

# GARNER FORWARD

Our one-day workshop highlights

## transportation



1 Multi-modal connections within Garner (esp. to downtown) & Collector Streets design standards

2 Focus on mobility corridors & smaller type projects – Spot Safety

3 Complete streets – “close the gaps” & prioritize bike, ped & transit projects

4 Create one great success story - Pilot project

5 I-540 mainline, integrate connectivity & growth at nodes

6 Bond Referendum or Tax

## parks, recreation & greenways

**Garner Connectivity**  
Existing & future greenways

**Focus on SW Garner**  
Preserve open space

**Regional Greenway Connections**  
Garner & regional greenway networks

**School & Rec Connections**  
Active Transportation for all ages

**Reevaluation of N. Garner**  
Bike, pedestrian, & greenways



## land use & utilities

*measure & evaluate existing design rules, requirements & policies*

**embrace growth, but manage its location, timing & quality**

design guidelines & targets for the plan



# GARNER FORWARD

What we learned from survey and focus groups

## WANTED...FOR OUR TOWN



Make a Case for (Positive) Change.  
Continue Building the Brand.  
Education is the Future.  
Diverse Town with Diverse Housing Needs.  
Connectivity is Key.  
Public Transit Decisions.  
Land Development in the Wake of I-540.

# 46%

want more housing choice (17% thought it was unimportant)...



but limit apartments, and put higher-density in the right places



## WE LIKE NOW...

“The amenities in the Town’s parks meet the needs of those using them.”



“I was born and raised in Garner - it's home.”

# 77%

agreed or strongly agreed that spending money on maintenance of public spaces and buildings was important



## Top 3 Things We Love about Garner:



Small Town Atmosphere



Proximity to Urban Amenities



Low Cost of Living

Summary of One-Day Workshop & First Survey | Infographics

## communicating results

Infographics were used extensively during the planning process instead of charts and tables. This piece summarized the main outcomes of a one-day workshop and the first town-wide survey.

# Summary of Focus Group Comments

Stantec met with **focus groups** oriented towards a number of key themes relevant to the development of the *Garner Forward* Comprehensive and Transportation Plans: landscape, streetscape, and urban design; community services; bikes, pedestrians, and greenways; economic development; planning commission; transportation/transit/streets; and town council/administration. These focus group meetings represent a balance of detailed input and broad cross-section input received through the process. The following is a summary of the focus group meetings that was presented to the Steering Committee shortly after the first seven were completed.

**Make a Case for (Positive) Change.** Focus groups indicated that Garner should emphasize preservation of the Town's small-town feel and identity. Growth and development could threaten that atmosphere, e.g., White Oak's success may have come at the expense of older shopping centers: how do you attract a mix of people to these (revitalized) spaces? Garner should come up with a language that communicates the message that change is not always bad. The Town residents need to support local businesses in town such as family restaurants; bookstores; antique stores; small, arts-oriented storefronts. Currently, all major industrial areas are at capacity, but it would be great to have companies that can employ Garner residents; increasing A/B class office space, for larger and high-technology employers; light manufacturing, distribution centers, and industrial uses would be also viable and desirable to create jobs.

**Continue Building the Community Character.** Focus groups claimed that Garner can use public assets to attract businesses and potential newcomers: school quality/performance, general appearance of town, gateways, industrial land uses, parks, athletic facilities, etc. There should be village-type of development along with renovated homes, vertical or horizontal mixed-uses, and 'cool' activities centered on the downtown and other areas such as the US 401 / US 70 intersection, as well as along Timber Drive near the senior center complex. A couple of tracts of land (about 50-60 acres) just off US 70 could be used for future housing, office, and mixed use.

**Education is the Future.** The long-term growth and health of the community will be determined by how many young families move to the area – and these young families often decide on where to live based on availability of quality education. Individuals and employers do not consider out-of-community schools when making location decisions, even though there are built-in opportunities to go to other schools. Garner should improve the quality and safety of schools; the Town needs more specialized schools with different points of emphasis (science, arts, and mathematics); middle and elementary schools should be separated from industrial sites; and having options like charter schools may attract new residents.

