

# Chapter II. The Planning Process

INTRODUCTION  
PROMOTING GEN H  
ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES



## Introduction

Throughout the Gen H planning process, the community was invited to engage with the project in a variety of ways to encourage a diverse group of voices to be represented in the creation of the plan. Over the course of a year, stakeholders and community members were invited to partake in discussions, online surveys, community pop-ups, public open houses, community advisory committee meetings, neighborhood canvassing, and meeting kits. At meetings and events, participants shared their thoughts about existing conditions, as well as their hopes and visions for the future. The online and printed surveys provided input opportunities for those not able to attend in-person events. A detailed summary of the engagement process can be found in Appendix D.



Pop-up engagement event at festival (left), City staff host a pop up engagement at a community event (right)

# Public Engagement Plan

An extensive community engagement plan was developed as part of this process with the goal of obtaining input from community members of all ages and backgrounds. The City of Hendersonville communicated upcoming events and surveys through flyers, banners and signs posted throughout the city, mailed postcards, maintained project information on the City’s website, subscriber newsletters, and social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube.

## ENGAGEMENT GOALS

- Identify stakeholder groups
- Utilize a variety of engagement tools, strategies, and activities geared toward reaching all identified stakeholder groups
- Meaningful involvement of lower-income and historically underrepresented populations

- Gather meaningful feedback from stakeholders that informs the development of recommendations
- Leverage opportunities to collaborate with project partners on outreach efforts
- Ensure that stakeholder questions and concerns are heard and answered
- Maintain and strengthen the relationships among the project partners
- Document engagement
- Align vision, goals, and recommendations



Custom branding was developed for the Gen H project

## BUILDING AWARENESS

- Project Branding
- Print Campaigns
- Media Campaigns
- Lower Participation Strategies
- Digital Ad Campaigns
- Radio and Spotify Ads
- Local Radio and TV Coverage
- Educational Video Series
- Future Planner Outreach Materials

## GATHERING INPUT

- Online Tools
- Community Survey
- Student Survey
- Meeting Facilitation
- Council Comp-versations
- Open Houses
- Pop-Up Meetings
- Meeting Kits
- Neighborhood Canvassing

## ENGAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS



Stakeholder Discussions



Presentations & Pop-Ups



Round Table Discussions



Council Comp-versations



Meeting Kits



Community Advisory Committee Meetings



Policymaker Workshops



Community Surveys

## ENGAGEMENT PHASES

Phase 1: Issues & Opportunities	Phase 2: Scenario Planning & Growth Framework	Phase 3: Implementation Strategy	Phase 4: Adoption
Gather input on existing issues and opportunities	Gather feedback on scenario planning that aligns with community priorities and the development of the growth framework	Inform the public on the preferred recommendations and implementation strategies	Engage City Council, Boards, Committees, staff, and stakeholders during adoption process

## ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Strategy	Who It Reaches
Community Advisory Committee	Diverse Stakeholder Group
Technical Committee	City, County, and State Staff
Policymaker Briefings	Decision Makers
Open Houses & Pop Ups	City Residents & Stakeholders
Neighborhood Meetings	Lower Participation Groups
Meeting Kits	Everyone

## TIMELINE



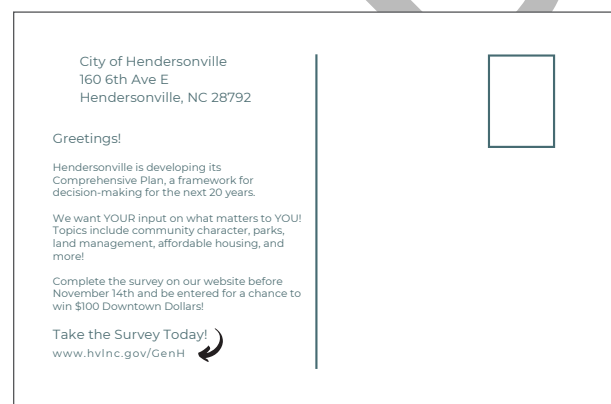
# Promoting the Plan

As part of this process an extensive community engagement plan was developed with the goal of obtaining input from community members of all ages and backgrounds. The City of Hendersonville promoted upcoming events and surveys through various methods that included branding the project Gen H to promote generational thinking about Hendersonville’s future and using multiple methods and platforms to engage with the public about the project.

