Wellington Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code Update

PHASE 1 ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY | NOVEMBER 2020

What you'll find in this document:
BACKGROUND
COMMUNITY FEEDBACK
- ✓ Who we heard from
- ✓ What we heard
- ✓ Preliminary Community Vision
- ✓ Opportunities moving forward

BACKGROUND

What is the Comprehensive Plan & Land Use Code?

The **Comprehensive Plan (the Plan)** is the primary planning document for the Town and addresses all facets of the community, including but not limited to: managing growth; land use and development patterns; major infrastructure and facilities planning; attraction of commercial development (including development and redevelopment of downtown); resource allocation (including looking at recommendations to maximize water supply); transportation; park and open space management; and regional coordination. The **Land Use Code (the Code)** is a regulatory document that establishes use regulations, design standards, and application procedures for development within the Town.

Why are we doing this planning process?

Wellington's Land Use Code has not been substantially updated since 2007; likewise, the current Comprehensive Plan was last updated in 2014. The two documents don't accurately represent key changes our Town has experienced in the last couple of years. As estimated by the Town, since 2014, the population has increased from 6,800 to 11,250 today –that's a 65% increase in just 7 years.

To accommodate the continued growth, this planning process seeks to involve you, the community, in articulating the community vision and objectives that will inform the Comprehensive Plan & Land Use Code. Once completed, these two guiding documents will serve to move policy and development forward in an intentional way that represents our community's character and values.

How will the Plan help Wellington?

The Plan will help all entities in the community...

- For **residents and visitors**, the Plan will identify elements of community character and provide details like general locations for future commercial areas, amenities, housing, parks, trails, facilities, programs, and more.
- For **business and property owners**, the Plan will include land use recommendations and overall development policies.
- For **Town leaders and decision-makers**, the Plan will provide guidance for future growth and development; policies, programs and services; resource allocation; code updates; and capital improvements.

What have we done so far?

Phase 1 of the Comprehensive Plan involved research resulting in a series of "community profile snapshots" to present an overview of **Existing Conditions**. Using the best and most recent data available from the Town of Wellington, Larimer County, the U.S. Census Bureau, and other sources, this document presents an overview of baseline conditions for Wellington and details how these conditions may influence the policies, actions, and focus areas for the Wellington Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code Update. Phase 1 also included having Town staff and the Steering Committee **audit** the 2014 Comprehensive Plan to identify concepts that are still relevant and effective, or those that need to be refined or replaced.

In addition to this behind the scenes work, Phase 1 marked the beginning of **public engagement activities**, resulting in over 300 submissions from the community. Table 1 is a high-level overview of the community engagement activities completed to date.

DATE	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	PARTICIPANTS
11 Feb	Town Board Presentation #1	Leeper Center	15 (approx.)
11 Feb	Steering Committee #1	Leeper Center	3
Between Feb- May	Stakeholder Interviews*	Leeper Center & Phone	61
13 May – July 14	Questionnaire #1	Online	102
13 May – 10 June	Phase 1 Quick Poll Series (4)	Online	173
27 May	Steering Committee #2	Online	5
1 June	Planning Commission Presentation #1	Leeper Center	7
25 June	Steering Committee #3	Online	5
		Total →	**366**

**This included Comprehensive Plan & Land Use Code stakeholders.*

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

This summary document compiles feedback from Steering Committee meetings, stakeholder interviews, and online community engagement. The COVID-19 pandemic that started in March 2020, when public outreach was set to launch. Limitations on public gatherings caused nearly all of Phase 1 community engagement to be done online. While we were limited by physical distancing in our ability to meet directly with residents, we were impressed with the ability of the community to connect and engage online.

THANK YOU!

We want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has participated thus far, and to remind you that there will continue to be opportunities for public involvement throughout the planning process. To stay informed about project updates and future involvement opportunities, please visit the project website @ www.townofwellington.com/451 and/or follow us on social media: Facebook @WellingtonCO1905 and Twitter @WellingtonColo.

