

# City of Arcata

## Strategic Infill Redevelopment Program

### Community Engagement Report



March 15, 2024

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# Engagement Summary

## Overview

This Community Engagement Report summarizes themes from public engagement undertaken for the development of the City's Strategic Infill Redevelopment Program (SIRP). Phase 1 started in 2017 and covered engagement leading up to and associated with the City's 6th Cycle Housing Element (adopted December 2019) and its Infill Market Study (adopted February 2021). These adopted plans each have an engagement report. This report incorporates those separate engagement reports by reference.

The Strategic Infill Redevelopment Program (SIRP) is intended to:

- Create a new vision statement for the City and a new set of strategic programs to implement over the next 20 years.
- Create a well-balanced housing infill development program that meets Arcata's current and future housing needs.
- Ensure the continued preservation of working forest land to the east and agricultural bottomlands to the west of the City by concentrating development in and around Arcata's developed neighborhoods.

Key outcomes of this Program include:

- Updated elements of the General Plan.
- Form-based code for high-density, medium-scale development that allows mixed-use, mixed-tenure, market-rate affordable housing as well as increased and economic opportunities.
- Area-based policy that sets codes and standards to allow projects that meet them to move forward without discretionary review.
- Revised zoning code based on General Plan Updates, including Gateway Area Plan.

This report is structured as a set of nested information on the engagement conducted. The information is summarized, and major themes are highlighted for the community and decision makers in the Engagement Summary. The data are compiled in this section across all events. The next section includes summaries and themes from individual events. The next subset takes the information provided by the public at various events and collates the comments received. The nesting allows the reader to quickly understand the community priorities, while retaining the full granularity of specific comments for transparency.

The engagement report is not a full catalog of all input received on the SIRP. Public comment that was directed to decision makers that was included in their packets is not replicated here. Public comment received on the EIR is contained in the EIR per state law and is not replicated here. Comments will be both compiled in this report, and forwarded verbatim to decision makers, if received in the form of a written submitted comment.

## Phase 1 Engagement Summary

City staff and the consultant team have worked hard to build on the direction set by Council in the City's 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element and engage the Arcata community through a variety of methods to ensure

that engagement was both wide-reaching and COVID-safe. Staff has worked to engage a wide variety of community stakeholders in current planning efforts, with an emphasis on bringing new people to the table and engaging a diverse array of current and future residents, including Cal Poly students and local organizations. Given the City's interest in reaching a variety of community members—including both those who currently live inside Arcata's city limits as well as those that do not but would like to—staff used a multi-pronged engagement approach to gain insight into people's experiences with housing and provide various opportunities to offer input into the housing plans under development. To this end, City staff and consultants have provided several means of engagement with this work throughout the process of developing and reviewing draft documents, with a focus on equity and inclusion.

Beginning in late 2020, the City initiated an extensive community engagement program on the development of the Gateway Area Plan specifically (rather than the General Plan updates, or the SIRP as a whole effort). Early public engagement on the infill program in 2020 was undertaken in partnership with the Institute for Local Government (ILG), as the City of Arcata was chosen as a BOOST community in 2019, which was intended to provide additional, targeted support to select jurisdictions leading the way on climate action. The Institute for Local Government is the nonprofit 501c3 research and education affiliate of the League of California Cities, the California State Association of Counties, and the California Special Districts Association. ILG's mission is to promote good government at the local level with practical, impartial, and easy-to-use resources for California Communities. The City's ILG team assisted staff in setting a preliminary course for engagement on the Gateway Area Plan, including drafting a "community landscape" list to identify community partners, and assisting with facilitating our first visioning session in 2020; and supported the City in securing millions of dollars in grant funding for parks and infrastructure improvements associated with infill housing development.

Development of the Gateway Area Plan has synthesized public input from its earliest stages. Multiple public walking tours of the Plan Area were also hosted by City staff. Overall—including study sessions with various City committees/commissions—the City hosted over 25 public engagement events and activities throughout the development of the Gateway Area Plan's first draft. In addition, an online survey was open to the public from February-December 2021. The following is a chronological summary of engagement following Phase 1 of SIRP development. Generally speaking, the City's strategy has been to re-evaluate the overarching community vision first, then bring in committees to review the general framework proposed for the Gateway Area Plan, then targeted community review of the draft Plan upon its release.

Community input throughout the development of the City's 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element and Infill Market Study established the foundational intentions of the SIRP in several important ways. Most crucially, both engagement processes underscored the severity of Arcata's housing shortage. For example, the Infill Market Study found that in 2019, about half (50%) of 600 participants were paying over 30% of their annual income for housing each year, 31% were paying over 50%, and 14% reported that their monthly payments for housing over a year cost more than their annual income. Phase 1 engagement reflected an urgent need for increased access to safe, affordable housing for a variety of community members, including students from Humboldt State University (now Cal Poly Humboldt), artists, and seniors, among others. Furthermore, that engagement pre-dates the steep increase in Humboldt County housing prices that the community witnessed at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A second primary takeaway from Phase 1 engagement is that existing inequities in Arcata negatively impact one's ability to find housing. Once again using the example of Infill Market Study survey participants, almost half (44.65%) who identified as a person of color were renters. Almost half of the participants (41.44%) who identified as white were homeowners. In comparison, about 27.04% of participants who identified as a person of color were homeowners. In this way, Phase 1 engagement reinforced the need for equitable access to housing across various groups, irrespective of race, age, or socioeconomic status. Understanding this need, the SIRP has been developed with a focus on equity.

Phase 1 engagement activities also underscored the Arcata community's interests in climate change preparation, environmental stewardship, prioritization of infill development rather than sprawl, and careful planning for future infrastructure needs. Opposition to developing the City's green belt has formed the basis for the decision to prioritize infill as the primary means to meet Arcata's current and future housing needs.

Finally, stakeholders in Phase 1 engagement expressed an interest in streamlining housing production processes, understanding that City procedure and requirements often stand in the way of necessary growth and development. Participants stressed collaborating with existing artists and community partners to guide the design of structures and open space in ways that reinforce Arcata's unique feel and aesthetic.

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## Building on Previous Data

City staff made a point to build on previous engagement efforts undertaken by elected officials, community members, and Humboldt State University (now Cal Poly Humboldt), particularly considering challenges with meeting in person at the beginning of the City's engagement program. In addition to the Infill Market Study and the Housing Element, the sources below helped staff in understanding the general framework of community needs and desires prior to undertaking SIRP-specific engagement.

- “Policy Grid” Amenity Interviews (2018/2019)
- Existing City Policy (2000-present)
- Council Goal-setting Sessions (2020)
- HSU 5-Year Visioning (2019)
- HSU Student Climate Forum (2019)
- Equity arcata “Draft Solution Set” (2015)
- “Creamery District” initial Visioning (2012)

Cumulatively, these documents assisted in finalizing the structure and goals of the City’s Strategic Infill Redevelopment Program (SIRP). The City aligned the community needs and priorities reflected within these documents with the resources available and determined that Arcata’s housing and economic development needs—present and future—will best be met by prioritizing infill development.



## Engagement Summary At-a-Glance

Overall—including study sessions with various City committees/commissions—the City hosted over twenty-five public engagement events and activities throughout the development of the Gateway Area Plan’s first draft. After release of the draft, the City hosted over one hundred and twenty opportunities for learning about the Gateway Area Plan, the associated Form-Based-Code, and the updates to the General Plan and providing comment to staff, various committees, the Planning Commission, and the City Council.

Virtual, recorded sessions are available for review on the City’s YouTube page. A SIRP playlist has been created and is accessible via this link:

<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL7tMq3MmkA5qJHW0ypCUBOfCJ CtLuxZjD>

### Community Engagement- prior to draft Gateway Area Plan release and immediately after

1. 12/17/20 Community Visioning and Listening Session (virtual)
2. 1/21/21 City Council Special Study Session: Strategic Infill Redevelopment Program Report
3. 2/1/21-12/31/21 Visioning Survey (on-line; English and Spanish versions)
4. 2/21/21 HSU Associated Students Board Strategic Infill Redevelopment Program presentation
5. 2/25/20 Community Visioning and Listening Session (virtual)
6. 4/20/21 Community Lecture hosted by HSU (virtual) (Victor Schuab Lecture Series)
7. 5/6/21 Community Visioning Listening Session Recap (YouTube)
8. 5/6/21 Community Visioning listening Session Recap En Espanol (YouTube)
9. 6/4/21 Gateway Area Walking Tour with Arcata High School (in-person)
10. 6/19/21 Gateway Area Public Walking Tours (in-person)
11. 6/24/21 City Council and Planning Commission Special Study Session: Strategic Infill Redevelopment Program Report
12. 7/6/21 Economic Development Committee: Discussion of the Gateway Area Plan (virtual)
13. 7/14/21 Parks and Recreation Committee: Discussion of the 2020 General Plan Update and the Gateway Area Plan (virtual)
14. 7/15/21 Historic Landmarks Committee: Discussion of the Gateway Area Plan (virtual)
15. 7/19/21 Energy Committee: Discussion of the General Plan Update and the Gateway Area Plan (virtual)
16. 7/20/21 Traffic Safety Committee: Discussion of the General Plan Update and the Gateway Area Plan
17. 7/20/21 Wetlands and Creeks Committee: Discussion of the General Plan Update and the Gateway Area Plan
18. 8/10/21 Planning Commission: Study Session for the Strategic Infill Redevelopment Program, including the Gateway Area Plan (virtual)
19. 8/17/21 Traffic Safety Committee: Discussion of the Gateway Area Plan (virtual)
20. 8/30/21 Letter mailed to all property owners within Gateway Area encouraging outreach to City staff with questions regarding pending plan
21. 9/14/21 Planning Commission Walking Tour (in-person)
22. 9/21/21 City Council Special Study Session Walking Tour (in-person)
23. 10/15/21 Public Walking Tour (in-person)
24. 10/16/21 Public Walking Tour (in-person)
25. 12/9/21 Public Workshop (virtual)
26. 12/11/21 Public Walking Tour (in-person)
27. 12/14/21 Planning Commission (virtual)
28. 12/15/21 City Council: Report of Public Draft Document (virtual)

## Community Engagement- after Gateway Area Plan release to present

City staff planned additional community engagement in 2022 and 2023, including an in-person “Open House” style meeting with COVID protocols; additional zoom Town Halls and study sessions with more opportunities for engagement on proposed circulation and building height and scale; and a variety of opportunities to weigh in on area-wide amenities in partnership with various City committees. City committees and the Planning Commission performed additional review at public hearings throughout the first and second quarters of 2022. In particular, the Planning Commission made it a priority to go through the draft Gateway Area Plan chapter by chapter through the spring and summer of 2022, with the intent of broadening opportunities for public feedback and increasing access to the decisionmakers. In June 2022 the City held a Form Based Code educational town hall and in August held another Form Based Code workshop. In early 2023, the City held two Form-Based Code workshops, the first discussing architectural design and open space and the second going over streetscape, parking, and open space standards. In March 2023, the City Council directed the Planning Commission to bring their decisions to the first Council meeting in July. The City Council reaffirmed the timeline at the Council meeting on April 5, 2023. The Planning Commission held nine special meetings between March and June 2023 to meet the Council’s requested timeline. From August to October 2023, the City held three study sessions with the City Council and Planning Commission to discuss the General Plan and Gateway Area Plan. On January 31, 2024, the draft Environmental Impact Report was released for public comment.

During this period (2022-2024) the City released seven YouTube videos addressing different topics related to the General Plan, Gateway Area Plan, and associated Form-Based Code for the public to review at their leisure.

### January 2022

1. Jan 3 HSU Executive Team presentation
2. Jan 4 Eco News Report interview
3. Jan 6 Local Banker Gateway Area walking tour
4. Jan 11 Planning Commission Meeting
5. Jan 13 Dishgamu Humboldt/COOP Hum
6. Jan 14 KEET TV Interview
7. Jan 18 Transportation Safety Committee regular meeting
8. Jan 19 Bear River and Blue Lake Rancheria THPO Meeting
9. Jan 20 Wiyot THPO Meeting
10. Jan 20 Historic Landmarks Committee Meeting
11. Jan 20 CRTP Meeting
12. Jan 21 Open House
13. Jan 22 Farmer’s Market Tabling
14. Jan 22 Open House
15. Jan 24 North Coast Health Leadership Team
16. Jan 25 Attendance and answering Qs at Artists in Action
17. Jan 29 North Arcata Gateway Area Walking Tour
18. Jan 31 El Centro Open House Tabling

### February 2022

1. Feb 1 Economic Development Committee presentation
2. Feb 4 Skating Event at HSU

- 3. Feb 8 Planning Commission Meeting
- 4. Feb 12 Farmer's Market Tabling
- 5. Feb 15 ESM 360 Walking Tour
- 6. Feb 15 Parks and Rec Committee Meeting
- 7. Feb 17 HSU Community Psychology Course- "We'll Come to You" Session
- 8. Feb 17 Tabling at HSU Quad
- 9. Feb 24 Tabling at HSU Quad
- 10. Feb 24 HSU Research Methods course- "We'll Come to You" Session
- 11. Feb 24 Humboldt 350- "We'll Come to You" Session
- 12. Feb 24 HSU Tabling
- 13. Feb 26 Farmer's Market Tabling
- 14. Feb 28 Timber Heritage Society

#### March 2022

- 1. March 1 Artist "We'll Come to You" Session
- 2. March 2 HSU Conflict Resolution Class- "We'll Come to You" Session
- 3. March 8 North Coast News Interview
- 4. March 9 Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting
- 5. March 10 Forest Management Committee Meeting
- 6. March 10 SIRP EIR NOP Scoping Meeting
- 7. March 12 Farmer's Market tabling
- 8. March 15 Creeks and Wetlands Committee Meeting
- 9. March 16 Greenway "We'll Come to You" Session
- 10. March 21 Energy Committee Meeting
- 11. March 21 Architect's Meeting
- 12. March 23 Local Government Commission "We'll Come to You" Session
- 13. March 24 Student Forum w/ Housing Liaison-1 pm, in person on campus
- 14. March 26 Farmer's Market tabling
- 15. March 28 OLLI Presentation
- 16. March 30 KINS Interview

#### April 2022

- 1. April 3 "Humboldt Holding Up" podcast
- 2. April 8 HSU AS Board "We'll Come to You" Session
- 3. April 10 Universalist Fellowship Climate Action Campaign
- 4. April 12 Planning Commission Meeting
- 5. April 14 Spanish Language Gateway Meeting
- 6. April 20 SIRP CEQA Agency Scoping Presentation (YouTube)
- 7. April 21 True North "We'll Come to You" Session
- 8. April 25 HSU Environmental- "We'll Come to You" Session
- 9. April 26 Planning Commission Meeting

#### May 2022

- 1. May 10 Planning Commission Meeting
- 2. May 12 Economic Development Committee Meeting

- 3. May 18 Businesses in the Gateway Area (YouTube)
- 4. May 19 Historic Landmarks Committee Meeting
- 5. May 24 Planning Commission Meeting