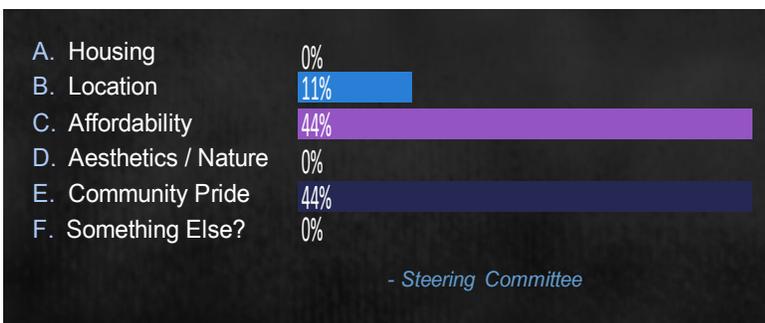
**Garner is a Diverse Town with Diverse Housing Needs.** We must recognize that people of all races and incomes are present throughout our community. Apartments are necessary for starter families to accommodate a diverse range of incomes. It is hard to find affordable housing in Garner, but it is also increasingly hard to find housing at any price point. Sewer provision for lower-income housing has been a problem in the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) area, which precludes redevelopment of the smaller plots of land with better materials and design standards. The ETJ should not be allowed to expand without a utility plan being in place; the *Garner Forward* Plan should tell us how to build new land uses only when utility services and transportation are there to support it.

**Connectivity is Key.** Garner needs to connect people to the Town's major destinations such as parks, civic organizations, libraries, schools, shopping centers, and historic and recent neighborhood developments. The Town's connectivity must have a multi-modal approach and should include sidewalks, trails, and greenways for bicycle-pedestrian connectivity. This practice helps promote health benefits and benefits to community spirit, including creating a natural bond between people and developing a cohesive community that can sustain future growth. For these infrastructure projects to be successful, periodic maintenance is required along with inclusion of specific amenities like: comfort stations with water, food / vending machines, toilets, shower facilities, mile posting, and call boxes for emergencies. The focus groups also emphasized connectivity between the different plans and facilities within Garner as well as in adjacent cities and communities, especially greenways. As Raleigh develops its active transportation system, it becomes more imperative that Garner connects with that system to provide access to its citizens and capitalize on our Town's proximity to downtown Raleigh.

**Public Transit Decisions.** Providing mobility options for residents of the town to get to the store or doctor is another important consideration. The Wake County Transit Planning Advisory Committee (TPAC) meets regularly to determine financing and implementation opportunities for transit services in Garner. Wake Transit is also working on studying major transit investments including potential commuter rail route with rail stations at Greenfield Parkway and Downtown. The new Wake County Transit Plan also shows bus rapid transit (BRT) service to Garner along US 401 to Tryon Road and Wal-Mart shopping center. Furthermore, Garner has an opportunity through the Community Funding Areas program to develop a circulator loop for the Town, which would be funded 50 percent through Wake County; the Town would be responsible for funding the remaining 50 percent.

**Land Development in the Wake of I-540.** Garner has very little east-west connectivity, in part because of wetlands that would be expensive to bridge. I-540 and ETJ expansion plans for Garner suggest that we are bringing in an area that cannot be easily accessed from anywhere else in Garner. We stand to make our roads worse with the additional development within the Town and its surrounding areas. How will Garner manage and control the land use around the interchange areas of I-540? The northern section of I-540 would be much more severe in terms of traffic without the Falls Lake restrictions; similarly, the Swift Creek watershed has placed some growth restrictions; it limits density in that area. Improvements to NC 50 and US 70 are still a very long way off and there is no funding source: hence, adequate land use planning is crucial.

*"What's Garner's Best Asset?"*



# OUR PEOPLE TOLD US...

A major part of the Garner Forward effort and resources went towards communicating with the public, either through representatives on the Steering Committee, in focus group meetings, workshops, or in surveys.

To communicate there needs to be someone talking and someone listening. The following are some of the important outcomes of what we heard during our outreach with all of these groups, and where we heard it from, including specific

statements that well represent the overarching point. The following pages summarize at a high level the comments we received from various sources: surveys, workshops, Steering Committee members, and even direct email "letters."

