunity for diverse public engagement with nearly 200 participants in attendance. In an effort to be as inclusive as possible, staff partnered with the Hispanic Outreach Center and conducted one meeting entirely in Spanish at the HOC office.

The seven locations included:

1. Ross Norton Recreation Center
2. North Greenwood Recreation Center
3. Main Library
4. Clearwater Beach Recreation Center
5. Countryside Recreation Center
6. Morningside Recreation Complex
7. Hispanic Outreach Center

Each session was comprised of five activities. At the sign-in table, attendees placed dots on a zip code map to identify where they live and to help orient them to key geographic locations within the city's planning area. The opening presentation included an interactive survey through [mentimeter.com](https://www.mentimeter.com), which allowed participants to text their answers to questions asking about their connection to Clearwater, how they heard about the meeting, what they felt made Clearwater "unique," and rating priorities that had been mentioned at the Zoom and Youth Community Conversations.

Figure 5. Community Engagement Clearwater Beach Recreation Center



The rest of the activities were conducted in smaller break-out groups. In the "Dot-mocracy" exercise, participants were asked to share their thoughts on what they like about the city today as well as places or things that need improvement. They placed green (positive) and red (negative) dots on the map and wrote their comments and concerns on post-it notes (see Attachment A for map combining all participants' dots from the seven sessions). In the "Post-it Up" activity, each attendee used post-it notes to identify what top future priorities the city should focus on. The last activity, "EnVision It" had each small group work together to develop a vision statement. At the end of the meeting, a volunteer from each table read their vision statement and participants voted with dots on their favorite.

SUMMARY OF CLEARWATER 2045 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES



Some of the key themes that meeting participants felt were important include:

1. Promoting Downtown activities and incentivizing business growth.
 2. Addressing transportation issues including safety, multimodal connections, and congestion.
 3. Improving access to recreational facilities and ball fields by allowing residential, non-league play.
 4. Encouraging inclusion and better representation for neighborhoods.
 5. Focusing on sustainability, aesthetics, and environmental concerns.

Below is a word cloud created by using the 200+ participant submissions on what makes Clearwater "unique."

Figure 6. “Unique” Clearwater Word Cloud



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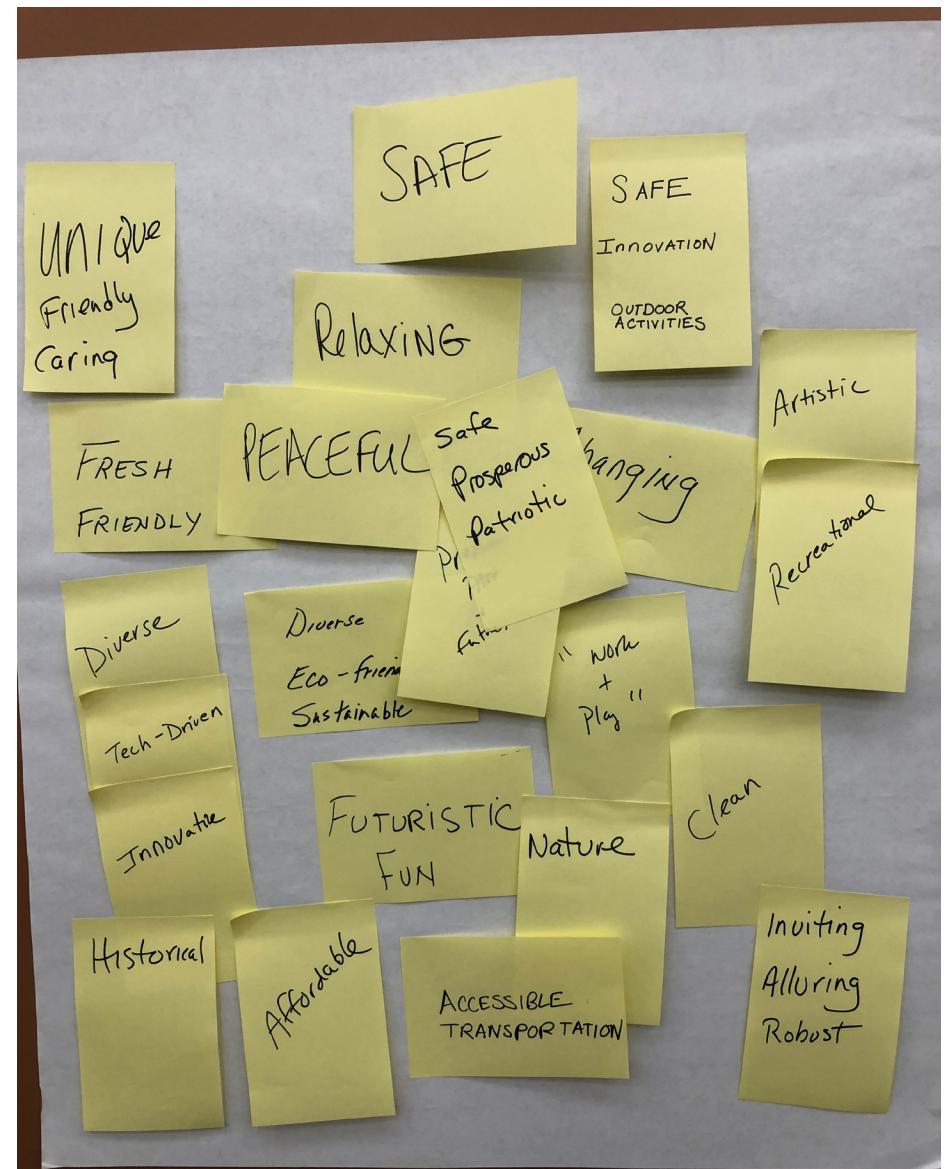
Figure 7. In-Person "Dot-Mocracy" Activity, Main Library