June 2022

- 1. June 1 City Council engagement update
- 2. June 10 Housing Professionals- "We'll Come to You" Session
- 3. June 14 Planning Commission Meeting
- 4. June 16 Historic Landmarks Committee Meeting
- 5. June 22 City Council Meeting-Draft General Plan Engagement Report & General Plan Update Review Process
- 6. June 28 Planning Commission Meeting
- 7. June 29 Form-Based Code educational Town Hall (Zoom)

July 2022

- 1. July 5 Economic Development Committee Meeting
- 2. July 13 Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting
- 3. July 18 Energy Committee Meeting
- 4. July 19 Transportation Safety Committee Meeting
- 5. July 21 Economic Development Committee Special Meeting
- 6. July 26 Planning Commission Meeting
- 7. July 27 Historic Landmarks Committee Meeting

August 2022

- 1. Aug 2 Transportation Safety Committee Meeting
- 2. Aug 4 Planning Commission Meeting
- 3. Aug 5 Gateway Area Plan Form-Based Code and Building Massing Presentation (YouTube)
- 4. Aug 9 Planning Commission Meeting
- 5. Aug 16 Form-Based Code Design Workshop (zoom)
- 6. Aug 23 Special City Council Meeting Joint Study Session with the Planning Commission

September 2022

- 1. Sept 13 Planning Commission Meeting
- 2. Sept 20 Wetlands and Creeks Committee Meeting
- 3. Sept 27 Planning Commission Meeting

October 2022

- 1. Oct 11 Planning Commission Meeting
- 2. Oct 25 Planning Commission Meeting

November 2022

- 1. Nov 8 Planning Commission Meeting
- 2. Nov 15 Planning Commission Meeting
- 3. Nov 15 Wetland and Creeks Committee Meeting

December 2022

1. Dec 8 Access Humboldt "Thursday Night Talk" Radio Show
2. Dec 13 Planning Commission Meeting

January 2023

1. Jan 10 Planning Commission Meeting
2. Jan 17 Transportation Committee Meeting
3. Jan 17 Wetlands and Creeks Committee Meeting
4. Jan 19 Form-Based Code Workshop: Architectural Design & Open Space
5. Jan 24 Planning Commission Meeting

February 2023

1. Feb 11 Planning Commission Study Session on Building and Roof Design, Open Space
2. Feb 14 Planning Commission Meeting
3. Feb 21 Transportation Safety Committee Meeting
4. Feb 23 Form-Based Code Workshop: Streetscape, Parking, and Open Space Standards
5. Feb 28 Planning Commission Meeting

March 2023

1. March 1 City Council Meeting-Update on Gateway Area Plan Engagement Process
2. March 14 Planning Commission Meeting
3. March 27 Planning Commission Special Meeting

April 2023

1. April 5 City Council Meeting-Direction Regarding Timeline for SIRP
2. April 11 Planning Commission Special Meeting
3. April 22 Planning Commission Special Meeting
4. April 25 Planning Commission Special Meeting
5. April 27 Planning Commission Special Meeting

May 2023

1. May 9 Planning Commission Special Meeting
2. May 16 Transportation Safety Committee Meeting
3. May 23 Planning Commission Special Meeting
4. May 30 Special Meeting Transportation Safety Committee Meeting

June 2023

1. June 13 Planning Commission Special Meeting
2. June 27 Planning Commission Special Meeting

July 2023

1. July 11 Planning Commission Meeting
2. July 25 Planning Commission Meeting

3. July 28 State Density Bonus, Community Benefits, and Inclusionary Zoning Presentation (YouTube)

August 2023

1. Aug 8 Planning Commission Meeting
2. Aug 11 Gateway Area Plan Proposed Circulation Network Changes and Evaluated Alternatives Presentation (YouTube)
3. Aug 22 City Council Joint Study Session with the Planning Commission

September 2023

1. Sept 8 Gateway GIS Analysis and Graphics Support Presentation (YouTube)
2. Sept 8 Gateway Area Plan Solar Shading Impacts 3D GIS Analysis (YouTube)
3. Sept 12 Planning Commission Meeting
4. Sept 25 Gateway Form-Based Code Open House
5. Sept 26 City Council Joint Study Session with the Planning Commission

October 2023

1. Oct 10 Planning Commission Meeting
2. Oct 24 City Council Joint Study Session with the Planning Commission

November 2023

1. Nov 14 Planning Commission Meeting

December 2023

1. Dec 12 Planning Commission Meeting

January 2024

1. Jan 3 City Council Meeting-Review revised draft General Plan 2045 & Review December 2023 Revised Gateway Area Plan
2. Jan 9 Planning Commission Meeting
3. Jan 10 Chamber of Commerce Business Breakfast-General Plan Presentation
4. Jan 17 City Council Meeting-Consider Inclusionary Zoning Policy
5. Jan 23 Planning Commission Meeting
6. Jan 31 Draft EIR circulation period start date open for public comment.

## Community Vision

Broadly, community visioning involves five key steps to determine:

Step	Which Delivers...
Where are we now?	An inventory of current assets, opportunities, and challenges
Where are we going?	Future scenarios based on current assets, opportunities, and challenges
Where do we want to be?	Preferred future, based on shared values and aspirations
How do we get there?	Decisions and actions required to make the vision possible, with clear indicators and measurements
Are we making progress?	An overview of performance (through monitoring and reporting) and opportunity to recalibrate as necessary

Our primary questions have been:

- 1) How do we retain what makes Arcata special, and provide opportunities and space for new people, balancing conservation and inclusivity?
- 2) How do we continue to effectively regulate growth (regulate meaning maintain the balance of appropriately *encouraging and discouraging* growth in a way that aligns with community values & priorities)?



## Dates/structure

### “Town Hall” Zoom Meetings

The City held two meetings where we asked the public what updates to our current policy make sense in order to strengthen our community, combat and adapt to climate change, and increase opportunity for everyone to live, work, and play in Arcata.

The second of the two sessions focused on four main areas of focus as identified through outreach to date: 1) growth and development, 2) neighborhoods and urban form, 3) environment and sustainability, and 4) community and health. These topics encompass all elements of the general plan that staff will be updating through 2023.

### “Meeting-in-a-Box” Sessions

City staff prepared targeted packets for further outreach that can be easily used both by staff and members of the community, further broadening our ability to connect and capture information from a variety of community stakeholders, through a “Meeting in a Box” process. A “Meeting-in-a-Box” is a self-guided meeting format that was available on the city’s website. This meeting in a box format allowed community members to dig into topics that are most interesting to them and submit ideas to city staff. The meeting in a box format was available to the public for the entirety of 2021 to ensure maximum reach of engagement.

### Online survey

The City released a survey on the City’s website that aligned with the questions asked at the Town Hall sessions in an effort to bring along members of the community who cannot attend our meetings, but still want to engage in our processes. The survey was released concurrently with the public meetings where similar topics were discussed in late 2020/early 2021, and the survey remained open for over a year, officially closing April 1 of 2022.

### YouTube Videos

City staff created and posted multiple videos to YouTube which detailed different aspects of the Gateway Area Code and Form-Based Code. These videos were created to educate the public about the planning effort, and to give the community access to information they could watch at their leisure. This was another method staff used to reach people who may not have been able to attend Planning Commission meetings, City Council meetings, or other public meetings.

## Listening Session/Community Vision Session 1 (December 2020)

On December 17th, 2020, at 5:30 PM, City staff conducted a public meeting over zoom in partnership with the City's BOOST team, who are partnering Institution for Local Government Program staff. There were roughly 40-50 participants, many of whom stayed for the full hour-and-a-half meeting and took part in the small group breakout sessions. The meeting started with a 2020 report out from Arcata City Manager Karen Diemer, then transitioned to a variety of polling questions, then breakout group sessions. The meeting ended with a short overview of upcoming City planning efforts and upcoming opportunities for future engagement.

Watch the recorded video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8LfsJLLZxU>

We held our first visioning session in December 2020 and started with basic questions meant to spur big ideas about Arcata's future.

Results focused on many of the topics reflected in our current vision statement that was completed in the year 2000, including the environment and climate change, the importance of community engagement, and the city's physical and structural connections to Humboldt State University. But some new themes are beginning to emerge as well that didn't make it into the city's vision from 20 years ago.



New themes include more intensive preparations for climate change and sea level rise, addressing mental health and homelessness, reconnecting with Humboldt's Indigenous communities, addressing racial disparities in Arcata, incorporating art into all elements of city life and governance, and focusing energy and investment into geographical areas of the city outside the plaza, particularly Valley West.

At this first visioning meeting, COVID relief and basic needs such as shelter and jobs were identified as high-priority concerns to focus on in the next year, followed by an interest in working on connections to Humboldt State University. When asked, "how do you envision Arcata in 2021 and beyond", Arcata was primarily envisioned as community oriented, equitable, and inclusive. We also asked participants to define equity in their own words, and overwhelmingly the response was "opportunity". Finally, when asked what makes Arcata special, the majority of participants at the December 2020 meeting identified "community" as being a key value, and by extension something to protect and support.

## **Common Themes**

**Sustainability** - We need to work to protect the environment and ensure our ongoing continued use and stewardship of natural resources.

**Climate change and Sea level rise** - We need to prepare for a changing climate and sea level rise. What can we do to both prepare, and not decrease quality of life for residents, but instead improve it through collaboration and innovation?

**Reconnecting with Indigenous people** - We need to connect and reconnect with our local Indigenous communities and look to them for guidance on how to navigate a path forward in partnership.

**Engagement/Civics/Reconnecting with our community** - We need to work to connect, and to reconnect, with neighborhoods, decentralize decision-making, engage youth civic leadership programs, and more in light of COVID-19 and beyond.

**Valley West**- We need to focus more on Valley West and allocate more resources to it and other under-served areas of the City (communities gardens, more resources for families, expansion, need study, recreation, trash cans)

**Art** - We need to incorporate art into the streets and community life, art for health, economic frameworks that support art

**Racial Equity and Arcata for all** – We need to provide help to the most vulnerable; a trickle-up effect, undocumented community members are left out (suggestion - city sponsorship program) - making Arcata a place for all, economic development so people can thrive; healthy Arcata (health leads to housing, climate, art (spiritual health)

**Youth Engagement** - We need to make our political structures accessible and inclusive; HSU is a huge draw; youth leadership program and structure for civic engagement

**Humboldt State University (HSU)** - We acknowledge HSU is a huge draw; education opportunities/collaboration: Humboldt was being built on resources that are here, in the community. How can we reconnect with HSU?

**Thoughtful City Growth** - We need to be mindful of growth patterns; maintaining what Arcata is and expanding with sustainability; controlled growth

**Accessibility and Mobility** – We need to focus on basic infrastructure, more transportation access

**Economic development** – We need to build economic frameworks that support art, economic development so people can thrive

## Community Vision Session 2 (February 2021)

On February 25th at 5:30 PM, City staff conducted a public meeting over zoom. There were roughly 40 participants at the meeting, many of whom stayed for the full hour-and-a-half meeting and took part in the small group breakout sessions. This meeting diverged from the December 2020 meeting by focusing on four main themes that spoke to both feedback received in December, and connected to the Elements of the General Plan that will be updated over the next two years. The four topics were:

- 1) Growth/development;
- 2) Community/health;
- 3) Neighborhoods/urban form; and
- 4) Environment/sustainability.

The meeting started with a variety of polling questions and an introduction from Community Development Director David Loya, then moved on to a summary of results from the December 17th meeting, then transitioned to breakout group sessions with notes taken by participants. The meeting ended with a short overview of upcoming City planning efforts and upcoming opportunities for future engagement.

Questions asked: *What are your big/innovative ideas for improvement and change in the topics of community & health? What does success look like moving into the future? How do we measure our success along the way? What are we doing well that we should build on?*

Watch the recorded video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3R7xkTqfLjQ>

### Common Themes

**Engagement/Civics/Reconnecting with our community** - We need to work to connect, and to reconnect, with neighborhoods, decentralize decision-making, delegate decision making power, engage youth civic leadership programs, and more in light of COVID-19 and beyond. Focus on community health and community connections.

**Prioritize Infill and increased density in core of City**-Create much-needed housing and strategically locate it to make services and transportation alternatives pencil. Frame Infill as a two-sided coin, involving both growth, and protection of greenspace and City periphery. Focus on investing in more bike/pedestrian infrastructure to support infill development.

**Valley West**- We need to focus more on Valley West and allocate more resources to it and other under-served areas of the City (communities gardens, more resources for families, expansion, need study, recreation, trash cans)

**Art** - We need to incorporate art into the streets and community life, art for health, economic frameworks that support art.

**Racial Equity and Arcata for all** –We need to provide help to the most vulnerable; a trickle-up effect, undocumented community members are left out - making Arcata is a place for all, economic

development so people can thrive. Focus on community healing and health related to past racial injustice/reconciliation.

**Reconnecting with Indigenous people** - We need to connect and reconnect with our local Indigenous communities and look to them for guidance on how to navigate a path forward in partnership.

**Youth Engagement** - We need to make our political structures accessible and inclusive; HSU is a huge draw; youth leadership program and structure for civic engagement.

**Focus on individual/physical health** - Mental health and services, particularly for Arcata's unhoused population; focusing on physical health, youth health, and increasing feeling of physical safety.

**Focusing on “human-centered” design** (physically, politically/structurally)- examples from groups included walkable/bike able streets safe for children, gathering places filled with art, parks and green spaces, edible landscaping.

**More representation from diverse range of people**- diversity of demographics is needed, and staff should work to engage a truly representative sample across age, race, and income. The following groups/individuals were identified as representing people staff should work harder to reach:

- Child care operators
- Schools
- Younger community members
- Latinx population
- Local tribal members
- Hmong population
- Black Humboldt
- HSU students, including the Associated Students Board and the African American Center for Academic Excellence
- Mad river hospital and open door clinics
- Humboldt County Black Music and Arts
- True North

## “Meeting in a Box” Sessions

In addition to the City-led community meetings and Citywide vision survey, four organizations chose to run small-group community vision discussions and submitted the information to staff for compilation into the larger visioning results. This meeting in a box format allowed community members to dig into topics that are most interesting to them and submit ideas to city staff. The following organizations took part in a meeting in a box session:

- Cooperation Humboldt Study Group
- Equity Arcata Design Team
- Arcata High School Students
- Cal Poly Humboldt Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

## Meeting in a Box Themes

**What are the things that make Arcata a great place for you to live, work and play? (In other words, what is most precious to you about this community that you want to see retained or built upon over the next 20 years?)**

- Proximity to family, nature, beaches; Arcata feels cohesive, tangible sense of community, young people/leftists yet small; relatively bikeable and walkable
- Culture, dense culturally for size, intellectual academic atmosphere
- Appreciate green areas like redwood park, marsh, shay park, creeks; identity humanist and enviro friendly
- Large public spaces and parks, accessible, plaza; community spaces
- Mixture of uses of the space; not huge industrial areas, next to farmland; likes bikeability not car friendly
- Natural beauty, trees, and weather
- Local food, events and art, the Arcata Playhouse, that there are no big box stores
- “the unexplainable magic that it has”
- City’s commitment to developing racial equity through its many programs—“The sentiment that so many people are interested in environmental and social justice; more and more BIPOC and LGBTQ people standing up and making themselves heard and seen in the area”—“the diversity, Arcata as a judgement-free zone, never been in a city before where everyone has a voice and everyone is respected—everyone is welcome, all come-ers are welcome—we want you as you want to be”

**In what ways might you like to see Arcata grow and change over the next twenty years?**

- A Future Focus – additional emphasis on long term consequences for actions and how our actions will affect future generations (like gen z's grandchildren) – Climate change as center of decisions
- Edible/Native Plantings – More edible and/or native plants planted in parks and school yards and other public lands.