WE HEARD...	FOCUS GROUP	SURVEY	STEERING COMMITTEE	WORKSHOP
Housing choices are needed, but the location of apartments should be limited and chosen carefully				
I want to continue to live in Garner, for myself, my parents, or my children; take lifestyles for seniors seriously				
The combination of small-town atmosphere and proximity to urban amenities is great, and should be used as an asset				
"Smart Growth" to us means understanding the costs of new development in the future to avoid tax increases				
Respect existing neighborhoods, but still strive to revitalize areas and attract new retail and employment options				

We used all of our public input in some fashion to inform the Garner Forward Plans and process - the comments are reflected in everything from the issues and goals

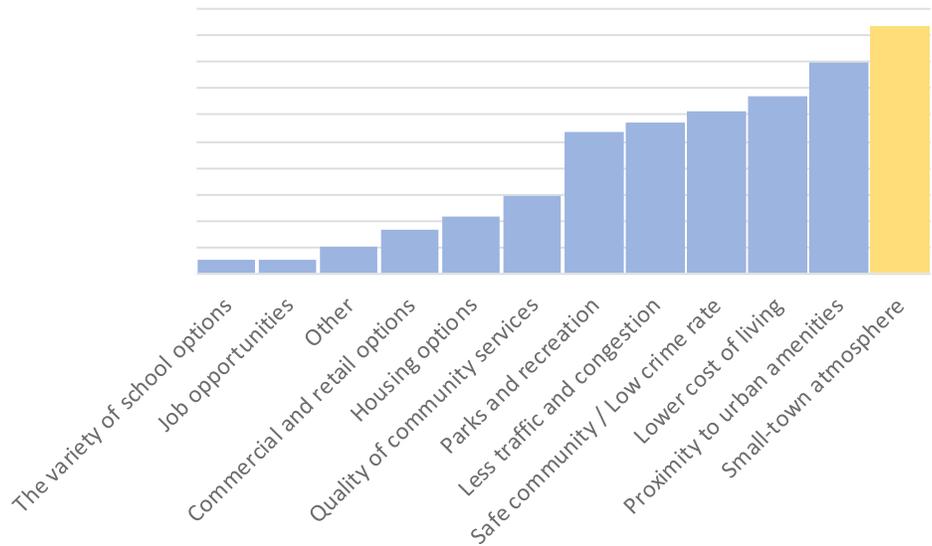
to the specific strategies that the plans recommend. **Thank you to everyone who participated.**

# Survey

The Garner Forward Issues Survey was completed by 1,140 respondents over a period of nearly three months (ending in August, 2016).

People - 93% of whom identified as Garner residents - were asked a variety of questions about transportation, development patterns, parks, and their types of concerns for the future.

## What are the top three reasons you live, or would like to live, in Garner?



The **small-town atmosphere** of Garner was the most often-cited reason for why respondents liked Garner, along with the **proximity to urban amenities** and **a favorable cost of living** as second and third most cited reasons, respectively.

### YOU SAID IT...(Other Reasons to Live in Garner)

- Very racially mixed.
- Small-town atmosphere.
- Close to my workplace.
- Close to downtown Raleigh.
- Love Garner - been here for years and like how it is developing.
- Quiet, not crowded community.
- Good for seniors.
- Have always lived in this area. Grew up here and graduated from Garner High School.
- Small-town feel but not too far away from big town amenities when you need it, great schools, clean area, not everything & everyone is on top of you living!
- Family home.

## Which of the following do you think are areas where Garner faces challenges or shortcomings?



**Transportation** is a common vote-getter for this kind of question, in part because it is one that almost every respondent can relate to in their own lives. However, a **lack of entertainment options and pedestrian facilities** are important; “growth management issues” may not have been near the top of this list a few years ago.