Vision Statements with the highest vote totals from each In-Person Community Conversation are as follows:

- Ross Norton Recreation Center: Clearwater will strive to preserve its resources, support the well-being of its residents and visitors through educational opportunities and entrepreneurship.
- North Greenwood Recreation Center: Clearwater is committed to becoming a very inclusive and diversified city, focusing on equity, and thriving to be a city where families can live, learn, work, and play.
- Clearwater Main Library: Clearwater is a friendly, safe, inclusively diverse community that shares its coastal life, green spaces, and cultural amenities from sunrise to sunset!
- Clearwater Beach Recreation Center: Clearwater: A future-focused community that is a vibrant destination, with cultural diversity, a business-friendly environment, that protects our natural resources for generations to come.
- Countryside Library: Our Clearwater is a diverse, active, neighborly, safe, beautiful, accessible community that builds on our strengths while preserving our environment and our past.
- Morningside Recreation Complex: Clearwater – sheer beauty. A diverse community striving together in unity, where sharing and caring, rising and shining in this bright and beautiful, quintessential, scenic, and charming city. A magnificent place to live.
- Hispanic Outreach Center: Clearwater, where people enjoy a diverse city where it offers beaches and tourist attractions and the friendliness of its socio-cultural variety.

Figure 8. In-Person Visioning Exercise



Other Engagement – Project Website

A dedicated project website, Clearwater2045.com was created using the Bang the Table Engagement HQ platform to solicit feedback from the community and provide a resource for all upcoming events and information pertaining to the Comprehensive Plan project. As part of the city's initial engagement efforts, a four-week photo contest was conducted whereby participants could post photographs of something "uniquely Clearwater." Over the four weeks, 58 photos were submitted. Another poll asked what Clearwater data participants might be interested in seeing on the website. This will be used as staff completes the data and analysis phase and prepares additional infographics and other information to share on the "Our Community" page of the website. A mapping exercise also lets users pin where they live, work, or play within the planning area.

Figure 9. Photo Submission from Photo Contest



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5 Key Questions

Visitors to the website also had the opportunity to complete a five-question survey that aligned with the discussions at the in-person, Zoom, and youth engagement sessions. This survey was available when the webpage launched and was promoted through social media in September as an alternative for participants who may have missed the Community Conversations (closed on September 9th, 2021). Questions related to what residents most enjoyed, had concerns about, and would like to improve about Clearwater. A total of 155 registered participants responded. Direct quotes from the 5 Key Questions that represent themes found across responses, as well as two example submissions are provided on the following page.