- Planning for Growth – More density and infrastructure in built up areas, interspersed with green areas like the redwood park, the marsh, and shay park – “ keep these green lungs and clean spaces, densify those spaces that are not green. Turn old unused industrial sites to mixed use commercial and residential with high density housing/commercial space and regenerative green spaces.” “Probably grow as a city, becoming more modern.”
- Housing—More affordable housing is needed to accommodate the future of newcomers and residents. Also development of a community shelter and housing for the unhoused and transient populations. Housing that allows pets; whatever can be done to support smaller houses or alternative modes of ownership; more investment in services for homelessness everyone deserves food, laundry, shelter
- Tribal Collaboration and Arcata for All – Repatriation of valuable lands for Wiyot, stakeholder in government. Mostly in racial and social equity and being welcoming to everyone.
- All-ages spaces – Creative places for youth so young adults and adolescents have something to do— “I feel like in Humboldt many kids feel like they don't have a lot of places to really be themselves and be accepted so I feel like a lot of local kids turn to drugs when maybe they could have been supported by the community.”
- Local food access – Better access to local food and growing food without expensive charges, more community gardens
- Alternative Transportation – “I would love it to be less centered around vehicles for transportation, less car roads more people roads” ; “I would like to see Arcata become more bike friendly”; -more bikeable, more trails – “reallocating right of way, taking space away from cars, reclaiming roads as public space”; “extend public transport and make car free zones/streets, expand bikeability and walkability by making more separate bike lines and closing of car parking access downtown, make a park and ride outside of the city to keep cars out of downtown.”
- More welcoming integration between Arcata and HSU – “Explore and develop opportunities to hang onto more HSU grads, City to develop stronger ties with HSU, City to develop more housing opportunities in line with sustainable, walkable neighborhoods, City to strengthen equity awareness within the City”

**The city is committed to using a racial equity lens in planning and policy development. From where you sit, what racial or other social inequities do we need to address as a city? (for example, in housing, transportation, education, etc.)**

- Repatriating non nominal lands to the Wiyot tribe. Local Indigenous people have not been in the room in these conversations; local Indigenous people are a huge resource, some way of bringing them into the conversation/into more peoples' lives/more support for Indigenous people doing amazing things in our community
- Offer bike support - bike kitchens, more public transportation with clean energy buses. Defund the police - put money into social services. Participatory Budgeting and direct democratic influence on policy.
- Less racial discrimination in the renting and housing markets. There are stories about residents and students being denied housing due to their race, sexuality and gender identities. Better and more housing options for students.

- Humboldt State being considered to become a polytechnic university, STEM faculty will be needed, they will only move here if we have housing—housing is a basic need; strategic housing development is urgent to support the recruitment & retention of HSU's BIPOC students and employees, non-BIPOC individuals without inherited wealth as well who are struggling to house themselves
- A true story of who we are/what our community history is taught in schools; more equity training for teachers, less incidents of racism & microaggressions by teachers
- City finding more ways to provide funding to BIPOC community members—business grants, housing grants/loans; recognizing Indigenous culture & cultural history through City policy so we have a true sense of what we've taken, who we are, and hopefully where we could go with that; Job training and more employment opportunities for BIPOC community members, resources for low-income families and for those that are living in poverty

**What are your “big ideas” for the future of Arcata’s built, natural, human and economic environment?**

- Biogas facility/Sustainable infrastructure
- Edible and/or native green spaces throughout the city
- Direct democracy and Participatory Budgeting
- Artist housing
- Tax on unused buildings in the downtown
- Percent for art tax
- Maintenance of existing public spaces, perhaps through citizen task forces for things like trash & gardening
- HSU faculty & staff hotel/housing venture—state of the art housing close to the campus (there is a building just up from the D St Neighborhood Center that is empty; owned by HSU?)—there should be a landing place for people to come so that they do not have to float while looking for permanent housing
- Large and sustained community conversations & events centering race, racism, and racial equity and other diversity-related pain points (homelessness, poverty, etc.—other pain points of inequity more broadly)—businesses, families, individuals invited to sign a pledge of accountability to equity and inclusion—can be placed in windows—BIPOC community members breathe more easily seeing Black Lives Matter signs
- Support hiring and retention of BIPOC faculty in STEM fields at HSU
- Education K-12—curriculum change, focused more on where we are/who we are/the true version of us—kids can take this into their homes, kids may have parents that do not go to workshops/equity trainings
- Housing equity and resources – Also working to fix the housing issue – integrated housing with students and non-students and families
- Business development, encouraging the entrepreneurial spirit that we are known for in this region—sad to see people that have left the area because there are no opportunities; we are losing talent/creatives that wants to stay—it is important to be inspired; we do not have the infrastructure in place to support a community of creatives

- Walking trails everywhere—connecting all cities in Humboldt/around Arcata safely for those community members that want to get places by walking/biking
- Not everyone who lives here has easy access to the forest, beach, etc.—programs or projects that make our natural wonders accessible to all; free shuttles to the beach on weekends—very simple things that help us all to inhabit our spaces
- How do we actually get to zero waste as a community—including restaurants: green growth & development, green businesses
- More gardens so that people can grow their food—public spaces that are resources for everyone
- Financing for low-income people—making an effort to finance businesses, housing, education etc.
- More affordable housing for new residents and potential students and a living space/shelter for the unhoused population. Dive more into connecting with the long-forgotten minority communities.
- Is there a way to make the process of getting a house less complicated? A process that streamlines it, so that students and people aren't applying to these places & putting in application fees etc. without all of the hoopla—maybe a partnership between City and HSU
- youth resource center, preserving natural resources, helping the homeless, and having more equity in the community by building housing in areas that would benefit and by offering aid to low-income families whose homes need repair from mold or weather damage.
- Home away from home, attending the HSU Games (NCAA and Club sports), festivals
- other ethnic communities and cuisine, supporting small business, better transportation, knowledge of more community events, better medical support, and childcare
- A renewed focus on bringing students into the community rather than shunning them. It pays to have these students come in and help because they could very well be new community members. They could even be community leaders if given enough love and acceptance by the community.
- more infrastructure, night events
- health resources; emphasis on eco-friendly transportation/having a walkable town; continuing to strengthen bond between HSU and the city; strengthening the connection between Downtown Arcata and the rest of the city; dealing with influx of new people, housing, and what to do as it becomes harder to maintain the "reclusive small-town charm" while also increasing quality of life for residents
- Tours of nature locally as well as more free sports facilities (soccer fields, outdoor basketball courts, etc.)
- Working towards more community engagement opportunities.
- I believe healthcare for students and young people, as well as food resources, are the two biggest struggles aside from housing issues. There are a lot of food initiatives promoted to students (CalFresh!), but they are not always able to provide for students. I do not have any ideas on how to fix these issues currently.
- More big, noticeable, and free community gardens that have all kinds of fruits, vegetables, and herbs.
- Covered and accessible bike paths that protect against rain and are easy to ride on.

- A nicer rock-climbing gym in town that includes rope climbing (not just bouldering) that would encourage exercise and be more accessible to folks who can't rock climb outside.

### Online Community Vision Survey

An online survey regarding the community vision was released in tandem with the community vision meetings (February 2021) and remained live through April 2022. The first two questions were required; all other responses were optional. Question 5 was added September 2021 to assist the City's Racial Equity/Social Justice Policy Review Working Group in gathering relevant data.

Themes generally reinforced feedback captured at the community visioning town halls: need for more high-quality housing accessible to a variety of users; commitments to sustainability, community, and equity; concerns regarding climate change, desire for more accessible and diverse alternative transportation opportunities.



Are you an Arcata resident? (490 responses)

Yes – 67%  
No – 33%

Have you attended a City workshop related to recent City visioning (either December 17th 2020 meeting, February 25th 2021 meeting, or meetings related to the Housing Element, adopted in 2019? (490 responses)

Yes – 12%  
No – 86 %  
Attended other related City event -- 2%

**What are the current characteristics of our community that make Arcata a great place for you to live, work and play? (please limit to your top 3) (487 responses)**

1. Natural Beauty and Weather (317 responses; 65%)
2. Humboldt State University (269 responses; 55%)
3. Playgrounds, trails, other public lands and parks (239 responses; 49%)

**In your opinion, what are Arcata's core values? (397 responses)**

Top results: community, sustainability, environmentalism, equity and diversity, innovation, "small town" values

**The City of Arcata is committed to using a racial equity lens in planning and policy development. From where you sit, what racial or other social inequities do we need to address as a city? (for example, in housing, transportation, education, etc.) (256 responses)**

Common Themes: housing, transportation and infrastructure, community services, tribal partnerships and indigenous rights, relationships to Cal Poly Humboldt, racial equity education and training

**As our community grows, what are the most important factors to consider in its planning? (please limit your top 3) (483 responses)**

1. A mix of housing types/affordability (217 responses; 44%)
2. Thoughtful City Growth-both infill development and resource protection (170 responses; 35%)
3. Climate Change/Sea Level Rise Protection (146 responses; 30%)

**What are your "big ideas" for Arcata that will strengthen Arcata to be a better place to live, work or play in the next 20 year? (369 responses)**

Top results: community events, cleaner streetscape, limit growth/concerns regarding building height, concerns with homeless population, more housing, more and improved alternative transportation options, dog park, innovative appropriate technologies, mental health services, economic development, spaces/places for young people, sea level rise preparation and climate adaptation, improvements to plaza, improvements to Valley West neighborhood

**Housing "big ideas":**

- limited equity housing cooperatives
- tiny house villages
- housing for people with pets
- more ADU creation
- CR's tiny house program
- Transitional housing programs
- Earth ships
- "Housing first" models
- Eco-villages
- First time homebuyer program
- Limit vacation rentals
- Community land trusts
- Rent control
- More "starter" home development

- More single family home development
- Use appropriate technology (CCAT on campus as example)
- Micro-housing

**Transportation “big ideas”**

- Make the Plaza car-free
- Downtown parking garages
- Trolleys
- More bus routes
- More bike lanes/walking paths
- Safe routes to school
- EV charging stations
- Free bike library
- Free bus in the downtown
- Shuttles to HSU and downtown
- Online available micro-transit

**What's missing or outdated from our current vision statement? (214 responses)**

Common Themes: Wiyot land recognition, statement regarding embracing diversity and promoting racial equity, focus on gathering spaces beyond the plaza, rephrase/delete “We'll Grow, but on Our Own Terms”, note climate change/climate crisis

**If you live in the City of Arcata, do you own or rent your home? (475 responses)**

Own -- 43%  
Rent -- 23%  
N/A -- 34%

**What generation best represents you? (478 responses)**

Pre-Baby Boomer – 5%  
Baby Boomer – 33%  
Generation X – 23%  
Generation Y – 23%  
Generation Z – 13%

**What race best represents you (based on US census definitions)? (460 responses)**

Race Category	Survey Results	Citywide Demographics (2021 census data)
White	387 (84%)	75%
Two or more races	71 (15%)	9%
Asian	19 (4%)	4%
Black or African American	11 (2%)	2.5%
American Indian or Alaska Native	8 (1%)	3%
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	1 (0.2%)	1%

For this survey, Hispanic ethnicity is separated from race. Which of the following categories best represents you? (patterned after 2010 census categories)? (444 responses)

- Not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin – 372 responses; 88%
- Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano – 38 responses; 8%
- Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin-Not Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano – 21 responses; 4 %

What is the primary language spoken in your home? (479 responses)

- English – 469 responses; 97%
- Spanish – 4 responses; 0.8%
- Other – 6 responses; 1%

What income bracket best represents you? (465 responses)

- Level 1 – 64 responses; 13%
- Level 2 – 58 responses; 12%
- Level 3 – 51 responses; 11%
- Level 4 – 47 responses; 10%
- Level 5 – 57 responses; 12%
- Level 6 – 178 responses; 38%
- NA – 10 responses; 2%

Are you currently an enrolled HSU student? (480 responses)

- Yes – 76 responses (15%)
- No – 404 responses (84%)

Have you ever been an enrolled HSU student? (478 responses)

- Yes – 314 responses (65%)
- No – 164 responses (34%)

**BONUS QUESTION: If you have the time and interest, is there anything else you would like us to know about you and your place in the fabric of Arcata's community? (229 responses)**

Common themes: challenges finding and keeping housing; desire for more opportunities for community connection; need for medical/mental health services; concerns regarding homelessness; concerns regarding Gateway Area Plan, specifically 8-story buildings

## Themes Translated to Updates to Community Vision Statement

- Healthy communities and neighborhoods matter to Arcata residents.
- The City looks to artists and the arts to create and support healthy communities and neighborhoods.
- Connection matters here. “Community” is important to Arcata. Community is exhibited in things like running into people you know on the street, the CO-OP, the Farmer’s Market, locally produced goods, local businesses (“Mom and Pop shops”)
- Racial equity and “Arcata for All” is important to Arcata residents, providing opportunity for residents to choose Arcata regardless of race, ability, income
- Recognition that the City of Arcata lies Wiyot Tribal lands and supporting collaboration between the City and the Wiyot Tribe, as well as other local tribes, as well as recognition of historic injustices to indigenous people
- Arcata’s focus is on creating human-centered spaces that are well-designed and enjoyable to exist in, with a focus on future development that will encourage both livability and “thrivability”

### **Proposed to remove:**

- graphics (McKinley statue, Godwit Days)
- Language regarding “*we'll grow, but on our own terms*”

## Committee Review

### Dates/structure

The presentations and exercises were part of the Community Development Department's own "Committee Roadshow." The intent of the first round of committee engagement was 1) to get the word out to a variety of local stakeholders with a vested interest in the future development of the City; 2) to provide additional opportunities for public engagement and comment on the concept of the Gateway Area Plan and associated development "amenities", which could be used as part of an approval process for large-scale development projects that would otherwise not be allowed through a streamlined approval process. Amenity options brought forward by staff varied by Committee and were informed by a series of interviews conducted by Community Development Specialist Karin Roscoe and AED Economics through the process of the Infill Market Study development. Interviews were held with Gateway Area businesses and property owners, as well as local real estate and development professionals.

Six out of the City's nine committees were engaged in this work between July and September 2021, prior to release of the draft Gateway Area Plan in December 2021.