WHO WE HEARD FROM

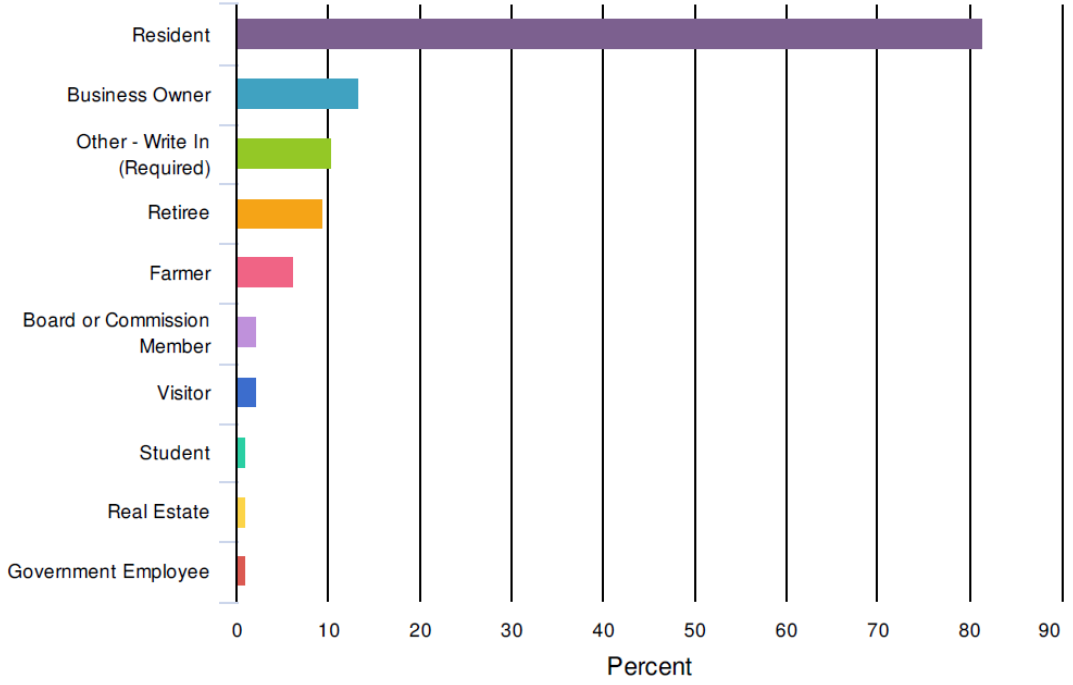
Stakeholders generally represented a variety of residents, business owners, land owners, school principals, community groups (i.e faith-based groups, Women of Wellington, Parks Advisory Board), and other community interests. As the sounding board for the plan, the **Steering Committee** (see Table 2) ensures that every step of the process fits within the character of the community. They do this by being active participants throughout the planning process; weighing in on decisions; collaborating with other groups; and assisting in getting the word out.

Table 2. Steering Committee:

NAME	ASSOCIATION
Tracey D Jensen	Business Owner, Wellington Main Street Program Board member
Rebekka Kinney	Planning Commission, Board of Trustees
Linda Knaack	Business Owner
Jon Gaiter	Board of Trustees
Gary Green	Chief, Wellington Fire Protection District
Dan Sattler	Business Owner, Former Board of Trustees

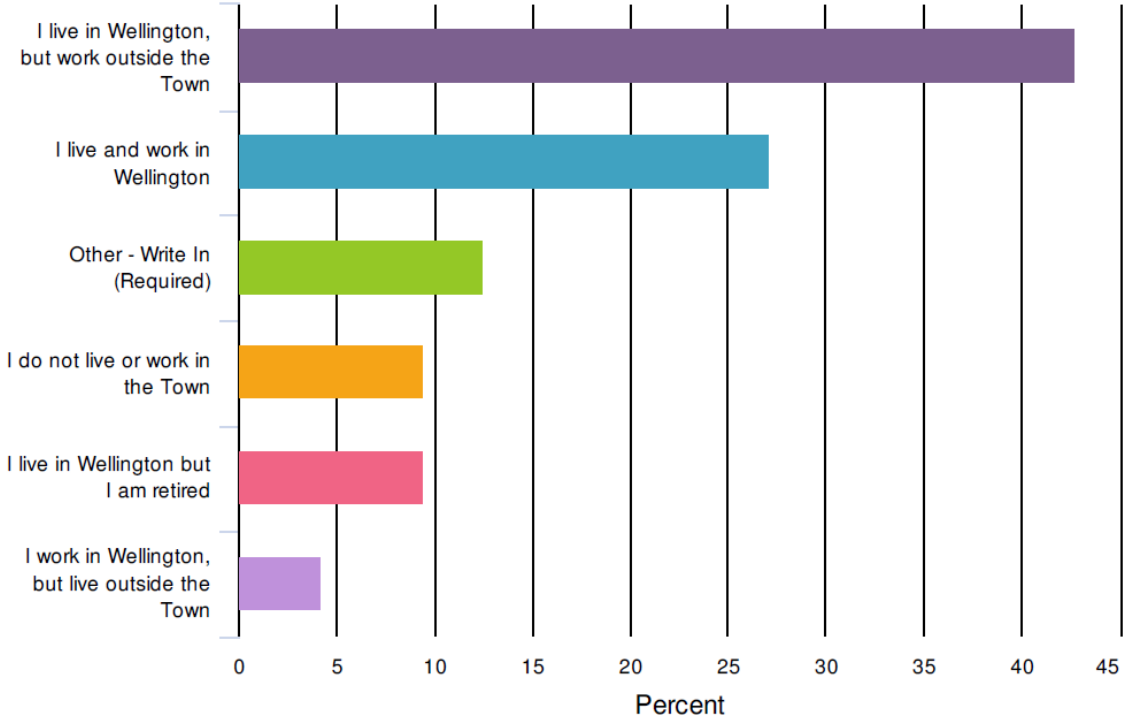
Quick polls did not provide a way to track demographics; however, the **online questionnaire** did. What follows is a summary of who we heard from in the online questionnaires. Note that these questions were optional; hence, the varied number of total responses.