Figure 10. Five Key Questions

1. I **LOVE** this one thing most about Clearwater: *

Please add your comment here...

0/255

2. One thing that **CONCERNS** me about Clearwater today is: *

Please add your comment here...

0/255

3. One thing I **ENJOY** about another City I've visited is: *

Please add your comment here...

0/255

4. One thing that would **IMPROVE** our City the most: *

Please add your comment here...

SUMMARY OF CLEARWATER 2045 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES



Table 2. Selected Responses to 5 Key Questions

I LOVE this one thing most about Clearwater:
"If I have to pick one thing it's natural beauty in an urban setting. Clearwater is clean, full of life, full of nature, refreshing weather, friendly people, lots of community assets like parks & recreation centers, It's paradise."
"Great place to Live: We have many wonderful neighborhoods and parks. We have good schools. We have good jobs and retail services."
"The vicinity to the beaches and the community feel towards other people who live here."
"I truly love the aesthetics of this city. I love the artwork which you will find everywhere, all around the city. We have the statuary on Cleveland Street, and the murals on so many buildings."

Figure 11. Example Online Response

	Respondent No: 52 Login: Registered	Responded At: Jun 04, 2021 07:58:09 am Last Seen: Jun 04, 2021 14:48:27 pm
Q1. I LOVE this one thing most about Clearwater:	The natural beauty of our city and the effort put in to make it the best it can be.	
Q2. One thing that CONCERNS me about Clearwater today is:	The high volume of traffic on our roads and the limited parking spaces available for residents at key locations	
Q3. One thing I ENJOY about another City I've visited is:	The availability of mass transit if it is clean and efficient.	
Q4. One thing that would IMPROVE our City the most:	Doing something to route and move traffic better. More locals would enjoy and attend places and functions if it were not a hassle to get there.	
Q5. I would also like to tell you THIS about our city:	I grew up here and have nothing but fond memories. I would like this to be true for future generations. I am proud of our city and will help in any way to keep it thriving	

Table 3. Selected Responses to 5 Key Questions

One thing that would IMPROVE our city the most:
"More affordable housing, and more reliable and thorough public transportation"
"Improve access to the beach so the traffic buildup is not so intense on the access roads."
"A more inclusive and expanded Downtown, with more small businesses geared to sustainable products, that could easily be reached from all neighborhoods through public transportation."
"Get a handle on the homelessness. I don't like going near the city center because of this. There are a lot of business owners in the old downtown area, and you are harming them by failing to control homelessness."

Figure 12. Example Online Response

	Respondent No: 33 Login: Registered	Responded At: May 29, 2021 15:28:23 pm Last Seen: May 29, 2021 22:23:07 pm
Q1. I LOVE this one thing most about Clearwater:		That it's a very homey paradise to everyone who either lives here or visits here.
Q2. One thing that CONCERNS me about Clearwater today is:		The downtown shops have never been all in business for a great length of time. I'd like to see a more relevant and happening downtown area.
Q3. One thing I ENJOY about another City I've visited is:		The architecture and history of the town gets brought out in a very aesthetically pleasing way.
Q4. One thing that would IMPROVE our City the most:		Getting downtown to be relevant and more of an attraction.
Q5. I would also like to tell you THIS about our city:		What is great is downtown Cleveland Street right now! It's really popping nights!