Each City Committee:

- Received a PowerPoint presentation by Community Development staff on the conceptual draft Gateway Area Plan (which was still in development at that time);
- Received a list of implementation measures tailored to its expertise and purview;
- Participated in an exercise to prioritize and customize its top choices to be incorporated into the draft Plan and/or the proposed Form-Based Code, as appropriate.

### City Committee Prioritized Implementation Measures

#### Economic Development Committee

- Alternative Transportation/Connectivity/Trails.
- Low-Income/Mixed-Income Housing.
- Mixed-Use Development.
- Beautification.
- Job Creation "(50+ Jobs, etc.)." --per screenshot/Minutes discussion
- Community Support Services.

#### Energy Committee

- "Enhancements" bus stop amenities, secure bike parking, park and ride lots, textured sidewalks, trail lighting, contribution to an all electric bus, etc.
- Encourage design features which reinforce linkage to nature and use of alternative transportation for properties being developed adjacent to trails and greenbelts (adopt a trail, windows facing greenbelt, creek daylighting, native plant landscaping, retail/dining access facing trail, edible and/or native landscaping, etc.).
- Development that provides needed services such as low-cost health/dental providers, substance abuse treatment, mental health counseling, childcare services, teen or youth centers,

emergency shelter, job training support, senior care/services, support services for the disabled, foster youth support, etc. "(SOCIAL AND SUPPORT SERVICES NEEDS Broaden this.)"--per screenshot

- Prioritizing all electric development.

### **Historic Landmarks Committee**

- Blight reduction and adaptive reuse of existing structures (emphasis on residential? Commercial?).
- Development of potentially significant historic structures mapped as in need of repair/rehabilitation (perhaps measured by code enforcement records and/or APD calls for service?).
- Rehabilitation of existing housing.
- Conserve the many examples of early residential building styles found in the city's older neighborhoods, from Bayside to Arcata Heights.
- Assure that new construction and additions to existing historically designated buildings maintain the character and livability of the historic neighborhoods.

### **Parks and Recreation Committee**

- Improved access to alternative transportation (including bike route enhancements, bus stop amenities, secure bike parking, park-and-ride lots, textured sidewalks, trail maintenance and lighting, etc.)
- Concentrate particularly on trail enhancement and associated public space.
- Contribution of an area-wide beautification fund which would be used for public art, landscaping streets and buffers, sidewalk or entry mosaics, information kiosks, street trees, furniture in public places, park amenities, parklets, etc.
- Easements provided to the city for links to parks, open space, or natural areas.
- Additional park in-lieu fees (community wide?).
- Contributing to community ("activity" per screenshot) programming in tandem with Arcata Main Street or with developments (e.g., Plaza Point) closer to downtown.

### **Transportation Safety Committee**

- Increase secure and weather-proof bike storage.
- Offer bike parking and/or bus passes as well as vehicle parking for residents.
- Trail connectivity.
- New bike lanes and trails.
- Encourage mixed-use construction with businesses and residences.

### **Wetlands & Creeks Committee**

- Habitat "stepping stones" (patches of plants/trees; chains of small wetlands across property).
- Develop a stormwater management bank for Jolly Giant Creek water quality improvements to be applied within the stormwater watershed area.
- Improving passage and habitat conditions for migrating anadromous salmonids (e.g. invasive vegetation management).

- Maximize geomorphic restoration (alteration and/or daylighting of disturbed streams so their form and behavior emulate those of undisturbed streams).
- Easement for drainage and other public uses of floodplains, where desirable to maintain stream courses in a natural state or daylight new sections of Jolly Giant Creek.
- Easement or payment towards “wetland banking” to restore habitat in southern portion of Area (directly north of Samoa Blvd).
- Low-impact development including site-design strategies to reduce runoff generation and bioretention and infiltration practices (e.g. rain gardens, bioswales and artificial wetlands, catchment systems pervious pavement)-part of Low Impact Development.

## Themes

Throughout Committee engagement, there were themes that spanned multiple decision-making bodies. These themes are generally related to the development of safe and attractive alternative modes of transportation; investment in blight reduction and neighborhood beautification; and providing access to housing and services for community members in need of assistance.

### Alternative transportation Connectivity/trails

- Alternative transportation Connectivity/trails (*Economic Development Committee*)
- Improved access for alternative transportation (including: bike route enhancements, bus-stop amenities, secure bike parking, park-and-ride lots, textured sidewalks, trail maintenance and lighting etc.) (*Parks and Recreation Committee*)
- Concentrate particularly on trail enhancement and associated public space (*Parks and Recreation Committee*)
- Enhancements, bus-stop amenities, secure bike parking, park-and-ride lots, textured sidewalks, trail lighting, contribution to an all-electric bus, etc.) (*Energy Committee*)
- Offer bike parking and/or bus passes as well as vehicle parking for residents. (*Transportation Safety Committee*)
- Trail connectivity. (*Transportation Safety Committee*)
- New bike lanes and trails. (*Transportation Safety Committee*)

### Beautification/Investment

- Contribution to an Area-wide Beautification Fund which could be used for: public art, landscaping streets and buffers, sidewalk or entry mosaics, information kiosks, street trees, furniture in public places, park amenities, park-lets, etc. (*Parks and Recreation Committee*)
- Blight Reduction and Adaptive reuse of existing structures (*Historic Landmarks Committee*)
- Beautification (*Economic Development Committee*)

### Housing and Community Services

- Development that provides needed services such as; low-cost health/dental providers, substance abuse treatment, mental health counseling, childcare services, teen or youth centers, emergency shelter, job training support, senior care/services, support services for the disabled, foster youth support, etc. (*Energy Committee*)

- Housing development that includes a percentage of unit's set-aside for low-income households (rental or purchase) (*Energy Committee*)
- Community support services (*Economic Development Committee*)

#### [City Committee Targeted Review](#)

After release of the draft Gateway Area Plan, City staff sourced input on the document from various City Committees. The intent of the second round of committee engagement was 1) to get the word out to a variety of local stakeholders with a vested interest in the future development of the City; 2) to provide additional opportunities for public engagement and comment on the draft Gateway Area Plan; 3) to receive formal recommendations from each committee on the Gateway Area Plan and General Plan Elements.

Seven out of the City's nine committees were engaged in this work between January and May 2022. Committees were presented with sections of the draft relevant to their committees.

Each City Committee:

- Received a PowerPoint presentation by Community Development staff on draft Gateway Area Plan chapters applicable to their purview.
- Participated in a discussion of general areas of support or and concern.
- Adopted specific recommendations related to the Gateway Area Plan or Elements of the General Plan

The Historic landmarks Committee recommended modifications to the Historical Preservation Element.

The Parks and Recreation Committee recommended modifications to the Parks and Recreation Element

The Transportation Safety Committee recommended modifications to the Circulation and Mobility Element

The Wetlands and Creeks Committee recommended modifications to the Resource Conservation Element and the Open Space Element.

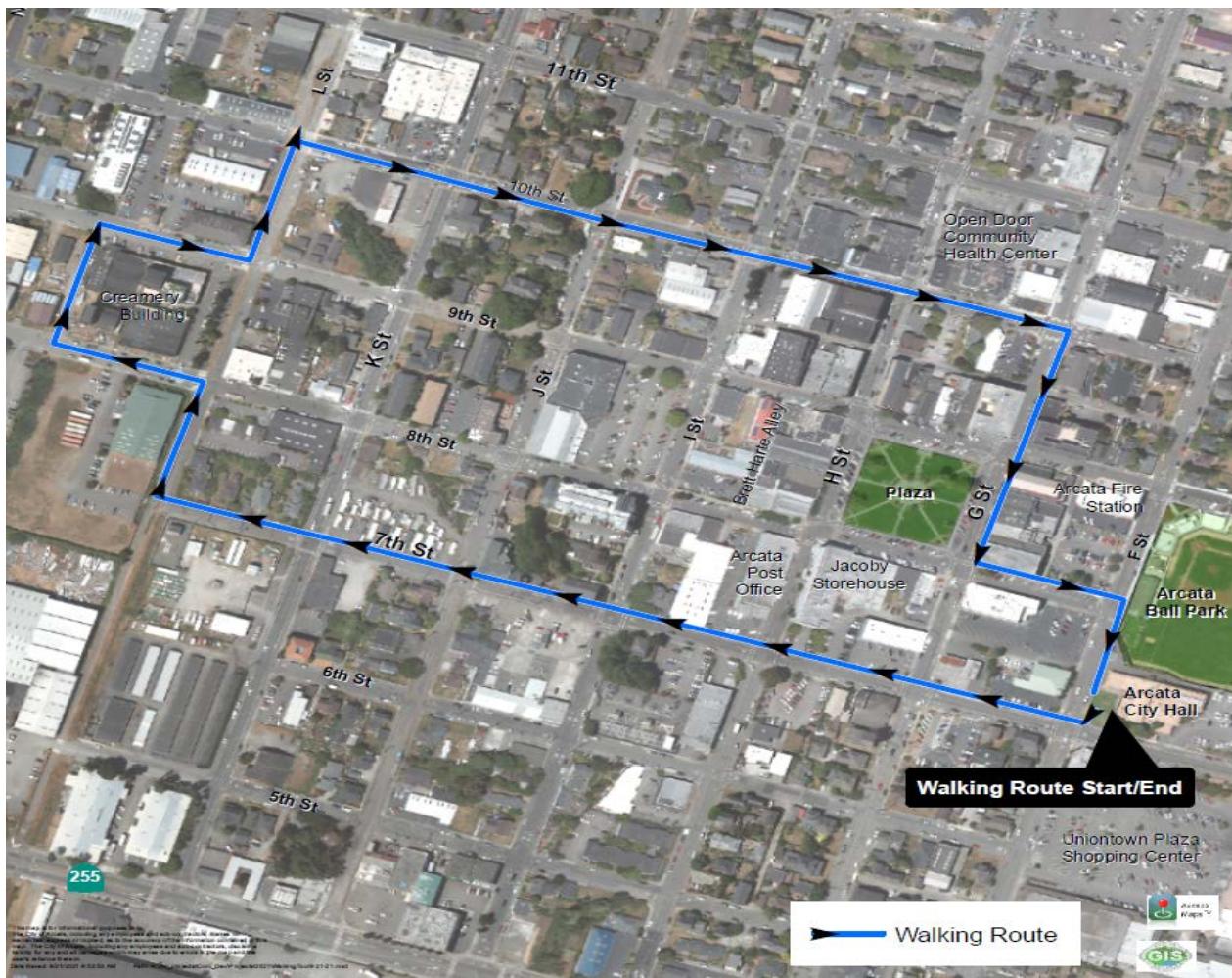
The Forest Management Committee recommended modifications to the Resource Conservation Element

Economic Development Committee, Parks and Recreation Committee, Historic Landmarks Committee, Transportation Safety Committee, Forest Management Committee, and the Wetlands and Creeks Committee all made recommendations to the Gateway Area Plan policies.

## Walking Tours (June 2021-February 2022)

City staff held a variety of walking tours of the Gateway Area over the course of roughly nine months, both before and after the release of the draft Gateway Area Plan. Meetings have been held with K-12 and Cal Poly Humboldt students; local businesses; the Planning Commission and the City Council; and the general public. Community Development staff, including Director David Loya as well as Senior Planners Delo Freitas and Joe Mateer, cumulatively held fifteen tours over this time period. Roughly 20 community members attended each tour, and some tours had as many as fifty attendees. Although some community members attended multiple tours, it is estimated that the walking tours engaged between 250 and 300 individual community members.

The figure below showcases a typical walking route, though various tours focused on other areas of the Gateway as well.



### Dates/structure

- 6/4/21 Gateway Area Walking Tour with Arcata High School
- 6/19/21 Public Walking Tours (three tours)
- 9/14/21 Planning Commission Walking Tour

- 9/21/21 City Council Special Study Session Walking Tour
- 10/15/21 Public Walking Tour
- 10/16/21 Public Walking Tour
- 11/21/21 Public Walking Tour
- 12/07/21 Redwood Coast Montessori Walking Tour
- 12/11/21 Public Walking Tours (two tours)
- 01/06/22 Local Banker Walking Tour
- 01/29/22 North Gateway Area Walking Tour
- 02/15/22 “Introduction to Environmental Planning Methods” Walking Tour



## Themes

- General consensus is that the Gateway Area could benefit from more street-level activity, art, lighting, community gathering spaces, and a mix of urban spaces and greenery. The current mix of uses, activity, and “feel” of the area are assets that should be built upon, not replaced.
- Following the example of the Creamery District, height and massing concerns were tied to the Creamery District losing its distinctiveness, which could be mitigated through attractive and thoughtful design, articulation techniques such as big windows, landscaping, and art.
- More urban uses should be prioritized over parking in the core downtown, but parking and outdoor space should be balanced in the Gateway Area. Parking was frequently noted as a concern, with some community members concerned about the impact of traffic in the Area and others about the appearance of parking lots.

- Many participants supported protecting the history of the area and buildings are evocative of that history but agreed with staff's approach to identify and protect only the most excellent examples of historic architecture.

Although walking tours were held with a variety of groups by multiple staff members, similar themes were presented throughout each. Several tours included instant polling at the end of the tour, which asked questions related to general impressions of the district, desired future amenities, and areas of concern regarding future development and growth. General identified impressions of the Gateway Area viewed during the walk included:

- Needs maintenance/investment
- Lacks cohesion
- Untapped Potential
- Good “bones” (trail, Creamery, natural areas/creek)

General identified amenity desires:

- Lighting
- Landscaping/trees/greenery
- Repainting + art/murals
- More/bigger sidewalks
- Human-scale activity
- More people on street/events/diversity of uses and businesses
- Connectivity to Plaza with bike/pedestrian priority



## Polling Results

### Main Impressions fo the District so far (key words)

duration: 00:01:04

#### Participant Input

- not cohesive
- Old
- some parts are run down
- a lil rundown, but has a ton of potential
- run down
- it's pretty random
- Not maintained
- Dirty but very artsy
- Needs to be repainted, like local art
- Has potential, buildings needs to be cleaned up
- buildings don't blend together
- needs refurbishment, some nice buildings, made more local

#### What are your main impressions of the District so far?

duration: 00:02:33

#### Participant Input

- Great opportunity for infill development?
- Creamery district improvements are great. Rest of district would benefit from higher density housing
- Posirive
- Untapped potential
- Cool , an informative walk
- Underutilized
- Good tour, guide, participants. Nice area potential.
- Potential for "painting" from a reasonably flexible canvas
- Great walking and bicycling
- Love the greenbelt and creek, would be great with a trail
- Great place to live
- Lots of potential. Needs balance of green oriented development (outdoor orientation with env sustainable visioning) & historic preservatio
- Green green green

## Main Impressions of this site (key words) (Creamery Building)

duration: 00:01:16

### Participant Input

- Cool
- nice on da eyes
- artsy, renovated, narrow road, large sidewalk
- Good vibes
- Cute, could be renovated
- aesthetic
- Historic
- The lights are pretty
- reminds me of europe
- charming, needs more around it, good restaurant
- Artsy
- cool buildings complemented by pretty greeny, good vibes like the lights
- Food

## What could make the District feel safer?

duration: 00:00:53

### Participant Input

- Lighting
- more lights
- lights and less homeless
- Lights, more visibility
- street lamps
- more lights, more resources for homeless people so they're not on the trails
- more people
- lighting maybe with the hsu safety button tower
- More lights
- Lights, more population, help buttons, more patrol of the area
- More streetlights
- Security cams
- more lighting on the streets, people

## What could help make the District feel "cohesive"-like a neighborhood?

duration: 00:01:29

### Participant Input

- new paint, more landscaping
- more community events
- More homes in the city area
- keep building in the historic style, add parks
- Similar aesthetic looking, well kept, landscaped
- street lamps
- overlapping landscaping and repaint
- more local art
- More community projects, flowers, new painting
- Sidewalks and light
- Bigger sidewalks
- make some buildings better, new paint, landscaping that is cohesive and ties together the buildings
- flower baskets on street lamps

## What would make the Gateway area feel more cohesive?

duration: 00:01:26

### Participant Input

- Great sidewalks
- Walkways between areas
- Good paths, benches, lighting
- Yeah, walkability.
- Connected trails, trees.
- Carry lines /style of creamery building
- Trees
- Walkable options bike parking safe
- Murals
- Lighting
- Is the city planning for the planting of trees?
- More greenery in general.
- Pedestrian bicycles moped to zip Thru town with
- Good lighting.

