

Comprehensive Plan Update 2020

Stakeholder Interview Summary

Report



Introduction

As part of the City of Delta's Comprehensive Plan Update (2020), McCool Development Solutions (MDS) conducted a series of individual interviews (for a total of 8 participants) to discuss the City's assets, needs, and opportunities. Six interviews were held on January 28, 2020, and two additional interviews were held on January 29, 2020.

Methodology

Although all residents, employees, and visitors, are "stakeholders" in the City's long-term future, these initial meetings targeted individuals representing a diversity of interests and organizations to explore a range of issues and needs. The individual nature of these discussions enabled participants to be more candid and in-depth than they otherwise might be in a larger community forum. Moreover, discussions could be focused on the topics important to each individual interviewee. Interview questions can also be found at the end of this report.

The stakeholder meetings are one component of the larger community visioning process, which includes several other activities: meetings with City staff, the Planning Commission and City Council, community information booths, community workshops, a project website, and community surveying.

Interview Participants

- **Gayle Davidson**, Senior Center Leader; KVNf
 - **David Lane**, Member of the Hospital's Board of Directors
 - **Kim Guthrie-Burch**, Realtor
 - **Alice Jones**, Developer, Realtor, Long-time Resident
 - **Elyse Casselberry**, Delta County Community and Economic Development Director
 - **Cynthia Hansen**, Resident
 - **Luke Fedler**, Police Chief, Long-time Resident
 - **Tom Huerkamp**, DURA
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Key Findings from Interviews

The context of current conditions and the key findings organized by the three reoccurring themes/questions are summarized below.

Current Conditions

To begin, we asked that the participants explain their personal history in Delta, as well as how they felt the community has changed over the years, and about their thoughts on the current condition of the City.

- The widening of the highway has brought some changes to the City, but overall change over the last 20-30 years was described as relatively static.
- Economic and employment shifts associated with the resource extraction industry has also impacted the City both in terms of population and economic viability.
- Housing affordability and the growing need for more housing options for the lowest income levels (30% AMI or lower), especially with a large aging population.
- There was mixed support regarding the impacts of tourism on the community.
- Large employers have moved away from the City leaving a need for permanent, quality jobs in the community.

Community Assets

We asked a series of questions that challenged interviewees to explore which aspects of the City they would consider to be the greatest assets (see list of questions below). From these conversations, the following themes emerged:

- Delta has fabulous weather!
 - Location, Location, Location
 - Agricultural heritage
 - Opportunities for tourism
 - Art as an important influence
 - Small town feel
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Community Needs

We also challenged interviewees to explore what they view to be the greatest needs of the community (see list of questions below). From these conversations, the following themes emerged:

- Unified vision with a dedicated path forward
- A deep dive into housing, specifically:
 - Attainable Housing
 - Affordable Housing
 - Temporary and Executive Housing
 - Deteriorating Stock
- Community entry enhancements, such as gateways
- Permanent employment opportunities
- Additional retail opportunities, including grocers, restaurants, and shops
- Crime reduction and prevention

Opportunities

Additionally, we asked a series of questions that challenged interviewees to tell us where they thought the greatest untapped opportunities were throughout the City (see list of questions below). From these conversations, themes emerged, including:

- Adaptive reuse and additional programming of City facilities, including housing, economic development, and services
- Leverage agricultural heritage, existing agri-businesses, and tourism
- Engage the arts
- Housing options
- Clear and consensus-based vision for the future

Conclusion

The stakeholder interviews yielded rich and well-rounded input on the community's priorities and opportunities in Delta. Many participants expressed appreciation at being invited to share their ideas early in the planning process and were even able to share contact information for and recommend speaking to a number of their fellow community members. Frequently mentioned assets and positive

features of the City include Confluence Park and the Recreation Center, agricultural lands in and around the City, the scenic views, and weather as the top three.

The interviews also provided critical insights into several key issues facing the City, including a unified vision and implementation plan, fully leveraging opportunities for services in City facilities, understanding and planning for housing in the City and how it impacts aging in place, crime and other quality of life factors, sustainability and land use implications, and the current impacts of tourism and community perceptions.

The input and ideas shared during the interviews will be used to inform the Current Conditions Assessment, the community engagement activities, and ultimately, the priorities set forth in the resulting comprehensive plan for the City.

Stakeholder Interview Question List

The following questions were used as a general outline for conversational topics to be used in the stakeholder interviews. No interviewee was asked every question, nor were the interviewees asked the same questions. The interviews were intentionally more conversational in structure.

- How long have you been living in Delta?
 - What key elements have you seen change over the last 20, 10, 5 years?
 - Describe your position at your agency/business.
 - What key projects is your company/agency/you working on in Delta?
 - In your view, what is the relationship between your agency/company/you and the City?
 - In your opinion, what are your agency/company's main mission and goals?
 - Do you feel that your company/agency's needs have been addressed by the City's current planning efforts/activities? How so?
 - What key projects does your agency/business/company have slated for the next 5 (10, 15, 20) years?
 - How do you envision your company/agency working with the City moving forward?
 - How or where does their relationship need to change/improve?
 - Drawing from your experience, what is Delta's greatest asset as a community?
 - What efforts, organizations etc. have contributed to this asset?
 - Drawing from your experience, what is Delta's greatest flaw as a community?
 - How do you think this flaw can be addressed?
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