Relationship with the Town of Wellington:



Percentage indicates the number of times that each option was selected based on the questionnaire respondents' choices. Respondents were able to select all that applied. ***Total responses: 97***

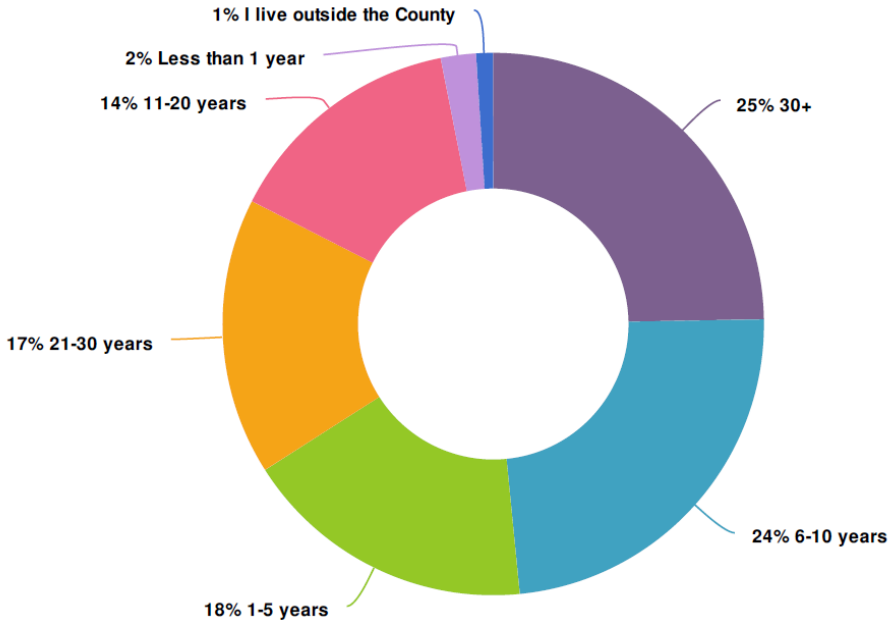
Live or work in Wellington:



Percentage indicates the number of times that each option was selected based on the questionnaire respondents' choices. Respondents were able to select all that applied. ***Total responses: 96***

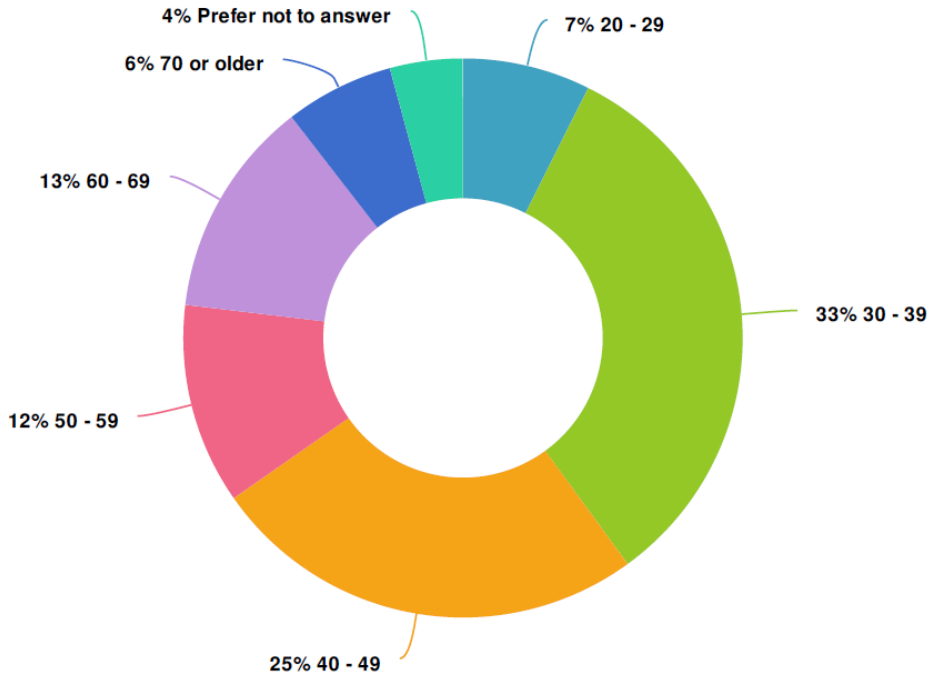
Time living in Larimer County:

Total responses: 97



Age

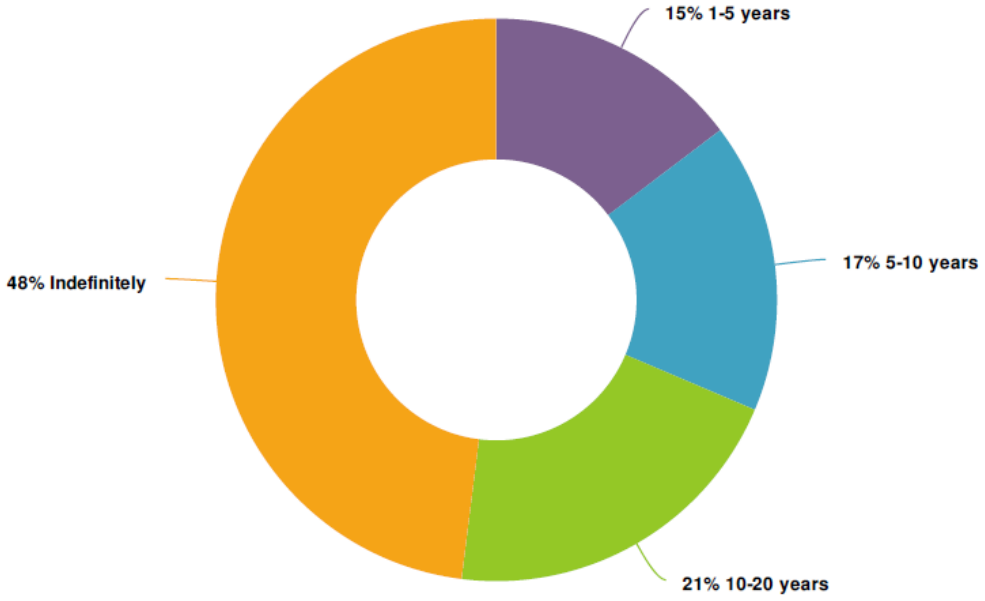
Total responses: 95



WHAT WE HEARD

How long we plan to live in Town?

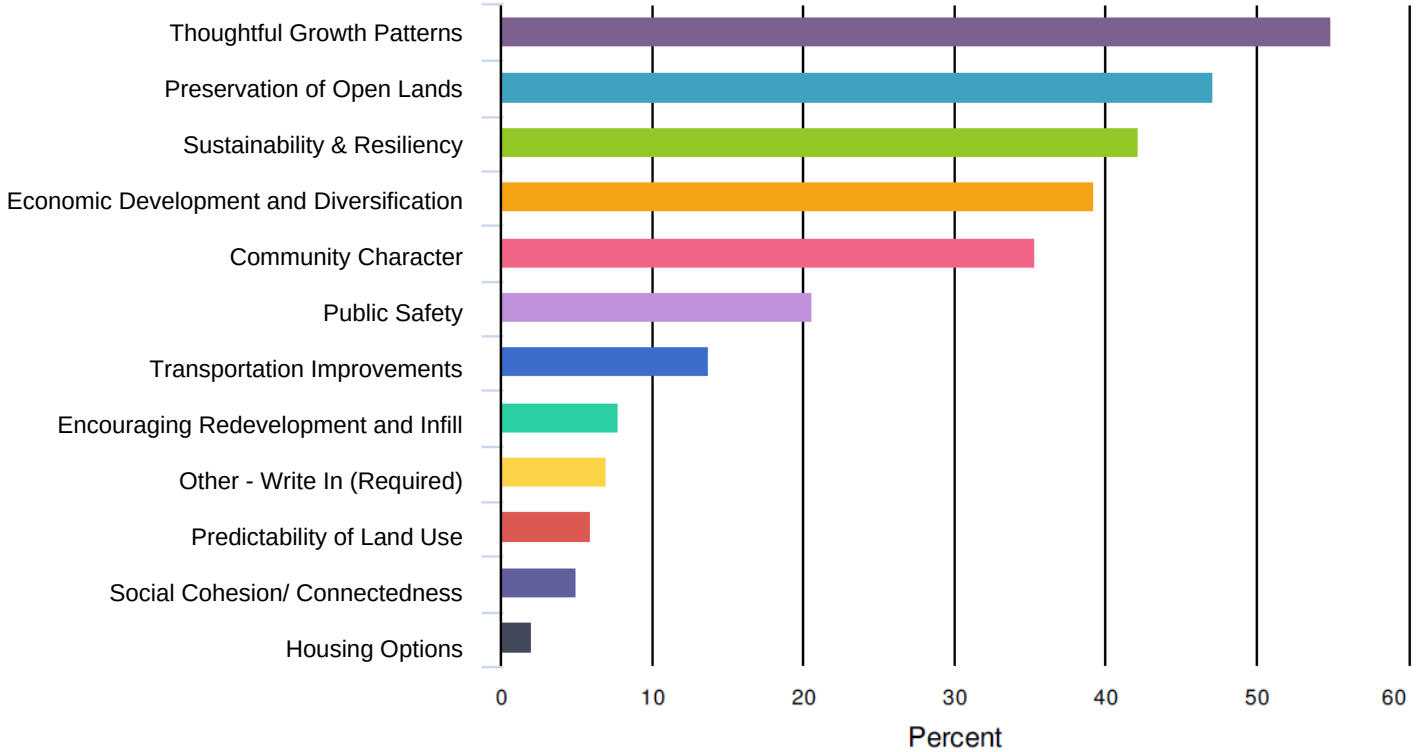
Total responses: 102



What we value most about Wellington.