## What would make the Gateway area feel more cohesive?

duration: 00:01:28

### Participant Input

- A food market, more housing, public spaces
- Walking bicycling corridor/promenade
- Pronounced entry way
- Emphasis on public spaces
- An actual gateway , room for walking and bicycles
- Green belts/paths/creek binding areas, place based events/festivals
- Gussy up existing structures
- Safe streets, crossings, trails and paths, lighting
- Linking Plaza the Gateway
- More pedestrian priority

## If you lived here, what would you want to experience here?

duration: 00:01:38

### Participant Input

- Car free lifestyle
- Public events, plaza-like gathering space, bike paths and parking
- The Playhouse in the Creamery building
- Great cafe, natural light, greenery, community gardens, bike paths/parking
- Walkability, nature, bikeability,
- Mixed uses
- Art center with safe housing enviro, parking structure for residents and connection to plaza
- Ways to walk safely to the Plaza
- Park, Green way, bike trails, safe housing
- Greenery
- The ability to have needs met near my home so I wouldn't have to drive
- Diversity of business and housing and community



## What other ideas/priorities do you have regarding Gateway Area redevelopment?

duration: 05:44:16

### Participant Input

- Art
- Murals
- More robust public engagement opportunities
- Meet the RHNA goals for Arcata. Get those units!
- 5 story tops, keep it green
- Ways to honor and give back to the Wiyot tribe.
- Think 5-6 stories seem like a good top height
- As a musician, I'd like this area to be encouraging of indoor and outdoor performances.
- More mixed use, 3 stories
- Home ownership options
- Limit building heights
- Tall unique buildings incorporating commercial on the street level. 8 stories
- Performance venues!
- Mixed use
- Thank you!

If you lived here, what would you want to experience here?

duration: 00:01:21

### Participant Input

- Public transportation, no cars
- Bus stop, nightlife, art, murals, green space
- Good public transportation
- Art
- Outdoor places to play. Garden spots. Sustainably built homes.
- More Housing and nightlife/restaurants
- Art and culture
- Night life
- Safe bike and ped option s
- Walking and Biking priority
- Art
- Creamery Bldg events

## Gateway Area Plan Community Review



### Dates/structure

The City held three opportunities for general public comment on the draft Gateway Area Plan in an open format, in addition to several committee hearings and roughly ten “We’ll Come to You” sessions. These sessions have been open to the public and have not been limited in speaking time to three minutes, as is typical for City Committee, Commission, and Council meetings. Between the Open House days 1 and 2, and the zoom Town Hall, roughly 200 people participated (40 people at the zoom town hall and 170 at the Open House, with some overlap assumed).

- Zoom meeting (December 9, 2021)
- Open House (January 21st and 22nd, 2022)

## Zoom Town Hall

The City kicked off review of the draft Gateway Area Plan on December 9, 2021. The meeting was held via zoom, and roughly forty community participants were in attendance. The session was held in a similar format to the City's second community visioning session, with a presentation by staff held at the beginning of the meeting, and then two rounds of breakout group discussion afterwards, organized by Plan topic area. There were four topic groups in total, facilitated by City staff and relevant members of the consultant team. Topics included:

- 1) Housing, growth, and development
- 2) Community amenities and design standards
- 3) Mobility, infrastructure, and streetscape
- 4) Conservation/Open Space, Arts, and Historic Preservation

Public comments by topic are summarized below. The meeting ended with an open Q & A session. Multiple commenters noted an interest in holding a more open-form meeting not refined by topics, which led to staff's decision to hold an in-person Open House in early 2022. The meeting recording can be viewed on the City's YouTube channel.

### Group 1: Housing, Growth, and Development (staffed by David Loya, City of Arcata, and Vanessa Blodgett, Planwest Partners)

#### Session 1

- Housing is a primary importance to the community and needed to bring in employees (especially for Open Door)
- Eminent domain concerns-City's response is City has never used it, City does not plan to
- Racial equity and social justice, who is the City already working with, and what does that mean to the City? City's response is City is working with a racial equity working group. The City's goals are to create policy that are anti-racist.
- Underbuilding parking? What does that mean? What is privately owned public open space?
- Community benefits and amenities – some are things that should be required for all new development (i.e. bike parking, solar panels, etc.) Are those tables in the plan?
- How did you come up with 3,500 units? City response-calculation of total build out if every parcel was developed to full capacity.
- Some think that the plan build out could be realistic (how do we know it's not going to happen given the current conditions related to the climate, housing market, Covid, HSU polytechnic, etc.)
- Arcata infrastructure is failing, how will the plan accommodate this? Where is the money going to come from to make necessary infrastructure improvements? How will we know what is needed? Especially WWTF. Timing of when that will be evaluated? Concern related to infill large building; Fire Dept. is small – what's the plan for emergency access in such a dense area. City no longer has a ladder truck
  - City response- Marsh WWTF will need to be improved to address SLR and population growth will be addressed in EIR and in other City plans that are currently being developed (WWTF planning)

- Will City help property owners find the grants and money needed to develop to what is in this plan?
- Some can't imagine what 7 or 8 stories would look like. Don't think that is necessarily the direction we should be going. Concern over 8 stories. Like the idea of higher density housing in Arcata.
- How can individuals develop their property? What fees would they have to pay? M Street high voltage lines?
- Look at maps to evaluate specific site constraints?
- 4-subareas – put total acres for each sub area on the map
- Can non-conforming uses stay, or will they be required to move?

Group 2: Community Amenities and Design Standards (staffed by Rob Holmlund, Planwest Partners, and Gillen Martin, City of Arcata)

- A question was asked by an M Street resident in Gateway Hub as to why their neighborhood was not considered Gateway Neighborhood (single family homes have been there since the 40s/50s, there are 6 households in the area—why isn't it classified as a neighborhood?)
- How can current residents take advantage of community amenities program as a smaller property owner to ensure continued high quality of life in area?
- A question was asked regarding whether or not the community amenities would be vetted by City Committees or just "rubberstamped"; response was amenities would have been pre-approved—if this plan continues to move forward, committees will be setting precise standards for amenities. How many points amenities should count for within the point system is still part of the conversation/something the City is hoping to get input on in the coming months
- It was voiced that a presentation on community amenities specifically would be helpful; the roadshow went to 6 committees to rank amenities, would be nice to have more of the information fleshed out for the public
- Will there be an order/sequence to the development/what will be constructed?
- Will this impact wetlands?
- A question was asked as to whether this will come with any additional property taxes/a unique property tax district—response is this Plan is not proposing anything along those lines
- If we have a lot of rentals in the district, who is going to manage those rentals?

Group 3-Mobility, Infrastructure, and Streetscape (hosted by Netra Khatri, City of Arcata, and Rosanna Souther and Todd Tregenza, GHD Inc.)

Group facilitators explained that the goal of road reconfiguration is not to increase traffic, but to promote a car-free lifestyle

- Benefits of couplet:
  - Existing congestion around 11<sup>th</sup>/K Street
  - Simplify intersection, less spillback
  - Can Add more ped/bike amenities
- City did consider Q Street – environmental constraints (wetlands/Coastal Zone)

- “L Street return” is concern to some attendees, 11<sup>th</sup> Street – Consider turn pocket from 11<sup>th</sup> to L Street
- K/L couplets raise concerns for nearby residents, questions regarding why Q Street was not considered for the one-way instead of L Street. Concerns about Trees removed on L Street at Creamery
- Stoplights along K and L brought forward as ways to safely get pedestrians across busy one-way streets
- Some attendees pleased with overall bike/ped priority, recommended not referring to these as “alternate modes”
- Would like to see car-sharing, designated spaces (ZipCar)
- 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> – need to make sure school buses can stop
- Resident near Gateway project; concerned about parking for residents. College students – can we have them require no car
- A question was asked as to parking spaces
  - There will be parallel spaces on some streets and angled in on others—angled in allows for a net zero loss in many areas
  - The plan does not prohibit off-street parking on private properties; new developments, it is on the developers to plan for parking
- Concerned about people traveling the wrong way on one-way streets
- Consider right-of-way at railroad tracks at Alliance and other locations; start planning for future acquisition/Rail banking needs

Group 4: Conservation/Open Space, Arts, and Historic Preservation (Hosted by Emily Sinkhorn, City of Arcata, and Delo Freitas, City of Arcata)

- Use Wiyot naming for parks, open spaces in Gateway Area in partnership with local tribes
- Ensure perspective and character of historic resources is retained, especially with the context of historic structures. Look to Emeryville for inspiration.
- Ensure safety for pedestrians/recreational users accessing parks on foot-Allow kids, families to live in those areas. Allows access to the marsh. If we have so much development-having safe crossings for children to get to the marsh.
- Encourage native plants...vine maples, native trees.
- Ensure there is a maintenance plan for greenspaces and trees. Residents love having trees, but there are concerns around maintenance leaves covering stormwater drains, street sweeping
- Concern was raised that the L Street turnaround will affect open space/recreation; it was answered that the trail/recreation opportunity will remain unchanged, but the street will run alongside—the individual does not have desire to run/bike alongside cars
- Plan for dogs/companion animals, provide open spaces for companion animals
- Concern regarding concept of privately owned/publicly accessible parks, and how private ownerships of public land may affect free speech
- Retain the character of the Creamery District. Making a one-way street may change the character. Don’t compromise the space.
- Example of Emeryville-allowed very tall buildings but they’ve now eliminated that. Now 3-4 stories with parking included.

- Appreciation of requirement that in some places there is art required.
- Encourage street furniture, places to sit, places to eat. Standards support that, but sidewalk width may not be wide enough for vibrant zone and clear path of travel, so ensure sidewalks are wide enough

General Comments received not related to topic areas/comments from Q and A portion of meeting:

- Timing of Council and Planning Commission review clarification
- Appreciate what the City is doing to address housing needs
- Make information as available as possible (QR Codes may not be that helpful to everyone), consider the needs of people who may not have ways to participate
- Reach out to Wiyot tribe, how are they involved
- Timeframe for development of the units – how will that progress?
- Acknowledge that this plan is the most pedestrian friendly and environmentally friendly plan in the County
- Opportunity for car share should be part of the plan
- Infrastructure needs to be addressed (fire, water, sewer, etc.)
- Ensure the Mobility diagram is accurate and covers only the area within the public right-of-way, not private property.
- Concerns about shading to other's gardens. Then people can't grow food.
- Concerns over two story building minimum.
- Concerns over reduction in parking ratios and how lack of parking may affect users who can't walk or bike (families with children, seniors)

## Community Open House

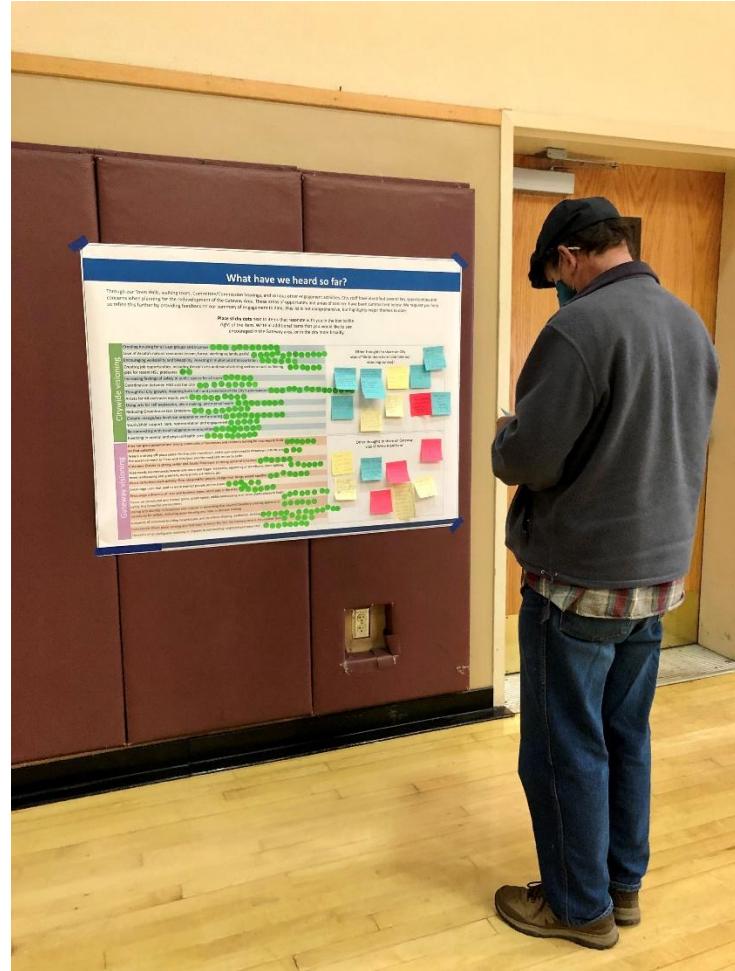
The City held a two-day Community Open House at the Arcata Community Center on January 21st and 22nd. Approximately 170 people attended the two-day event. The Open House was an opportunity for community members to provide feedback on the draft Gateway Area Plan. Staff from the Community Development Department were available on both days to answer questions and discuss the plan.

A total of 16 stations were available for participants to interact with and provide feedback on. Participants used sticky notes and colored dots for posters at each station.

The topics included:

- Built environment and architecture
- Arts, culture, and sense of place
- Equitable housing
- Mobility/alternative transportation
- Draft Amenities
- General Plan updates
- CEQA next steps and potential impacts

A summary of Open House data is included below and represents major themes from multiple commenters. Many comments received were not specific to the underlying poster content, so staff determined this approach to be the clearest and most representative way to showcase the data. High-resolution images for the original posters and feedback are included as an attachment to this report.



