

Summary Memo
Round 2 of Public Engagement
December 1, 2021

This document summarizes the second round of public engagement input for Clinton County 2040, which was gathered between October 18 and November 17, 2021. Input was gathered in the following ways:

- Two virtual workshops (Tuesday, Oct. 26 at 9 a.m. and Tuesday, Nov. 2 at 4 p.m. via Zoom)
- One in-person, open house workshop facilitated by the Planning Team (Wednesday, Oct. 27 from 4 to 7:30 p.m. at the Expo Building, Clinton County Fairgrounds)
- A road-show exhibition of engagement materials (Monday, Oct. 18 through Friday, Nov. 5 at the Clinton County Courthouse)
- Online activities (open Monday, Oct. 18 through Sunday, Nov. 7)
- An in-person, interactive session with the Chamber of Commerce (Nov. 4)
- One in-person, small group featuring youth perspectives on the County's future growth (Wednesday, Nov. 17)

The memo includes the following:

1. Purpose
2. Outreach and Publicity
3. Approach
4. Results
 - Draft Plan Actions
 - Draft Action Prioritization (Top 5)
 - Future Character Areas Map
 - Virtual Workshop Input
5. Participation and Satisfaction
6. Appendix

"It's important for Clinton County residents to have a voice. It's important for Clinton County to have a plan for the future."

workshop participant

1. Purpose

The Clinton County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) launched a process to update its comprehensive plan in January 2021. The County's existing comprehensive plan was adopted in 2004 and needs to be updated to reflect current trends and priorities.

One of the key inputs to the process is insight from the community. The first round of public engagement, held in Spring 2021, offered multiple opportunities for anyone who cares about the County to provide feedback on its future growth and development. This second round of public engagement allowed community members to learn about the planning process, provide input on Draft Actions and Future Character Areas, and offer any additional comments on the Plan elements, as it moves toward finalization and adoption.

2. Outreach and Publicity

Outreach was conducted throughout the County to spread the word about the opportunity to participate in Round 2 of the public engagement. Outreach and publicity included the following:

- The Team capitalized on numerous, existing networks for outreach, including the Port Authority, the Chamber of Commerce, Wilmington and Village government offices, and the Visitor's Bureau, while also distributing project information via the County's existing email listserv.
- A press release was distributed to local media outlets.
- 5,000 rack cards were printed and team members distributed them throughout the County.
- Social media collateral was created and CCRPC Staff, Steering Committee members and others helped to disseminate it.
- Three emails were sent to the County's 3,000+ email listserv contacts.
- CCRPC Staff shared information via meetings and email to key groups throughout the County.

3. Approach

Clinton County 2040's second round of public engagement included both virtual and in-person opportunities to provide input, as well as a series of interactive, online activities.

Activities at both the in-person events and online included two main exercises: 1) Comment and prioritize Draft Plan Actions and 2) Review and comment on the Future Character Area Map.

At the virtual meetings, live, interactive polling software was used to collect input on the Goal Statements and the prioritization of Draft, which allowed participants to share their feedback during the meeting. Virtual workshop participants were then encouraged to review materials and submit additional comments on the Draft Actions available on the project website, ClintonCounty2040.com.

An exit questionnaire was also provided at the close of the in-person open house event, to collect demographic and satisfaction information on those who participated.

4. Results

This section summarizes the input that was collected. It draws from a database of every comment recorded (in participants' own words) and is organized around themes and sub-topics. Over 140 comments on the Draft Actions were provided at both the project website and at the in-person opportunities. The online input was organized by support, concern, or clarification comments and includes the individual action number associated with the comment. A summary these comments is included below. The comment database is included as an Appendix to this document.

Draft Plan Actions

- Actions pertaining to character and land use had some of the strongest support.
- Many participants expressed strong support for broadband improvements/expansion throughout the County in the next 20 years. Expanding broadband was also the most-voted priority action in this Comprehensive Plan.
- Similarly, many participants want to see an investment in infrastructure, broadly speaking, and attention to small business needs to aid the County's future growth.
- Affordable housing was also an action that participants supported.
- Participants had questions about what is meant by adequate accessible and affordable housing in the County.
- Several participants wanted to see education remain a high priority for the County in the next 20 years.
- Other participants did not want to see rural lands converted to other economic uses, including solar farms.

Clarification was requested regarding Action A.2.2 Limit development density in rural areas.

Draft Action Prioritization (Top 5)

- The Action that was most indicated as being a top priority was C.2.2: Pursue Federal grant funding for broadband improvements.
- The actions that tied for second-most prioritization were C.3.1: Adopt and implement a complete streets policy and D.2.3: Expand trailway connections in key locations. Participants thought that protecting and enhancing the rural character of the County, creating a countywide conservation plan, and supporting aging in place should be additional priorities for this Comprehensive Plan.

Future Character Area Map

- Participants were concerned about residential, commercial, or other urbanized growth into agricultural areas throughout as the County.
- Some participants liked the presence of growth encouraged in the townships and village areas, while others cautioned growth in these "heavy lifting" areas.

Mapping Exercise

- The majority of comments were in support of the draft map.
- Some comments made on the map were regarding plan recommendations rather than the map itself.
- Some comments expressed a desire for more, denser housing in key locations.
- Some comments questioned why the downtown core designation was not used in the villages.
- A few comments indicated that more rural preservation was desired in certain locations.

Virtual Workshop Input

During the two virtual workshops (Oct. 26 and Nov. 2), as well as at the County Commissioners meeting (Nov. 4), participants were asked online polling questions, in addition to being asked to provide more detailed feedback on the project website. Below is a summary of some of the key input collected at the workshops:

- Across all sessions, the Goal Statements were rated above average, with scores ranging from 3.92 to 4.44 out of 5.
- The Goal Statement with the highest average rating (4.44) was the Parks, Historic Assets and the Environment Goal Statement.
- Some participants were surprised that there was not a top priority action connected with wellness and parks provided in this activity.
- Participants noted that the solar farm issue is a major focus for many community members who have concerns about impacts on the rural environment.
- Improving education in the County is very important to some participants.

5. Satisfaction

Participants who attended the in-person open house were asked to fill out an Exit Questionnaire about their experience and themselves. Of those who participated in the in-person events, 19 people completed the Exit Questionnaire, 100% said they were comfortable with the activity and 100% said they felt their input was heard and recorded accurately.

“I'm interested in the community and want to see it prosper.”

workshop participant