Subject: Parks and Greenways

Message: **I am happy to see the Town become self involved in our future.**

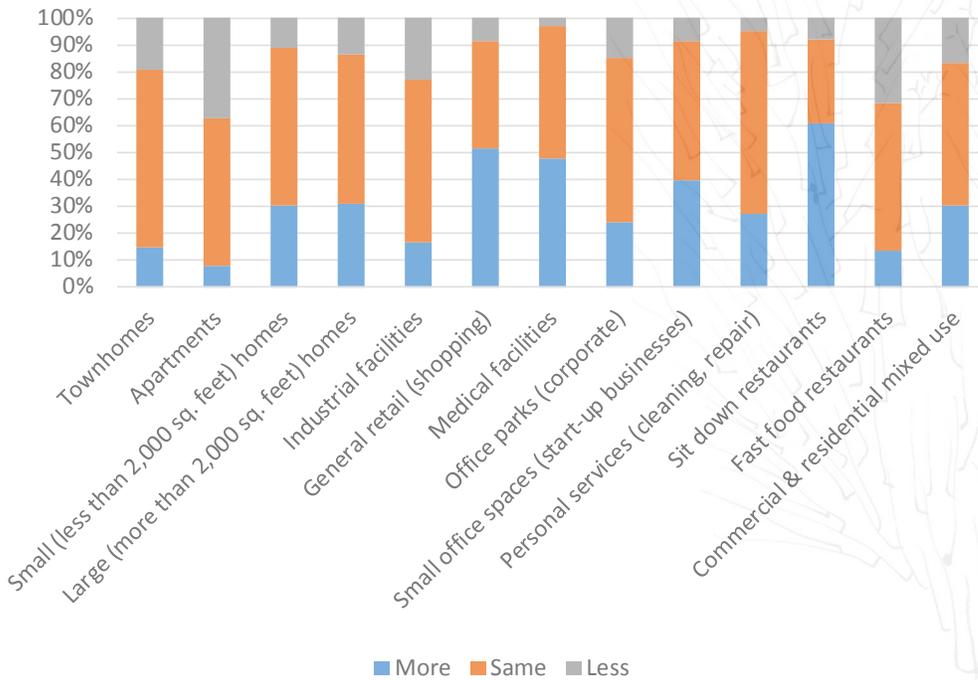
- Email Comment



# Survey

(continued)

## How Satisfied are You with the Following?



Having **more sit-down restaurants, shopping experiences, and medical facilities** were viewed as favorable new land developments. Apartments and fast-food establishments: not so much.

90% ..... 20%

Only 20% **agreed or strongly agreed** that regional bus service provides an adequate level of service to the Town of Garner now.

Agree or Strongly Agree that **streets should be designed to protect pedestrians** from vehicles.



..... 60%

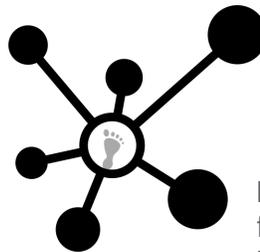
Agree or Strongly Agree that **traffic congestion** in Garner is an issue that needs to be addressed.



About 77% of respondents Agree or Strongly Agree that Garner **needs more sit-down restaurants** in town.

..... 63%

78% ..... 63%



**Pedestrian connectivity** to and from downtown was cited as Important or Very Important by 63% of respondents.

Seventy-Eight percent of people said that **tree canopy and open space preservation** are places that Garner should focus its time and attention (top vote-getter, closely followed by parks and enhancing the community appearance of buildings, public spaces, and facades).

# Summary of Issues Workshop (9.8.2016)

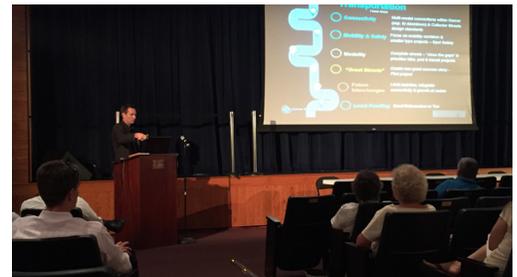
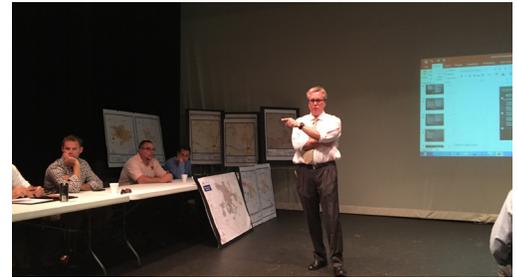
Two workshops were conducted for the *Garner Forward* project in order to allow people direct interaction with the consulting team members, foster team collaborations, and exchange information freely. The first of these workshops was held in the second week of September, and was a one-day event meant to refine issues. The second was conducted over a three-day period in December 2016, and was used to provide direct feedback on housing, transportation, development, utility, and land use topics. While a complete summary was made available to staff and the Steering Committee after the first workshop, the following elements that were explored related directly back to the overarching goals, individual topics, and directions for the rest of the *Garner Forward* process.