## Open House Themes

### Feedback on Community Vision Priorities (Citywide)

Topic	Number of Votes
Love of Arcata's natural resources (ocean, forest, working ag lands, parks)	47
Thoughtful growth-both infill and greenspace protection	39
Encouraging walkability/bikeability investing in multimodal transportation	32
Creating housing for all user groups and incomes	28
"Arcata for All" and racial equity work	25
Re-connecting with local Indigenous communities	24
Climate change/sea level rise preparation and armoring	22
Increasing feelings of safety in public spaces for all users	22
Investing in mental and physical health care	19
Reducing greenhouse gas emissions	19
Investing in mental and physical health care	19
Creating job opportunities, including arts/manufacturing/jobs for recent grads	17
Coordination between HSU and the City	16
Using the arts for self-expression, place making, and mental health	15
Youth/child support, care, representation, engagement	10

### Feedback on Gateway Area Community Priorities (Area-Specific)

Topic	Number of Votes
Area has good potential and a strong community of businesses and residents looking for new ways to build on that potential	7
Area is a strong off-Plaza center for the core downtown, and is well-positioned to downtown, nature, and the ocean-connect to Plaza with bike/ped priority-need safe routes to parks	6
Creamery District as strong center and Arcata Playhouse as strong center of Creamery	13
Area needs maintenance/investment-more and bigger sidewalks, repainting of storefronts, more lighting, more landscaping and greenery, more public art-murals, etc.	14

Focus on human-scale activity- flow designed for people, design that brings people together	11
Encourage uses that lead to more events/people on the street	11
Encourage a diversity of uses and business types, more jobs in the Area	10
Focus on communal and shared space, green space, edible landscaping and native plants- places to linger safely in a beautiful environment	18
strong arts identity in Creamery and interest in expanding that beyond Creamery-creating spaces and structures for artists, including artist housing and roles in decision making	13
Concerns of proposed building height/scale, and its effects-shading, aesthetics, parking	32
Incorporate Wiyot place naming and find ways to honor the fact the Gateway Area is on unceded land	12
Concerns of reconfigured roadway in impacts to surrounding neighborhood-more cars	20

### Concerns w/ Elements of Plan

- Concerns of 5+ story buildings –aesthetics of tall buildings (5+ stories), loss of “charm”, being like LA, “8 story buildings become ghettos over time”-concerns that City’s plans will result in ugly, undesirable development
- Many participants advocated for 4 stores as max (very common)
- Concerns over relocation of businesses/artists and current residents
- Concerns over growing “too much too fast”
- Concerns over infrastructure, particularly AWTF capacity (very common)
- Concerns over reconfigured roadway/circulation, parking and continued use of cars as being necessary
- Concerns over environmental impacts of GAP:
  - Infrastructure/services capacity
  - Gateway Area soil suitability/contamination
  - SLR/hazard vulnerability
  - Wetlands/wildlife

Concerns voiced regarding development:

Topic	Number of Votes
Building heights	17
Unit count/density	7

Parking	6
Big developers making profit	3
Impact to existing jobs	3
Shading	2
Noise	1
SLR/flood hazard	1
Maintenance of public space	1
Loss of discretionary process	1

### Appreciated Elements of Plan

- Need for more housing-both own/rent and different affordability levels.
- Need for “thoughtful City growth”, meaning infill and protection of greenspaces
- Encouraging walkability/bikeability
- Incorporation of arts identity in Creamery, beautification, communal and shared space, edible and native landscaping
- Mixed use, adding commercial and residential together

### Things to generally encourage/keep up the good work on citywide

- Arcata’s unique aesthetic character/architecture
- Appreciation for Arcata’s walkability/bikeability
- Appreciation for mixed types of housing-small/large, affordable/market rate
- Appreciation for Arcata’s existing natural resources and open spaces

### Recommendations

- Use art/beautification to encourage livability
- More open space/light/greenspace
- More/better transit citywide, car share, bike share, free bus routes
- Consider enforcing theme of creating housing for all abilities, ADA, seniors

### Beautification and Art

*How could this plan help strengthen the artistic identity of the creamery district, or spread that energy to new parts of the gateway area?*

Primarily, build upon past planning efforts to create the Creamery Arts & Culture District and honor the well-established entrepreneurial spirit and powerful identity that has been nurtured and organically cultured for years, and promote, prioritize, integrate, and incentivize housing integrated with or nearby workspaces for artists.

- Hire local artists to create art and sculptures... Also landscaping native
- Fund the Playhouse and creamery Shoshana - Jackie bring community together through art, all while paying artists a living wage also! Win-win!
- Bring back the creamery district name and boundaries.

- Percentage for the arts into plan.
- Attractive lighted path to creamery district from the Plaza
- Roving group of folks/volunteers to pick up trash, clean graffiti, connect with street people to get them services
- Hygiene and cleanliness - the city ignores this
- Working with Arcata Playhouse, Playhouse Arts as local arts agency along with dance community at Redwood rocks collective and kinetic Lab and all established arts and culture lovers of creamery district to help with funding of programs, development of spaces with access and support of art and culture as prominent, showcased, primary and celebrated to keep arcade is artistic identity pulsing vibrantly across the gateway and beyond +

## **Architecture/multifamily housing**

### Number of Stories

- A limit of 3 – 4 stories
- Limit height of building based on shadow criteria for small communities.
- Duplexes, triplexes, and 4-plexes with yards and common open space

### Style

- Unique styles – same look and feel as existing.
- Higher-rise buildings- not attractive.
- Design Review over 8,000 SF.

### Parking

- Parking availability desired.

### Open Spaces / Light

- Green space, open space, unobstructed light preferred.
- Shared garden.
- Small gardens, parks, benches desired.

### Safety

- Decreased safety with less visibility and alleyways.

### Other Comments

- Underground utilities will make taller buildings less attractive.
- Encourage home ownership.

## **Architecture/multifamily housing**

### Public Art

- Public art, including child-friendly sculptures.

- We currently have some good public art.

#### Spaces / Style / Look

- Strong desire for natural areas like the forest, Shay Park, and the Marsh; areas for vegetable gardens.
- Lawns are not as desirable as natural areas, native plants, and biodiversity.
- Rural feel desirable.
- Downtown spaces without cars.
- Public Loos.
- More public seating and trash receptacles.
- Limit one-way and unnecessary roads for cars; add pedestrian and bike paths; add linear parks.

#### Other Priorities

- Take care of what the city currently has before building something new, particularly keeping it clean.
- Discuss what Arcata's housing values are and whether jobs and economic growth fit with those values.
- It would be good to have a way to report on changes that are made.

#### Other Comments

- Focus on businesses with high-paying jobs.
- Concern about houseless persons and flower beds that are rocked in.
- Make buildings as tall as they need to be to meet housing unit targets.
- More community space and less capitalism? Housing

Most support for providing for mixed-income neighborhoods with housing options available for all income groups by including deed-restricted affordable units in addition to other low and market rate units. Mandating affordability was strongly supported. In terms of types of housing, the majority of feedback revolved around building height, with an emphasis on 3-4 stories.

Outreach to BIPOC and Indigenous communities was recommended as well to promote racial equity in access to housing in the Gateway Area and throughout Arcata. Current positive features of housing in Arcata were notably not related to the quality or quantity of housing (top votes tied between "open space/trees and gardens" and "walkable and bike-able neighborhoods"). The largest challenge was identified as unaffordability of both rentals and homeownership opportunities. The top recommendation for what to change about housing in Arcata was creating more affordable rentals.

#### Amenities

What else may we be missing?

- Parking, underground, parking garages, offsite parking (+3)
- Art, murals, outdoor event venues, (+4)
- Well maintained sidewalks and bus stops
- Creek daylighting (+5)
- Parks, social areas, pocket parks, access to open space, dog park (+7)

- Give incentive to renters who don't have cars
- Set higher buildings back from sidewalk
- Encourage native plants (+2)

Amenity Categories
Green Building and Sustainability (+12)
Active and Alternative Transportation (+8)
Retail and Job Creation (+2)
Housing Creation (+6)
Arts and Culture (+6)
Open Space (16)
Enhanced Architectural Features and Exterior Design (+5)

Some commenters noted many proposed amenities listed on the posters may be more appropriate as mandated development standards.

## Draft Gateway Area Plan Targeted Review

In the months following the release of the draft Gateway Area Plan, City staff partnered with Heather Equinoss, the City's consultant facilitator, to present the draft Plan to various community groups. These sessions were intended to share information and answer questions, encourage people to get involved, and source public feedback to share with elected officials. From January to April 2022, City staff and Equinoss Consulting collaborated on a series of ten "We'll Come to You" sessions--reaching a variety of groups and stakeholders within the city. These sessions were in addition to more informal presentations, such as news interviews, etc.

The "We'll Come to You" sessions were also intended to extend the reach of the City's engagement to new community members--beyond those engaged in the Open House sessions and Gateway Area Town Hall. Each meeting included a brief presentation of the history, intent, and contents of the draft Gateway Area Plan. Following a presentation by staff, Heather Equinoss guided participants through a series of polling and discussion questions on the draft Plan as well as future City growth and development. Questions generally spoke to things people love about Arcata and would like to see strengthened over the coming years. Conversation in these sessions also explored community perspectives regarding population growth, traffic circulation, and building height.

### "We'll Come to You" Sessions

- HSU Community Psychology Course
- ESM 360 Walking Tour
- HSU Research Methods course
- "Artists in Action"
- HSU Conflict Resolution Class
- Greenway Partners and other residents, businesses
- Local Architect's Meeting
- Local Government Commission
- HSU Associated Students Board
- True North

### Additional Open Houses/Tabling

4. Spanish Language Open House
5. HSU Student Forum 1 in partnership with Cal Poly Humboldt Housing liaison
6. HSU Student Forum 2 in partnership with Environmental Studies intern
7. Farmer's Market Tabling (January 22, February 12, February 26, March 12, March 26)



## Themes

The following summary of themes reflects feedback heard across multiple groups polled by the City through the “We’ll Come to You” sessions and various other engagements. Quotes from participants are included where appropriate.

### **Maintain the small town, friendly feeling of Arcata and the principles that have led to community**

- “The people!”
- “Small town, small community”-“Sense of community, free events, THE LOVE” – “Connection among community members”
- “I love that the community is generally eco-conscious and open minded.”
- “I also just love Saturdays in the plaza!!”
- “My friends go to the farmers market and grab lattes every weekend”
- “Quiet is valued here”
- Historic built environment - “we’re not anywhere America. We’re unique, historic preservation”
- Walkability and Bikeability
- Wetlands, Marsh, ag lands, community forest, “The trees 😊”
- “The vibrant art and sustainability community along with the family-centered community (events, housing, etc)”
- Robust small and local businesses-“Everything I need I can buy locally”-“Small businesses being a top priority. No big business culture in Arcata.”

### **Encourage Whimsical, artistic aesthetics and discourage “cookie cutter” development**

- Strong desire to keep the area alive and rich with arts, outdoor gathering spaces
- Keep the area “funky” and grandmother in the things that make the Creamery District feel like you are entering a different space, e.g. meandering pedestrian pathways, whimsical design
- Concern that a form-based code would mean the district takes a ‘cookie cutter’ design approach and will lose its whimsy, folks don’t want all the buildings to all look the same
- Concern that growth could ruin the small town feel-“I don’t want construction and progress to act as an eye sore.”
- Wants a community that is beyond “livable,” want a place that is “thrivable”
- “Seeing only rows of housing would be upsetting, I value the nature especially coming from SoCal where we don’t have nature. I don’t believe in disrupting animals that lived here before we did.”

### **Concerns over Gentrification that pushes out artists, renters and businesses**

- Artistic placemaking is what makes the district unique, and desirable.
- With increased development and potential for landowners to sell when the market peaks, it could become unaffordable for the people who make the space a place that’s desirable to live and work. This is a pattern that many artistic communities across the country has experienced and needs to be avoided
- Desire for more information regarding what industrial businesses currently operating in the business would be encouraged or discouraged moving forward

### **General Support of prioritizing multi-modal safe transit through and around what will become a higher-density area**

- “It would be nice to have protected lanes for bikes and scooters on the roadways that are separate from the sidewalks”

- Bike and pedestrian safety and limited public transportation options-“more ramps for bikers, more security for bike storage”-“expand the biking lanes”
- “Expand public transportation”
- “We barely have a parking inconvenience. But we do have a housing crisis. Even if we build housing that creates a parking inconvenience, we should. These things are not equal”
- “The bus! It was ok prior to COVID and now its bad so that needs to function better”

**General support of Increased density inside the City to preserve resource lands in the county and meet our carbon reduction goals and support for mixed use**

- The current draft plan means we’re not annexing into the ag lands or encouraging sprawl between Arcata, Eureka, McKinleyville
- Increasing housing stock is critical if we don’t want to have people commuting to work/school in Arcata from afar
- Living closer together is essential to maintaining habitat and conservation
- The point of having incorporated cities was for development. The point of county land was to maintain resources.
- If Arcata doesn’t plan for growth, it will happen through other mechanisms, e.g. sprawl between Arcata and Eureka on resource lands; via Cal Poly Humboldt, etc.
- The planning related to preservation of the land is on a different path/timeframe from the housing development planning. It’s created a disconnect...when in fact they are deeply connected.
- Having a mix of businesses is good, e.g. having a muffler shop and Brio on the plaza

**General Support of Well-designed multi story (2-4 story) housing that creates community, and opens up existing housing**

- Community is built through relationships; cities (large and small) around the world live [in multistory housing]. With good design, people can and will build relationships and community in taller buildings
- If other kinds of housing available, single people could move out of their single-family homes and into high-rise housing. Right now, we have no other place to go. This is about opening up existing housing too!
- There’s a younger generation that need to find places to live. And right now, it takes connections to people. It’s hard for newcomers to be welcomed
- Need to figure out how to develop condos. They are an important part of the housing ecosystem and a good opportunity for younger people to build equity. Need to work through the liability issues

**Building height**

- Most people in support of 4-5 story buildings, others were in support of 6 stories and below; support generally dropped off after 5 or 6 stories with smaller portion of participants supporting 7 or 8 stories-“Want housing that is 5 stories high with rooftop community gardens”-“More solar panels, ease on local housing laws to allow multistory housing”
- Like the idea that highest destiny would unlock amenities, leading to a density bonus. The City could also have a portion of that money go to a fund for affordable housing
- For very tall buildings, there should be a setback, spacing between structures, no more than a few in the Gateway Area and all should be balanced with open space
- Need design standards that prioritize solar access and light along with other values. And this

- should be designed so as not to become a tool to oppose development
- For the south sides of streets, push the buildings up and preserve the sunny space in the backs for parks and playgrounds. For setbacks, consider the sunlight for north vs. south sides of the street and differentiate requirements accordingly

#### **Design Review for taller buildings/larger projects**

- Having sketches that illustrate Form Based Code would be helpful
- The City should require architects to design buildings over a certain height/project size to ensure they align with building code
- The bigger the building, the greater scrutiny it should get, e.g. anything over 5 stories should trigger a Design Review
- There could be special cases for towers, requiring open space and a Design Review

#### **Supported amenities to unlock higher densities**

- Deed restricted affordable housing, housing for houseless folks, or seniors
- Exceptional design that adds to Arcata's viewshed, similar to sculpture
- Payment into funds for beautification/art
- Payment into funds for open space/recreational maintenance and expansion

#### **Public health and safety, and healthcare access concerns from students**

- "I wish I felt safer walking around Arcata off campus"
- "Want a safe off-campus environment"
- "Fewer cars getting broken into or homeless people fighting in Arcata square"
- "We need to care for our homeless population more effectively"
- "Make resources more readily available for homeless and clean up the trash that litters the streets"
- Health care accessibility. Difficult to find off campus resources--"Better access to public health resources...it's really hard to get any kind of local appointments, especially in your own insurance plans, including medi-Cal"



## Racial Equity Policy Review

The City of Arcata believes that planning through a lens of equity--meaning with both an understanding of present inequity and a vision for future equity--is necessary to ensure that policy serves all members of the community equally irrespective of race, gender, religion, language, income, sexual orientation, or any other aspect of identity. As policy is used to prioritize projects and investment of City staff time and resources, it shapes individual and collective experiences of the Arcata community. Furthermore, because the process of creating policy begins with public engagement, limited engagement of a non-diverse set of local stakeholders has the potential to result in policies and projects that do not reflect the full community's needs, desires, and vision of itself. Policies that do not represent the full Arcata community will not be able to set the correct direction for future development of Arcata.