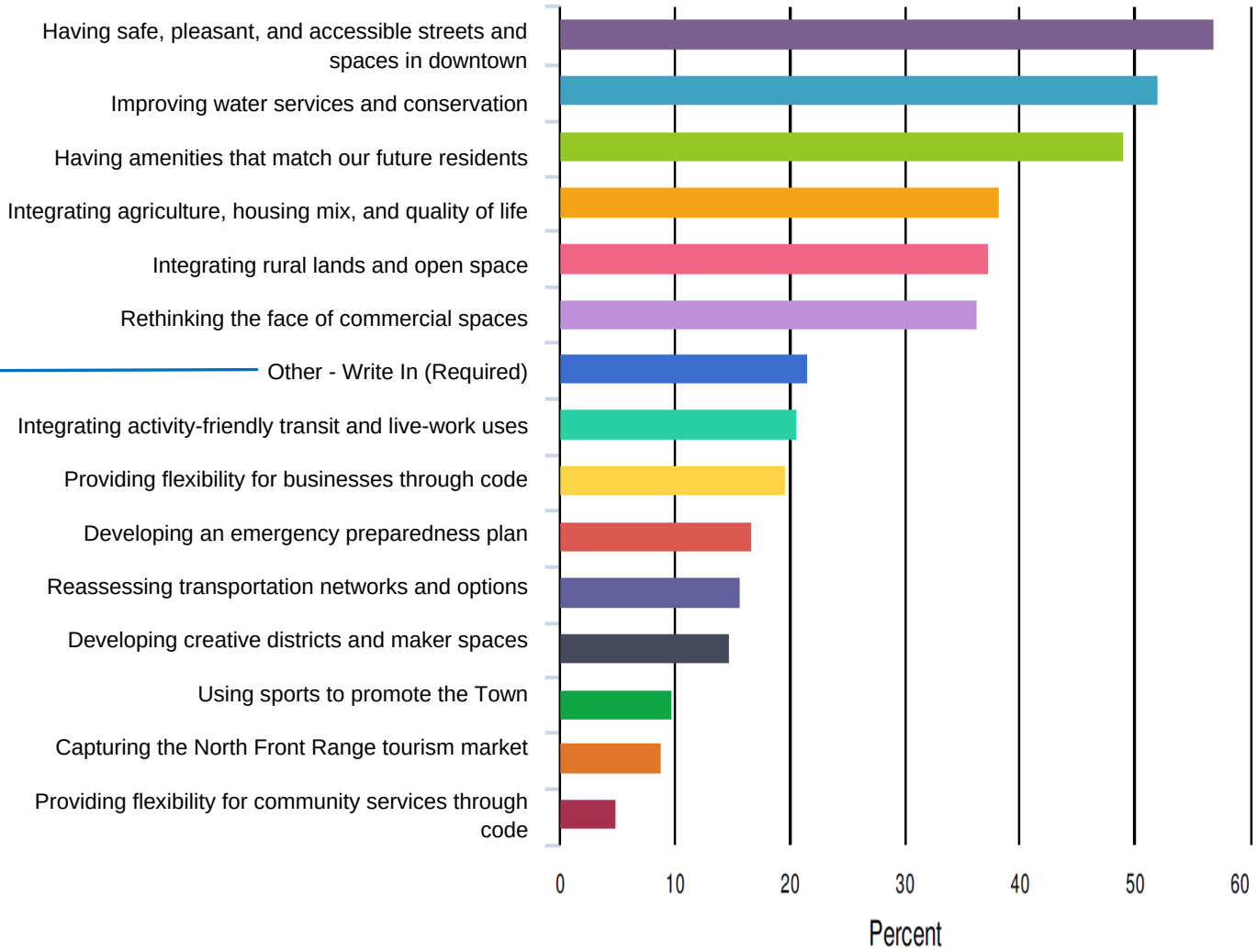
The following word cloud illustrates the key words or phrases that emerged from all the submissions (stakeholder interviews, Steering Committee meetings, quick polls and the online questionnaire). The larger the font, the more times a word or phrase was repeated.

Why we think land use planning is important for the future of the town.



Percentage indicates the number of times that each option was selected based on the questionnaire respondents' choices. Respondents were able to select their top 3 choices. ***Total responses: 102***

What we see as opportunities to make Wellington a more sustainable and inviting town to live, work, and play?



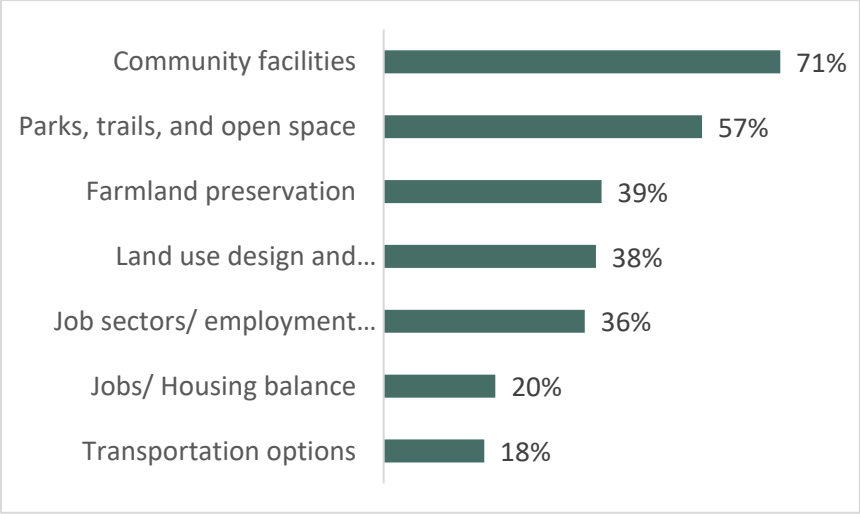
Percentage indicates the number of times that each option was selected based on the questionnaire respondents' choices. Respondents were able to select their top 5 choices. ***Total responses: 102***

Some of the 'other' suggestions were:

"Positioning ourselves as a big, small town surrounded by rural agriculture." "Forc[ing] people in old town to take pride of the area and clean up their properties…" Offering a "…better way to connect the east and west side of the town…" "Bus service to other communities."	"Mak[ing] it easier for people/companies to open businesses here." Ensuring there is "more variety in the businesses Wellington has to offer, as well as more family focused amenities." "Bringing in a community center that will service EVERY category."