ATTACHMENTS

- A. “Dot-Mocracy” Share Your Opinion Map**
- B. In-Person Participant Location Map**
- C. Community Engagement Timeline Table**

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Attachment A. "Dot-Mocracy" Share Your Opinion Map and Table

Table 4. Selected General Thoughts from "Dot-Mocracy" Exercise

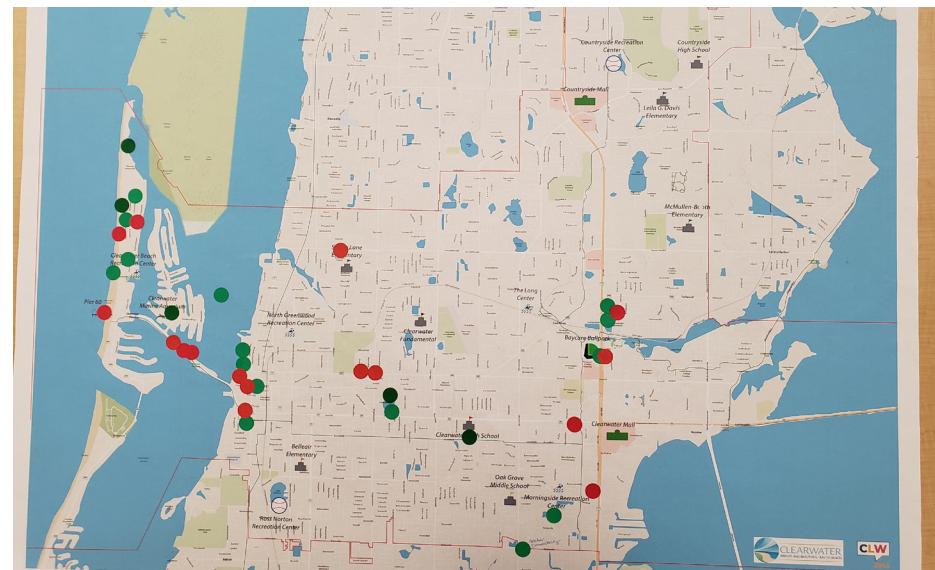
Good	Needs Improvement
Restaurants and shopping opportunities/diversity	Congestion along main transportation corridors; Pedestrian and traffic safety
Beach and water access	Housing affordability and stock
Cultural opportunities (e.g. Ruth Eckerd Hall, Capitol Theatre, Jazz Holiday)	Connected between neighborhoods and areas of Clearwater
Recreation centers and libraries	Focus on environmental improvement and resiliency
Downtown improvements and activation	More inviting and vibrant Downtown

Figure 13. Image of Opinions from "Dot-Mocracy" Activity



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Figure 14. Image of Completed "Dot-Mocracy" Activity



"Dot-Mocracy" Share Your Opinion

Collection of all in-person responses to Share Your Opinion Activity

- Good (Green)
- Needs Improvement (Red)



Not to scale



City of Tampa, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, USGS, EPA

Attachment B. In-Person Participant Location Map(s)

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In-Person Participant Locations

Collection of all in-person responses to Where Do You Live Activity

- Ross Norton Recreation Center
- North Greenwood Recreation Center
- Main Library
- Clearwater Beach Recreation Center
- Countryside Library
- Morningside Recreation Center
- Hispanic Outreach Center
- Youth



Not to scale



City of Tampa, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, USGS, EPA

Attachment C. Community Engagement Timeline Table

Engagement Session	Meeting Date
Virtual Listening Sessions (HDR)	
Neighborhoods Outreach Group	5/19/2021
Black and African American Outreach Group	5/24/2021
Business Leaders & Development Professionals	5/27/2021
Hispanic Outreach	5/27/2021
Zoom Community Conversations	
Session 1	5/26/2021
Session 2	5/27/2021
Session 3	6/3/2021
Session 4	6/5/2021
Session 5	6/8/2021
Session 6	6/9/2021
Session 7	6/15/2021
In Person Youth Engagement	
Long Center	6/21/2021
North Greenwood Recreation Center	6/22/2021
Morningside Recreation Center	6/24/2021
Countryside Library	6/28/2021
In Person Community Conversations	
Ross Norton Recreation Center	7/13/2021
North Greenwood Recreation Center	7/19/2021
Main Library	7/20/2021
Clearwater Beach Recreation Center	7/21/2021
Countryside Recreation Center	7/22/2021
Morningside Recreation Center	7/24/2021
Hispanic Outreach Center	7/28/2021

Engagement Session	Meeting Date
Website Opportunities	
Five Key Questions	5/19/2021 - 9/9/2021
"Uniquely Clearwater" Photo Contest	5/24/2021 - 6/20/2021