Historically, policy established by cities nationwide has been wielded to disadvantage and exclude groups of people. Moving from this understanding, the City has been investing time and energy into improving racial outcomes for Arcata residents, particularly through the work of the equity arcata collective.

equity arcata is a partnership between the City of Arcata, Cal Poly Humboldt, local businesses, and members of the community working to make Arcata a more inclusive and welcoming environment for people of color. equity arcata's story begins in 2016 when the tri-sector equity alliance was founded by leaders representing the City and Cal Poly Humboldt. This informal group met regularly over the course of 2017 with members of the Arcata business community to address racism and topics including diversity, inclusion, policing concerns, and challenges expressed by undocumented members of the community. After Cal Poly Humboldt students of color shared their experiences and asked City officials and other leaders to work on solutions, the tri-sector equity alliance sponsored a workshop where 65 participants from different sectors of the community took part in a day-long planning session. Attendees brought their experiences, opinions, and questions to the table. In breakout sessions, groups confronted a wide range of challenges--such as housing discrimination and cultural diversity in the tk-12 school curriculum. Based on the work accomplished during this session, equity arcata was officially established in 2017. Notes from the working session were compiled into "Equity Arcata: A Draft Solution Set," which became a foundational document racial equity work in Arcata and has guided City staff's thinking in creating a strategy for policy review through an equity lens.

The City has determined a need for including racial equity analysis as a key part of the Infill Program's work. Through the Draft Solution Set, equity arcata's work over the past five years, feedback from City visioning meetings held in February 2021 and December 2022, and vision survey comments, the Arcata community has provided staff with a general direction for the equity analysis. Staff is working with community partners to bring together a review group of racial equity stakeholders, drawing especially from the expertise of equity arcata's "Ongoing Learning" group, to undertake the analysis.

The Draft Solution Set specifically identified many areas of focus that overlap with themes from public engagement throughout the City's General Plan update, including housing, policing, and City connections to both Cal Poly Humboldt and local Indigenous Communities. It will serve as a guiding foundation for the City's racial equity review group, which will analyze which aspects of the Solution Set remain accurate and which may need to be updated/modified. More general questions that will be

asked of the group include 1) “How may the policy, initiative, program, or budget ensure safety and improve health outcomes for vulnerable populations, including people with disabilities?” and 2) “How may the policy, initiative, or budget decrease inequality in race, income, or wealth?”

## Racial Equity Themes/Data from Community Vision Town Halls

**Racial Equity and Arcata for all** – The City should provide support & services to the community’s most vulnerable; by doing so, Arcata will witness a “trickle-up effect.” Undocumented community members are oftentimes left out. - Make Arcata a place for all, focus on economic development so people can thrive, and prioritize the physical/spiritual health of the community.

Question asked: *In three words or less, what does the term “equity” mean to you?*

- Opportunities for all
- Facilitating access
- Guaranteed housing
- Opportunity
- Access resource justice
- Helping others balance out
- The same opportunity
- Equality
- Open opportunity
- Access to uplifting services
- Sustainable resources for all
- Equitable resource distribution
- Housing at all income levels
- Access to resources
- Opportunity and assistance
- Leveled playing field
- Inclusion of all voices
- Opportunities for all
- Empowering, access, opportunity
- Safe, inclusive
- Diversity
- Fairness acceptance inclusion
- Minimum acceptable outcomes
- Openness, compassion, diversity
- Dismantling systems of oppression
- Sharing space
- inclusion to all voices
- All can thrive
- Supportive resources
- fairness, empowerment, diversity

## Racial Equity from Open House Data

Question asked: *What strategies can the City use to promote racial equity in access to housing in the Gateway Area and throughout the City? What strategies can the City use to promote racial equity in access to housing in the Gateway Area and throughout the City?*

- Outreach to BIPOC and Indigenous communities (7 votes)
- Low-income artist housing (2 votes)
- Rent-Control
- Inclusionary zoning
- Pocket neighborhoods
- Diversity of housing types/affordability levels in different areas
- Encourage affordable housing development

Question asked: *What strategies can the City use to promote racial equity and access to public art and cultural activities in the Gateway Area and throughout the city?*

- Focus support/funding on and creating queer and BIPOC safe spaces for local artists
- Center arts events on giving BIPOC folks space to even the playing field from white established artist
- Preserve L St. Build on the linear park and dynamic place it is becoming
- Queer bars shops safe places
- In planning groups, meetings use language that is inclusive of everyone or colors genders gender identity
- Outreach to local university and colleges for input, NAACP, Latino groups, indigenous
- Creating more BIPOC collective and festivals with black Humboldt, HC black music and arts and other BIPOC organizations

## Summary of Racial Equity Themes from Community Vision Survey

Question asked: *The City of Arcata is committed to using a racial equity lens in planning and policy development. From where you sit, what racial or other social inequities do we need to address as a city? (for example, in housing, transportation, education, etc.)*

When surveyed about racial and social inequity in Arcata, respondents spoke most frequently to needed improvements in critical service provision. The responses suggest that the largest inequity Arcata needs to address are the racial and economic discrepancies that dictate access to basic necessities; housing and transportation were mentioned in the majority of the comments (perhaps because they were provided as examples were provided within the question, although education was rarely mentioned). Over half of the comments received centered on housing, housing equity, and homelessness.

This focus on ensuring residents' access to basic necessities reveals that Arcata community members see a strong link between racial equity and quality social services. In addition to transportation and housing, respondents cited health services, food security, trash collection & public beatification, support for the

arts, support for small businesses, and the creation of more jobs that pay living wages as necessary areas of focus. Although there was often consensus in naming these focus areas, there were differing opinions regarding what the City of Arcata's priority should be within each.

Beyond the interrelated issues of housing, transportation, and services, respondents requested more racial equity trainings/work in the community, calling for Arcata to become "more welcoming" (a commonly used phrase) toward Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). A smaller subset of respondents disapproved of the City's focus on racial equity, interpreting it as planning privileging a select group.

Many respondents also voiced direct asks for government—such as increased partnership with local tribes, more integration with Humboldt State University (HSU) and greater support for students, and affirmative action measures in elections/hiring practices.

Each of these primary themes is elaborated on in further detail below, with prior community feedback/context from the "Draft Solution Set".

### **Housing & housing equity**

The overwhelming majority of respondents commenting on housing seemed to agree we need more developed; however, community members had differing opinions on what the City's focus should be in terms of housing development. For example, some thought that the focus on affordable housing should be shifted and/or broadened to allow for production of more middle and higher-income housing; some called for more "urban developments," while others spoke to ensuring that BIPOC residents benefit from more single-family focused housing programs (like first-time homebuyer). Still others thought that the focus should be planning to mitigate sprawl and addressing environmental inequities relating to flood and sea level rise hazards.

Many respondents noted racial inequities in renting, some even calling for investigation into local landlords/property management companies that may be operating in racially discriminatory ways. Some respondents specifically named HSU students and students of color as populations discriminated against. Housing discrimination was noted as a "system-level insight" in the Draft Solution Set, with a community member sharing the experience of landlords not returning calls after seeing the name on an application.

Many respondents also noted the need for improved mental health and homelessness services and streamlined service provision: "simplifying the bureaucracy and red tape that people on the street have to deal with to get help, as well as providing for people with complex needs." Ideas included:

- More affordable housing for students and low-income folks
- Accessibility to housing for students of color
- "Equal access to quality housing and services for all people. Delivery of services should be done in a way that serves all races as well as those who experience social inequity."

## **Transportation & infrastructure**

Besides housing, transportation & infrastructure were the most commonly cited concerns. Regarding public transportation, respondents called for more frequent bus pick-ups, longer bussing hours, and more bus routes—as well as increased attention to bike and pedestrian pathways.

- More frequent bus pick-ups and longer bussing hours.
- Walking/biking safe pathways
- More city lights for people who walk

## **Other needed community services**

Beyond housing and transportation, respondents most frequently noted the need for improved health services (medical, mental, and dental). Ideas included:

Along with support for physically healthy lifestyles, comments also recognized support for the arts and Arcata's small business community as important for community wellbeing. Respondents specifically noted the importance of racial diversity within these aspects of the community by requesting support for BIPOC-owned small businesses and more diverse cultural events.

Finally in the vein of community necessities, respondents called for better and more varied types of jobs—noting Arcata's “unrealized economic potential” and inability to recruit businesses that pay a living wage. Ideas included:

- The access of food insecurity
- Support for small businesses started by marginalized groups
- Education, access to arts, increase in public awareness for groups/environments for racial minorities within the City
- “One of the most affordable areas of the City (Valley West) is poorly connected to the rest and underserved”

## **Partnership with tribes & Indigenous rights**

A significant number of comments received called for greater collaboration with local tribes and support for Indigenous rights. Some respondents believe in the land back movement, and that local governments should hold seats on Council and/or positions in departments for Indigenous representatives. Ideas included:

- Give back land to Wiyot Tribe
- Consider the needs & services of the tribal communities as paramount. Consider several different council seats as required members for targeted groups for input into the City Council decisions.
- Local tribes in planning and decoration of local events
- Tribal representatives in all departments

## **Relationship to HSU/Cal Poly Humboldt**

Respondents noted the impact of racism on HSU's ability to recruit and maintain diverse students, faculty, and staff in the Arcata community. The word “welcoming” was used in four different comments regarding how the city should grow to be toward students and potential BIPOC community members. It

was also noted that HSU should invest more in Arcata, and specifically in equity work within the community.

The Arcata community's relationship to HSU was noted as a place for growth in the 2017 Draft Solution Set. Students shared that they do not feel connected or welcome in the community or seen as a threat. Ideas included:

- Make downtown Arcata more welcoming to students, create safety corridors for students, pay student escorts

### **Racial equity education & equity work more generally.**

The vast majority of comments received imply that the respondent believes that Arcata has deep issues of racial and socioeconomic inequity that must be addressed. Many had specific asks for equity work—from holding forums on racism to implementing policy toward greater racial equity to increasing support for Arcata's elderly and disabled residents.

However, a small segment of comments received, about one in ten, do not see present inequities and/or disapproved of the City's focus on racial equity in planning. Some disputed that race is a factor affecting quality of life outcomes, or stated the belief that centering race in planning ends up being discriminatory. The 2017 Draft Solution Set also found that many people in the Arcata community "do not understand whiteness and unconscious white privilege". Ideas included:

- Keep building on equity arcata's work
- Hold forums to combat racism in the community.
- Support and representation for BIPOC children
- "Arcata has traditionally given very little attention to those with disabilities and generally does not seem to value the opinions/contributions of this group. People with disabilities comprise the largest minority and I feel the city needs to apply more resources to understanding and addressing the many ways improvements could raise the overall quality of life for all."
- "What needs to be addressed in planning and policy is to engage at least every couple of years a broad spectrum of citizens in gathering information on emerging issues and needs as they relate to human rights and intergroup relations. In terms of policies, measures and practices to bring about social and racial equity and a greater inclusion for all who live, work, or visit Arcata."

### **Racial Equity Working Group**

The Arcata General Plan shapes how the City of Arcata will look, function, provide services, and manage resources for the next 20 years. A General Plan is the City's "constitution" for physical development and change within the existing and future city boundaries. Throughout the development of the *General Plan: 2045* the City has committed to evaluating City policy for social justice and racial equity impact, and equity arcata has played a significant role in the latter part of 2023 in supporting this work.

The City recognizes that it is crucial to ensure that the General Plan review process has meaningful input from Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) community members while not placing the responsibility for dismantling structural racism at the feet of those most impacted by it. Targeted

meetings with BIPOC stakeholders were set with this in mind, with the intent of seeking guidance on policy shifts that will lead to meaningful outcomes and respect the time and resources necessary to undertake the work. The City contracted with Blanck and Oram equity partners to bring together a diverse group of paid community members to inform the priorities and policies of the General Plan Update with the understanding that centering marginalized voices and making decisions accordingly improves things for everyone in the community.

In eight hours of virtual group meeting time, equity partners facilitated conversations with 16 community members that addressed the areas of culture, employment, health, housing, mobility, recreation, and transportation. The voices of community members of color were prioritized with opportunities for white-identifying community members to share as well. Recommendations to the City include increasing overall safety by improving infrastructure with street lighting, flat sidewalks, and more public bathrooms and showers; prioritizing the community benefits of more housing as well as increasing active and creative transportation options; and outreaching more intentionally to reach more Arcata members about pre-existing and new developments in transportation, programs, and facilities. The final report summarizing this work is part of the engagement record.

In partnership with City of Arcata's Community Development department and Blanck and Oram equity partners, equity arcata helped organize working sessions to review three core content areas of the General Plan, using Blanck and Oram's Report to frame the review:

- Community Health & Housing
- Student & Community Safety
- Transportation

Two working sessions were held, one in May and one in August. These sessions were organized in response to the report from Blanck & Oram equity partners which emphasized the need to build community engagement and accountability structures across jurisdictions and convened local policy makers from various governmental and non-profit institutions with relevant policy expertise. Attendees represented organizations such as the Potawot Health Village, County of Humboldt, Cal Poly Humboldt, the Humboldt and Wild Rivers Area Foundation, the Humboldt County Association of Governments, Caltrans, and College of the Redwoods. Feedback from this group refined draft updated policies submitted by staff, which will be submitted to the City Council for review and approval through the last quarter of 2023.