What areas can the Town work on to improve our quality of life in Wellington?

Total quick poll responses: 101. Respondents were able to select all options that applied.



Is there something else that the Town can work on to improve our quality of life in Wellington?

Total quick poll responses: 65. Some word-for-word responses were:

"Try to get more retail options so that residents don't have to go to Fort Collins for purchases."	"Beautification efforts around town- love the murals, festive décor, flowers, holiday lights, etc."
"More businesses and/or community programs on the east side. We feel left out of many opportunities."	"Safe bike/walking trail system on BOTH sides of I-25 (not on high trafficked and high-speed roads). We drive outside of Wellington for safe bike/walking areas."
"Some big investments need to be made to improve the water quality."	"It would be nice to have sidewalks everywhere."
"Stop building new houses and build some apartment buildings for people who cannot afford to buy a house."	"My son is in a power wheelchair, accessible sidewalks and especially accessible businesses would be a HUGE help. All businesses should be wheelchair accessible."
"Forward thought to preserve Open Spaces where we can get out to ride bikes, play in green areas, build more parks. Eventually linking with Fort Collins trail system in the distant future."	"The underpass is appreciated but something more pedestrian friendly to access east and west of interstate."
"Having more dog parks and picnic areas as well for residents to enjoy the outdoors."	"Traffic flow, both on the frontage road and on the I25 exit."
"It would be nice to have a community pool and a senior center." "…a rec center with activities for all ages."	"Add sound barriers on interstate."
"Keep public bathrooms at the parks cleaner and fix them quickly when something breaks."	"Having public transport options up here would be huge!"
	"We need to preserve the farms and stop letting the developers come in and destroy them."
	"Keep it small."

Areas of the Town that require attention.

Total responses: 102

Efforts were made to categorize the more comprehensive responses into seven identified themes. The percentage indicates the number of responses that mentioned each theme:

Transportation *35%*	Property upkeep *17%*
"Need to continue to push CDOT to install blinking pedestrian crossings on Cleveland." "Public transportation to Fort Collins and Cheyenne would [be] great..." "The I-25 interchange is critical. It is a choke point." "There are several street areas that seem prone to potholes and should be fixed as those arise." "(Need) having larger wind and noise blocking trees on East edge of Rice and long frontage road would cut down on the view and noise of the interstate. Traffic lights would bring more safety to intersections at Jefferson and Hwy 1, GW bush and Hwy 1."	"…I would REALLY like the town to encourage Main Street business owners to show some pride & clean up their business store fronts." "Rebuild new, replace rundown property. Give present owners options without giant fees for improvement." "Old Town homes need to be held responsible to clean up their yards (weeds, junk)" "It would be nice to have a "town code" that requires homeowners to maintain their property. (Paint, weeds, junk sitting outside, etc.)" "Cleveland Avenue, the homes along there don't always take care of their yards. This is the main street to our community." "[Improve] HOA provisions."
Parks & Recreation *15%*	**Trails Connectivity *11%***
"Wellington Community Park needs the vandalism repaired and the bathrooms reopened." "A recreation center would be nice; sports courts, indoor pool, meeting space." "The downtown park is unsafe and not fun. It needs repair and updating. The kids who live downtown are the kids who can't afford to drive to the nice new park or the HOA parks" "We need another dog park with maintaining the landscape of it."	"Connect the trail from Jefferson St up to Buffalo Creek." "Would love more hiking trails to be installed, i.e. walks to/along lakes/rivers/creeks, educational nature trail." "The pathway that goes under I-25 need to be maintained, it smells and looks gross and it floods." "A means to walk from the East to the West side near downtown would be wonderful. The existing pedestrian underpass is great and utilized, but a second option would be a nice alternative for a more complete loop and pedestrian access closer to schools and businesses." "Would love a rural trail infrastructure that took advantage of the good open lands to the north or east."

	"I would love to see Wellington's bike paths extended to link all the town's neighborhoods and parks." "More bike lanes! Lots of kids are learning to ride and it's hard when there's nothing."
Economy *9%*	**Downtown *6%***
"I would stop butting residential up against I-25, which would make good business locations and visibility. We need a solid tax base for our town, rather than just a bedroom community for Fort Collins." "…no place for semi-truck to park (and give us their business)" "A couple buildings large enough to have more seating for sit down family-style restaurants that have some parking." "How about a food truck parking area inviting different ethnic styles and flavors?"	"…I would REALLY like the town to encourage Main Street business owners to show some pride & clean up their business store fronts." "The walkability of downtown must improve." "Our downtown could be a lot prettier if things were spruced up a bit. Some remodels, new signs etc." "Our downtown should expand out and south on Hwy 1." "Downtown is lacking in comparison to our neighbors... We should look to encourage small business to invite in restaurants, shops and other small downtown style stores to increase commercial activity in the area…"
Public Services *5%*	
"I think better signs would be amazing for our town library, parks, and small businesses." "Trees on walkways being trimmed at appropriate heights has been addressed by the town, but there are some homes in the "old town" portion that have trees from their property encroaching the walkway." "Water drainage (storm sewer) during heavy rains needs some addressing."	