## PRINT & MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

- A local radio station conducted a Gen H focused interview.
- Supporting informational materials, such as project one-pagers, survey promotion handouts, children’s coloring books, rack cards, Gen H swag, and more, were created for distribution at community events.

- Project materials were provided in both English and Spanish.
- The City placed yard signs, hung banners, and mailed postcards to its residents to help spread awareness.



Postcards from Hendersonville

## ENGAGED & ONLINE

- The project website served as the home for all project information including technical reports, conceptual drawings, and public meeting materials.
- The online survey was accessed through the project website as well. Individuals were able to subscribe to project email updates via the website to stay informed with project milestones during the process.
- A video series explaining the importance of comprehensive planning and encouraging survey participation were produced in both English and Spanish by the City.
- The City also created a video and slideshow presentation specifically for high school students providing an overview of local government and comprehensive planning.

- The City collaborated with RingoFire to launch ad campaigns on various digital platforms.
- Organic and paid social media ads were utilized throughout the engagement process to promote engagement opportunities.
- Demographic data was utilized from the survey to adjust the graphics and imagery throughout the campaigns.
- Targeted ads were developed to reach historically underrepresented populations.
- The City utilized Google Ads to boost awareness and opportunities for public involvement in the plan.
- Spotify ads ran to reach a new segment of community members.

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# Engagement Activities

## COMMUNITY SURVEYS

In total, six surveys were administered by the Gen H team to receive feedback from the community during each phase of the planning process.

### Gen H Plan Survey

The survey was open from August 14, 2023, through November 14, 2023. The City of Hendersonville staff attended community events, held meetings with City Council, visited schools, went door-to-door in underrepresented communities, and popped up at city gathering spots and community connection workshops to encourage community members to take the survey. In addition, staff set up survey assistance office hours at the public library and a bilingual survey assistance event at El Centro.

### Gen H Plan Student Survey

The student survey was developed and shared with local high school students.

In total, just over 4,700 people participated in the Gen H Plan surveys and provided over 10,500 individual comments.

### Open House Surveys

Following both Open Houses, meeting materials were provided online with an accompanying survey to provide opportunities for feedback for community members who were unable to attend the meetings.

### Green Meadows Canvassing Survey

During the horizon of the Gen H Plan survey, City staff and volunteers canvassed the Green Meadows neighborhood to engage with resident stakeholders. Residents were invited to take the Gen H Plan Survey and also answer a few tailored questions about their neighborhood.

### Draft Plan Survey

An online survey collected public comments on the draft Gen H Comprehensive Plan.

## STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Working with City staff, key stakeholder groups were identified to ensure a broad set of voices and views were heard during the Gen H Plan development. Over twenty stakeholder interviews were held during the first phase of the project.

### Stakeholder Interview Topics

- Public Works
- Economic Development
- Agriculture
- Parks, Trails, & Greenways
- Environment, Resiliency, & Sustainability
- Downtown Stakeholders
- Arts, Culture, & Tourism
- Education Providers
- Equity & Inclusion
- Housing
- Senior Population
- Healthcare
- Developers, Large Landholders
- Historic Preservation
- Housed/Unhoused
- Transportation & Bike/ Pedestrian
- Public Health

- Real Estate & Development
- Multi-Generational Business Community

### Key Themes

- Balancing growth with hometown character
- Affects of growth
- Workforce availability
- Directing growth to corridors and preserve sensitive areas
- Community health
- Opportunities to improve mobility and connectivity through parks, trails, and greenway networks