Moving forward, equity arcata and the Community Development Department will continue to work as accountability partners, with the purpose of ensuring that the voices of BIPOC community members are heard, uplifted, and reflected in relevant policy. The scope of this work is admittedly limited, and implementation is critical. Ultimately, the policy establishes the framework—an idealistic vision or version of the Arcata community—but it is acknowledged that it will take sustained commitment from the City to meaningfully implement the policy. Equitable implementation requires a commitment from both the community and its decision makers to ensure that racial equity considerations are kept central throughout the process. This work is part of a larger change in conversation, where the City and equity arcata have an opportunity to refine partnerships and explore various structures and methods to shift outcomes and reduce racial disparities moving forward.

## Form-Based Code Engagement

The City held several engagement events specifically addressing the Gateway Form-Based Code.

### Form Based Code Educational Town Hall (Information Session)

The City held a Form-Based Code Educational Town Hall via zoom on June 29, 2022 to give the community a better understanding of what a Form-Based Code is and how they work. The consultant preparing the Gateway Form Based Code, Ben Noble, gave a primer on how a form-based code works, its benefits, and how it supports community desires for housing creation. He then gave code and development examples and discussed guiding principles for the Gateway form-based code as well as building height and massing and the permitting process for by-right approvals.

### Form-Based Code Design Workshop

The City held an interactive webinar via zoom on August 16, 2022 to receive feedback from the community on a variety of topics related to Gateway Area design, including building height and massing. There were approximately 42 attendees at the meeting and the word cloud poll revealed “Walkability” as the top answer to the question “What is one thing you love about Arcata?”. Staff used Slido polling to receive feedback from the attendees on the following topics related to design: Upper Story Step Backs and the sub-areas they should apply to, variation in building height and the sub-areas they should be applied to and breaks in street facing building walls and the sub-areas they should be applied to. Slido was also used to get feedback on community benefits with affordable housing receiving the highest priority with alternative transportation as the second.

Wordcloud poll

Who is in the room? (1/6)

0 4 2

**What is one thing you love about Arcata?**



### Form-Based Code Workshop: Architectural Design & Open Space:

On January 19, 2023, the City of Arcata hosted a virtual workshop for the Gateway Code. The purpose of this workshop was to receive public input on Gateway Code standards for 1) building facade and roof design; and 2) public open space. Prior to the workshop, the City publicly shared meeting materials consisting of a memorandum presenting high-level proposed standards, a “Lookbook” illustrating building design strategies, and photographs illustrating different types of open space envisioned for the Plan area. The virtual workshop was available for the public to view after the January 19<sup>th</sup> meeting and the survey was open until February 8<sup>th</sup> so community members that couldn’t attend could still participate and provide feedback. Overall, the City received 30 survey responses.

The virtual workshop began with an introductory presentation that provided background information about the Gateway Code, summarized high-level proposed building façade and roof design standards, and shared images illustrating different types of public open space. Participants then divided into three breakout rooms to discuss the workshop materials. A facilitator and notetaker were present in each breakout room. The facilitator shared the workshop materials and discussed the following questions with participants:

#### Lookbook Images

In response to facade and roof design features shown in Building Design Lookbook images:

- What do you want to see in Gateway Area?
- What don’t you want to see in Gateway Area?

#### Proposed Standards

- For each topic (e.g., façade articulation, building entries) what is your reaction to the proposed standards?
- Do you have thoughts on the proposed standards that we should consider as they are further developed and refined?
- Do you have other ideas for how the Gateway Code can best achieve the intent statements?

#### Open Space

What amenities and design features do you most want to see in different types of Gateway Area open spaces?

- Privately owned publicly accessible open space
- Linear Park
- Barrell District Community Square

In total, 14 residents (excluding staff and consultants) attended the virtual open house. After the workshop, residents also had the opportunity to provide input on the workshop materials through an on-line survey (survey results reported in separate document).

#### **Workshop Input Feedback:**

Below is an overview of common themes in public comment from the breakout room discussions.

#### Lookbook Images and Proposed Standards

Participants expressed a range of opinions on the Lookbook images. In some cases, participants agreed that certain design features are desirable, and in some cases they did not. Discussion focused on Lookbook images, with less attention given to the proposed standards. Common themes in this discussion included the following:

- **Street-Level Pedestrian Experience.** Provide a ground floor façade design that emphasizes a positive pedestrian experience. Discourage garages facing the street and driveways crossing sidewalks. Provide for street-facing ground-floor frontages that are open and visible. Emphasize entrances. Promote human-scale design (e.g., broken up storefronts and recognizable individual dwelling units).
- **Construction Costs and Affordability.** Consider the costs of design standards. Ensure desired housing remains financially feasible with design standards. Consider construction costs that will be passed on to future renters and homebuyers.
- **Design Diversity.** Achieve diversity in building types, forms, and materials. Consider design diversity at the building, block, and district scales. Discourage uniform designs where all buildings choose the same design features and look similar. Achieve design diversity and visual interest while also avoiding designs that are cluttered or “knick-knacky.”
- **Arcata’s Unique Character.** Promote design that reflects and reinforces Arcata’s unique character (“funky vibe”). Encourage art and artist contributions to new development. Recognize area’s history and existing context (built and natural environments).

Different opinions were expressed about the Plaza Point Apartments building. Some participants appreciated the variation in colors, materials, and forms. Other participants found the building too busy.

Other comments addressed solar panels, solar access (orientation), plans for L & K Street, building placement on lots, weather protection, landscaping, garden space, social interaction, shading, massing transitions to adjacent uses, and other topics.

### Open Space

Two of the three breakout rooms discussed the example open space images. Common themes in this discussion included the following:

- **Natural Environment.** Open spaces should be designed with the natural environment in mind (e.g., preserve and enhance wetlands, incorporate natural features, use native drought-resistant landscaping).
- **Year-Round Use.** Incorporate structures into open space that provide for rain and cold (e.g., pavilions, covered structures).
- **Linear Parks.** Promote network of linear parks integrated with other parks, open space, and destination.

Groups also discussed the different types of open spaces (e.g., community squares, pocket parks) and how they can be designed to promote community interaction.

### **Form-Based Code Workshop: Streetscape, Parking, and Open Space Standards**

On February 23, 2023, the City of Arcata hosted a virtual workshop for the Gateway Code. The purpose of this workshop was to receive public input on Gateway Code standards for 1) streetscape design; 2; mobility and parking; and 3) public open space. For each topic, consultants presented materials and then received public feedback.

### Streetscape Design

The consultant presented a recommended approach to the streetscape pedestrian realm. This approach included a generous pedestrian realm (wide sidewalk) in high activity areas with new sidewalks projecting into private property. Pedestrian dimensions for two example street types were presented. Town Center street types would provide a 20-foot pedestrian realm from the curb to the building for ground-floor active uses. Neighborhood streets would provide a 17-foot pedestrian realm from the curb to the building for ground-floor active uses.

Public comment on this approach included the following:

- This is exciting
- Invite outdoor uses
- Devil will be in the details
- What does the property owner get for it?
- Just provide a 10-foot sidewalk
- Provide rebate on taxes
- Consider fire truck access
- Tree spacing
- Consider shadows on sidewalk
- This may be a hard sell
- Move slow on this
- Wider sidewalks is a good thing
- Pedestrian safety should be a priority

### Mobility and Parking'

The consultant presented proposed Gateway Code standards for:

- Number of Off-Street Parking Spaces Required
- Transportation Demand Management
- Unbundled Parking
- Carpools and Carsharing
- Parking Location and Design
- Bicycle Facilities

Public comment on these standards included the following:

- Developers want parking and won't build without parking
- Base parking on number of bedrooms not units
- Consider how to address ADA if parking is not allowed
- Consider on-street parking generated and impacts on neighbors
- Encourage podium parking for mixed use
- We will have a parking problem – consider a shared multi-level parking structure

- Need weather protection for bicycle parking; concern about vandalism

### Open Space

The consultant presented draft standards for publicly accessible open space. These standards included proposed rules for the minimum amount of required publicly accessible open space and development and design standards for these spaces.

Public comment on these standards included the following:

- Provide funding for public art in space
- Need L Street Linear Park
- Don't pave everything – consider runoff, look to Portland, limit percentage of impervious surface, emphasize green infrastructure
- With a lot of building we can get a lot of money to improve the gateway Area
- Consider interconnected wetland and wildlife corridor
- Make sure courtyards are accessible and linked
- Require native species including redwoods
- Don't include anti-homeless features. Benches can seat people
- Establish rules for the use of the space
- Be sure to provide covered areas
- Consider persons with disabilities

### Form-Based Code Gateway Housing Open House

The Gateway Housing meeting was held September 25, 2023, from 4-6 pm, 'Open House' style with self-guided posters at the D Street Community Center. The meeting focused on educating participants on form-based code standards and how to access engagement data and resources prepared to date.

Participants were polled on community benefits and encouraged to give additional feedback via feedback forms, attached to this summary. There were approximately 54 community members who attended the open house.

### Top ten community benefits voted overall:

1. 23 votes: **Owner occupied affordable units** (Housing Creation category)
2. 20 votes: **100% affordable housing projects** (Housing Creation category)
3. 15 votes: **Additional on-site affordable units** (Housing Creation category)
4. 15 votes: **Owner-Occupied Market Rate Housing** (Housing Creation category)
5. 15 votes: **Special Needs Housing** (Housing Creation category)
6. 14 votes: **Native Arts and Cultural Space** (Arts and Culture/Beautification category)
7. 14 votes: **Solar Micro-grid** (Green Building, Sustainability, and Resilience category)
8. 14 votes: **Living Roof/Rooftop Open Space** (Enhanced Architectural Features and Exterior Design category)
9. 13 votes: **Bike Land/Trail Enhancements** (Transportation and Mobility category)
10. 12 votes (tied for 10<sup>th</sup> place): **Creek Daylighting and Restoration; Acoustical Buffering; Tribal Housing Partnerships** (Open Space and Recreation, Building Amenities for Residents, Housing Creation categories)

Top benefits voted by category:

- Category 1-Housing Creation: **Owner Occupied Affordable Housing** (23 votes)
- Category 2-Arts and Culture/Beautification: **Native Arts and Cultural Space** (14 votes)
- Category 3- Open Space and Recreation: **Creek Daylighting and Restoration** (12 votes)
- Category 4-Green Building, Sustainability, and Resilience: **Solar Micro-grid** (14 votes)
- Category 5- Transportation and Mobility: **Bike Land/Trail Enhancements** (13 votes)
- Category 6-Enhanced Architectural Features and Exterior Design: **Living Roof/Rooftop Open Space** (14 votes)
- Category 7- Building Amenities for Residents: **Acoustical Buffering** (12 votes)
- Category 8-Economic Development and Job Creation, Provision of Essential Services: **Day Care and Senior Service** (10 votes)

## Engagement Themes and Conclusions

Staff have heard consistent through-lines in the community priorities and needs shared in the engagement on the City's Strategic Infill Redevelopment Program (SIRP). These themes have been found consistent in a variety of settings citywide. For example, residents place very high priority on Arcata's natural resources. Residents identify more housing, available for all user groups at accessible costs, as a top priority. Development of additional infrastructure to support alternative transportation is a priority. And infill development, as opposed to sprawl, is strongly supported. Community priorities regarding development are listed in the "Encourage" section of the table below.

These perspectives lead to the conclusion that the proposed outcomes of the SIRP are aligned with the Arcata community's vision for housing solutions. However, public engagement has also made clear that Arcata community members have apprehensions regarding some aspects of the SIRP (and the draft Gateway Area Plan specifically). These include building height, population growth, increased demands on transportation and water/wastewater infrastructure, and the role of developers in housing production. Aspects of community concern can be found in the "Discourage" section of the table below.

Regarding racial equity in the General Plan revision, the most prominent themes throughout engagement were housing and transportation, but new themes presented as well. These include the need for additional community services, increased connections to Cal Poly Humboldt, and relationship building with local Indigenous stakeholders and tribal councils.

A notable feature of engagement was the consistency in responses regarding what made Arcata special and what people wanted to see retained into the future. City staff consistently asked the question "What makes Arcata a good place to live, work and play" or simply "What do you love about Arcata?" answers were remarkably consistent across groups, regardless of age, race, or economic status.

### **Favorite things about Arcata:**

- Plaza
- mild climate and natural beauty (creeks, forest, ocean)
- good food and local food
- Redwood Park/community forest
- Small scale-close proximity to everything, walkability and bikeability
- Bay and the Ocean
- Forest/trees
- Marsh
- Isolated, small, places to find solitude
- Friends and tight knit community
- the Farmers market
- HSU/ Cal Poly Humboldt
- Quirkiness of the community - sense of character and freedom of expression
- Arts, music. Community events and festivals
- Strong small business community



### Themes regarding proposed development vision of the Infill Program

- Vision and philosophy of current General Plan is still supported and considered representative of community priorities (infill, alt transportation, greenspace/resource protection, encouraging high quality design)
- Infill/densification within core of City as opposed to sprawl/annexation is supported
- Housing creation for a variety of users and needs is supported and is identified as a major community need
- Strong interest in building homeownership/home equity opportunities through community land trusts, housing cooperatives, etc.
- Mobility and multi-modal investment (bike/pedestrian/bus) is supported and is identified as a major community need
- Appreciation of existing parks and trails systems and desire for expansion of system
- Racial equity/Arcata for all including accessibility needs
- Re-connecting with local Indigenous communities
- Climate change/sea level rise, preparation and armoring, reducing GHGs
- Youth/child support, care, representation, engagement, safe spaces to gather and connect
- Economic development, including HSU student pipeline, housing affordability, job support and training
- Services and support for houseless population
- Connections to Cal Poly Humboldt
- Community mental and physical health
- Art as community beautifier and tool for healing and creative expression
- Improvements to Valley West
- Desire for additional process regarding building and street design
- Population growth concerns: infrastructure capacity, parking, changes to “small town” character
- GAP concerns: buildings over 4 stories in height, parking, artists and business owners concern re: potential displacement
- Concerns over environmental impacts of GAP:
  - Infrastructure/services capacity
  - Gateway Area soil suitability/contamination
  - SLR/hazard vulnerability
  - Wetlands/wildlife

ENCOURAGE	DISCOURAGE
Small business growth and development	Large developers making profit off of housing
Home ownership/equity opportunities	Structures that block views of Bay or Hillside
High quality design that adds to the streetscape	Lots of 8 story buildings
Housing and transit options	
Walkability and bikeability	
Homeless services and support	

Many community members expressed concerns over

- Homelessness/mental health-some students had stories of being accosted or hearing of other young people who had been accosted
- Lack of upkeep/dirtiness/blight
- Need investment in health/mental health/additional resources
- Need places that stay open past 8 PM and are all ages (e.g. movie in the park), all-ages activities that are reliable year after year
- Needs good jobs
- Not enough cultural diversity and students of color leave HSU

Design Priorities from Community Engagement

- Don't make Arcata look like "Everywhere USA"
- Support the unique, funky, "small town" vibe of Arcata
- Protect historic resources
- Support Creamery District's identity and guidance from existing stakeholders (see Infill Market Study Community Engagement Report)
- 6 stories max supported by many; 4 stories is preferred