What small change can have a big impact on your neighborhood?

Total quick poll responses: 18. Some word-for-word responses were:

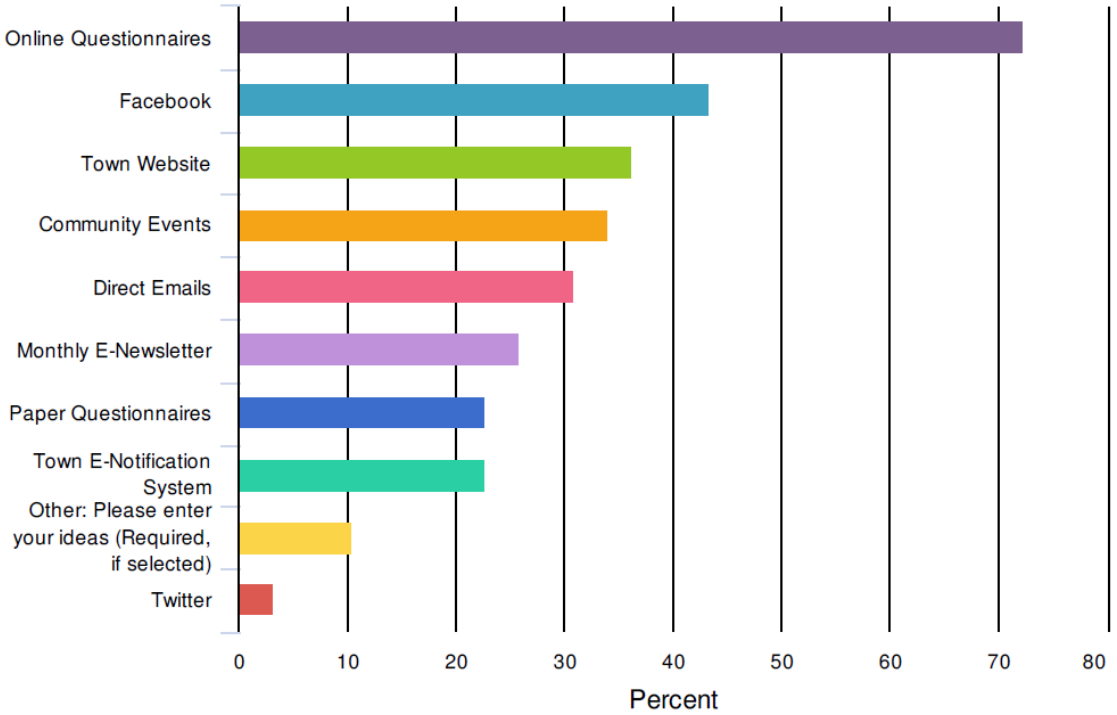
"More parks on the South side, dog park and adding a public park across from Rice since the school locks their park at points during the year." "Planting more perennial wildflowers, mosquito control near the water, planting more trees, more parks and trails." "That the town website notification system be kept up to date. Not all of us are on social media sites."	"Recreation center with a pool, gymnasium, and activities during the winter." "More street lights. Easier for neighbors to congregate and fellowship in the evening, plus providing safety from thefts, etc." "Residential streetlights... The wattage is too bright, unnecessary light pollution throughout town, light trespass into windows of homes & generally make it unpleasant to be outside at night."

Our vision for Wellington. In 2040 I want Wellington to be…

The following word cloud illustrates the key words that emerged from all the questionnaire and quick polls submissions.

Total responses: 80

Our preferred way to be reached during the planning process.



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PRELIMINARY COMMUNITY VISION & PILLARS

The community vision and pillars were developed based on feedback received throughout Phase 1 and in consultation with the Steering Committee. Please note **these are preliminary** and will change as we continue to receive and incorporate feedback from the community.

COMMUNITY VISION			
Our friendly and supportive community welcomes you with a smile. Together, we take pride in celebrating and protecting our town character and values while welcoming forward-thinking ideas that enhance our quality of life. Our dreams take root and blossom in Wellington!			
Pillar 1: Strong Community Pride	**Pillar 2: Vibrant & Historic Downtown**	**Pillar 3: Thriving Economy**	**Pillar 4: Sustainable & Resilient Public Services**
Wellington focuses on our community, providing safe neighborhoods oriented around parks, amenities, and public spaces; and offering options for our community to shop, gather, and celebrate. Wellington is a place we are proud to call Home!	Wellington preserves Downtown's distinctive charm and supports its local flair, enhancing its atmosphere as the heart of Town.	Wellington promotes an environment attractive to businesses that offer needed services and local employment opportunities and that contribute to the community's character, values, and quality of life.	Wellington strives to provide an outstanding level of public services that offer proactive infrastructure improvement and maintenance, contributing to the Community's sustainability and resilience.