Opportunities to improve greenways and mobility throughout Hendersonville was a theme from the stakeholder interviews | Welter Greenway, Lu Ann Welter

## COUNCIL COMP-VERSATIONS

The City introduced council conversation meetings, coined “Council Comp-versations”, where City Council members led discussions on various topics to educate community members on the Gen H process and receive input through diverse input gathering mechanisms. Themes included a Comprehensive Plan Introduction, Downtown, Balancing Growth and Strengthening Community Character, Parks and Open Space, and Housing, including the plan purpose, goals, and implementation. They held a total of five meetings, each hosted by the Mayor and City Council Members, respectively. The meetings were held in diverse locations across the city to reach different audiences and neighborhoods. During these meetings, City Council Members were able to share their own insights and additions on the plan.



Community members review a city map at a Council Comp-versation

A flyer developed by the City to promote the five Council Comp-versations

## COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) - comprised of community leaders, residents, and business owners - guided the process by providing oversight and input over the course of six meetings. In addition to attending and participating in meetings, CAC members were encouraged to take part in as many partnering activities as possible and recruit members of the community to participate in the planning process as well.



Community Advisory Committee meeting

## OPEN HOUSES

Two Open Houses, on November 20, 2023, and February 13, 2024, were held to gather public input on the Gen H Plan. The Open Houses were drop-in style where participants could attend the event anytime within the time range to meet with City representatives and provide their feedback on the Gen H Plan.



Two Open Houses were held giving community members the opportunity to provide feedback on the plan

## ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS

Round table discussions bring together a diverse range of stakeholders to collaborate on addressing community needs and challenges. They promote inclusivity, information sharing, collaborative problem-solving, relationship building, feedback gathering, and informed decision-making. Through open dialogue and partnership-building, these discussions empower communities to shape sustainable and resilient urban development.

Seven round table discussions were held over the course of developing Gen H, of those, there were meetings with the senior population, Green Meadows representatives, the Downtown Advisory Board, Business Advisory Committee, local African-American pastors, Environmental Sustainability Board, and the Tree Board. Due to low survey results for people identifying as Black, the round table discussion with the local African-American pastors was important to initiate outreach.

## CANVASSING GREEN MEADOWS

During the horizon of the community survey, City staff and volunteers canvassed the Green Meadows neighborhood to engage with resident stakeholders. Through conversations held on front porches, residents learned about the Gen H Plan that was underway, were invited to participate through taking the public survey and attend community events, and answered a few tailored questions about their neighborhood.

The canvassing event led to several additional, more in depth conversations with community and faith-based leaders about the African American community in Hendersonville and their representation and the inclusion of ideas in the Gen H Plan.

## POP UP EVENTS

During the planning process, City staff hosted over fifty engagements, gave presentations, and participated in events throughout the city to spread awareness about Gen H.



Mayor Barbara Volk speaking to students from Bruce Drysdale Elementary School



National Night Out pop-up event



Building Bridges presentation aimed at connecting with the Latinx community

## MEETING KITS

To ensure broad participation and opportunities for stakeholders to engage on their terms, the Meeting Kits were designed to encourage group discussion about the plan's goals and strategies. Utilizing this engagement strategy ensured a broader range of participation from stakeholders and that the plan is reflective of the community's vision for the future.

At events and pop-ups, City staff presented an overview of the Gen H planning process with the community. City staff led various discussion prompts and showed community members how to provide their input. At breakout tables, City staff guided community members through the Mapping Exercise and discussed the trade offs of different issues and opportunities and allowed them to give their own feedback about Hendersonville on the city-wide and downtown maps provided.