OPPORTUNITIES MOVING FORWARD

What follows is a summary of the challenges and opportunities heard from stakeholder interviews and the online questionnaires. The information, categorized under the four community pillars, will provide the platform for the goals and objectives that will guide the Plan and Code update process.

Strong Community Pride

Elements under this pillar: housing; parks and recreation; community events; natural resource; safety; and community heritage and character.

1. Bring more diversity of homes (i.e. multi-family, age-in-place) to subdivisions
2. Provide more housing rental opportunities
3. Continue to provide housing that is affordable and of good quality
4. Assess/respond to daycare facility needs
5. Maintain the town's safety "as one of the safest communities in the country"
6. Maintain Centennial Park as an open space
7. Increase the number of parks and open spaces in Town with attention to Town borders (to offer natural buffers between neighboring towns)
8. Assess feasibility of a concession stand in Wellington Community Park
9. Create more spaces and opportunities for the community to gather and recreate
10. Assess feasibility of community gardens
11. Assess the feasibility of a full-service recreation center

12. Enhance trail connections throughout town
13. Review appropriate zoning designation for churches and places of worship and increase awareness about their social value/contributions to support their ability to expand as needs arise
14. Develop gateway areas near town entrances and downtown
15. Balance residential and commercial development
16. Favor intensification over new subdivisions and sprawl
17. Ensure development decisions are supported by data
18. Protect existing agricultural lands
19. Explore the possibility of expanding hotel/lodging use
20. Have state wildlife refuges/state owned land east of Town as open space areas

Thriving Economy

Elements under this pillar: local economy

1. Give residents an opportunity to do their shopping and keep taxes in town
2. Identify and address barriers to business development to make it more attractive for businesses to establish in town
3. Ensure new businesses, especially larger ones, support and respect the small town feel and the local businesses
4. Promote local business and commercial development (over big-box and chain stores) with attention to Downtown and East Wellington
5. Attract businesses that can provide diverse local job opportunities from entry level (for the youth) to skilled level jobs
6. Design a strategy to capture recreation traffic to/from Red Mountain Open Space & Soapstone Prairie Natural Area
7. Assess the economic opportunity of a truck plaza near the north end of town
8. Assess the economic opportunity of limited marijuana and CBD processing

Vibrant & Historic Downtown

Elements under this pillar: Downtown, including some crossover with economy, housing, and parks, recreation, and cultural affairs.

1. Extend elements of the Downtown streetscape along Cleveland Ave to connect to the new school and to the eastern part of town
2. Assess opportunities for extending elements of the Downtown character to Harrison & McKinley Avenues
3. Increase trails and pedestrian pathways to connect to Downtown
4. Add community/social gathering spaces in and around Downtown
5. Address walkability (sidewalks, crosswalks), parking, and streetlights
6. Address property upkeep, outdoor storage, and waste disposal practices
7. Attract more restaurants (larger sit-down style) and specialty shops
8. Balance Downtown uses to have tax-generating businesses without undermining the importance of social assets, i.e. parks, landmarks, etc.
9. Allow residences along Cleveland Ave. (between 4th and 6th Streets) to transition to commercial uses

10. Promote 2-3 story multi-use buildings in Downtown

Sustainable & Resilient Public Services

Elements under this pillar: utilities and services; transportation; possibly including regional partnerships/ coordination; natural resources (in respect to hazards)

Public services in general:

1. Improve communication of Town services
2. Develop a comprehensive storm water management plan (especially for Downtown)
3. Develop an emergency preparedness plan
4. Coordinate site plan and building permit review with the fire district
5. Support additional medical and assisted living services
6. Assess and mitigate concerns about drinking water (smell, taste, and color)
7. Address water rights and water supply issues
8. Upsize and repair water mains throughout Town
9. Improve internet access and reliability
10. Assess impacts of power being one-phase in Downtown
11. Install underground utilities to catalyze commercial development
12. Construct a new Town Hall
13. Identify strategies to extend public works' services in the southern and northwest sections of the GMA
14. Improve signage and clarify the sign code regulations
15. Improve home and businesses upkeep/aesthetics, particularly in Downtown
16. Work with HOAs (via training and communications) to ensure they respond to residents' needs and support neighborhood livability
17. Reduce outdoor irrigation demand
18. Update landscape and irrigation standards

Roads & Transportation:

1. Increase east/west connections in and through town
2. Improve intersection at 6th St. and Jefferson Ave.
3. Increase shoulder width for key roads used for Emergency Services
4. Advocate for the interstate overpass to be a CDOT priority
5. Improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety around schools
6. Improve regional transportation connections, including trails and bike paths
7. Assess feasibility of offering a bus service to other communities
8. Improve and connect multimodal transportation networks in Town
9. Leverage BNSF railroad spur north of Town to attract key businesses to the area
10. Enhance sidewalks continuity
11. Update roads and sidewalks to comply with ADA requirements
12. Improve condition of Owl Canyon Road –east and west
13. Improve road conditions throughout town

14. Investigate the feasibility of a railroad quiet zone
15. Identify and classify existing and future roadways
16. Assess the traffic impacts of the new middle/high school on Highway 1
17. Advocate for a second I-25 interchange