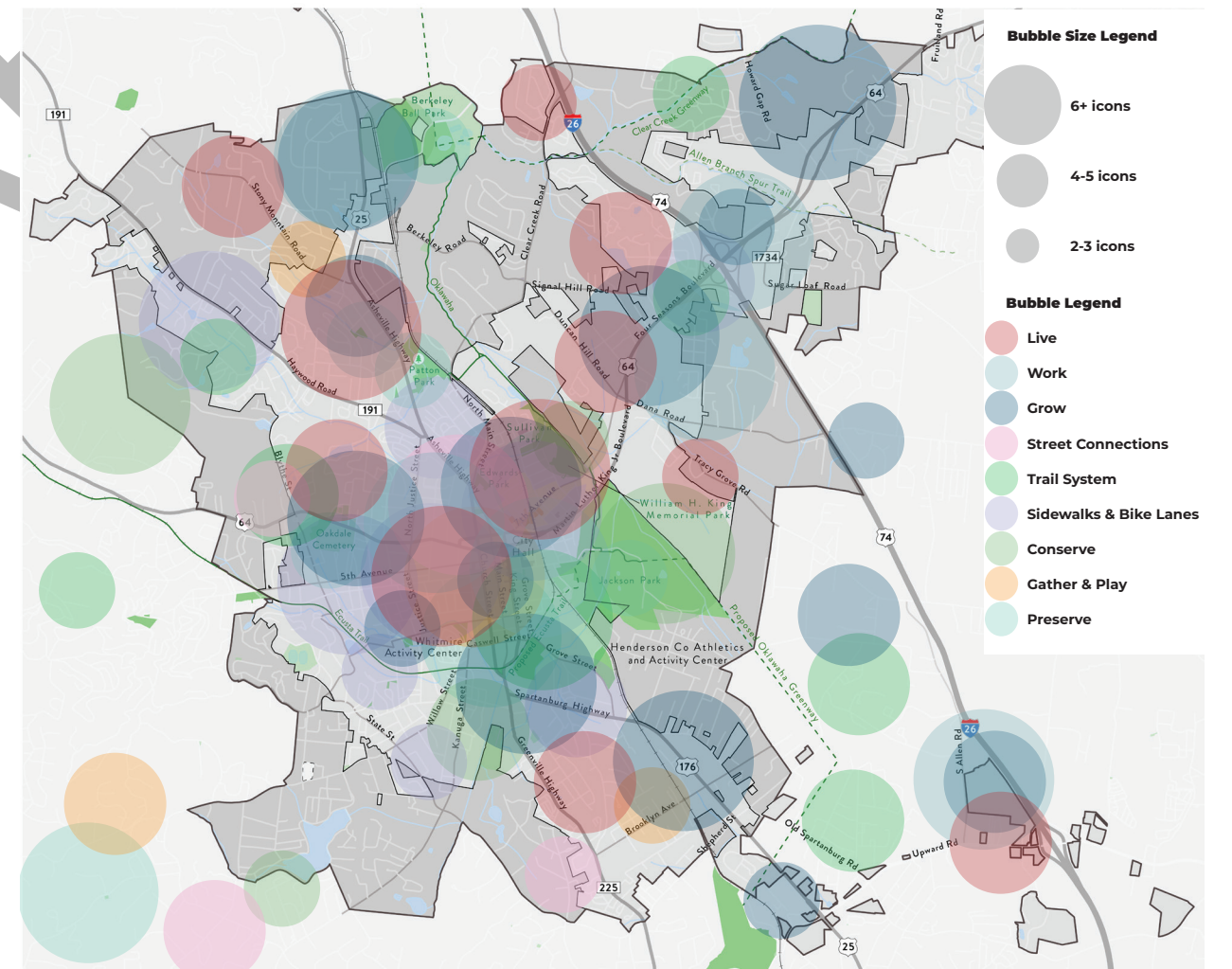
Instructions, scoring sheets, & discussion questions for the Mapping Exercise



Gen H Meeting Kit Mapping Exercise



Participants discuss Gen H Mapping Exercise



Bubble diagram of feedback from Gen H Meeting Kits