### What we heard:

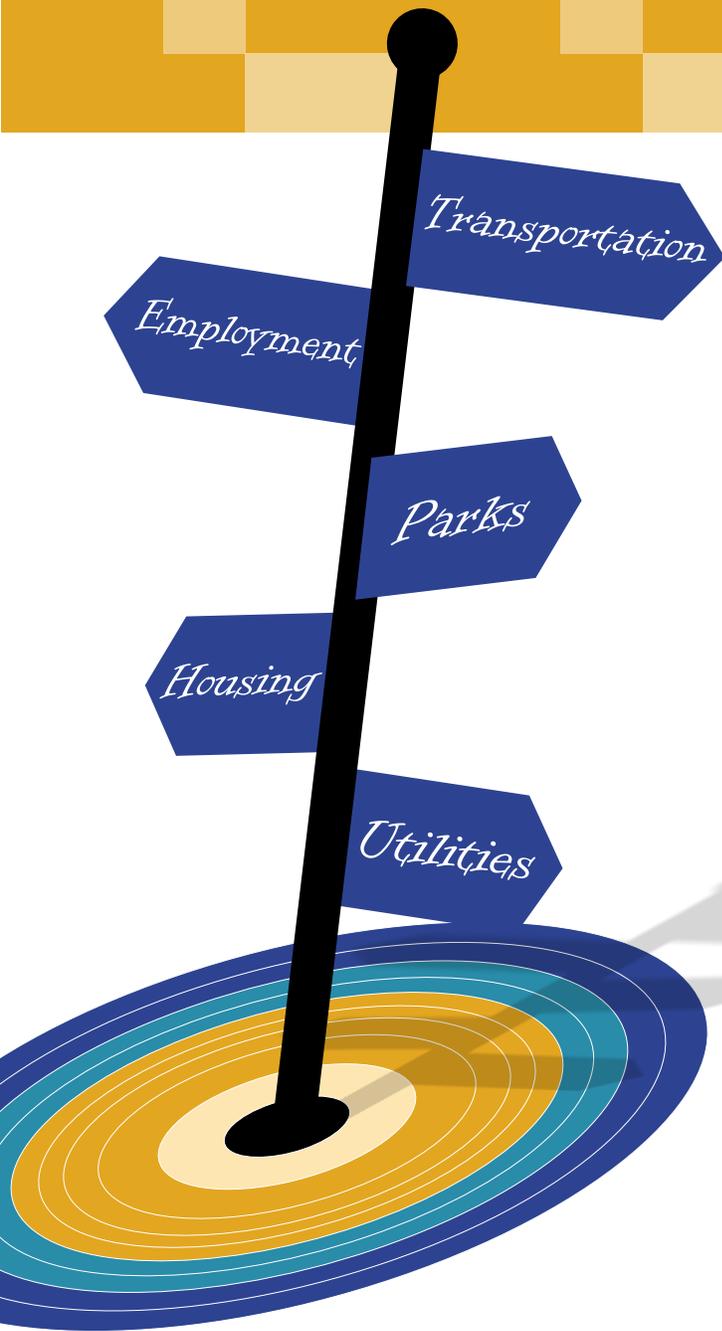
Get away from being a bedroom community and be more self-supporting (more employment, shopping) – **You've Got It All in Garner!** - **Look critically at the Node Concept and assign more design features and considerations of development densities and type** - *Connectivity is crucial: east-west, to neighborhoods, parks, Wake Tech campus, downtown Raleigh* - **Make a great street to show people what it looks like** - **We need better design standards to improve the Town's appearance** - *The historic downtown has full occupancy now so there is no space left except through redevelopment* - **Water/Sewer will influence type, density, and location of development**

The schedule for the first workshop (23 staff and 43 members of the public participated with us):

7:30am	Setup
8:00am	Scope & Findings Review / Brainstorming
10:00am	Break Out Groups: Issue Refinement & Concepts
11:00am	Group Presentations and Review
12:00pm	Working Lunch: Preparing the Presentation
1:30pm	Presentation and Feedback: Goal Validation
3:00pm	Modifications to Subject Area Issues / Concepts
4:00pm	Plan Development Assignments and Review
5:00pm	Take Down
6:00pm	Public Open House



# HELP GARNER STAY ON TARGET



## WORKSHOP+PUBLIC REVEAL

September 8, 2016

6:00pm to 7:30pm

Garner Performing Arts Center  
(742 West Garner Road)

We love this Town, and we think its future deserves a lot of attention. We are inviting everyone to help us roll up our sleeves at a one-day workshop. The staff work will address all the comments we've received, identify key issues, and provide directions for our study team. At 6pm we open the doors to you to get your feedback before we begin to develop final recommendations.

Don't get left behind as Garner moves forward...



Can't make it? Want more information?  
[www.GarnerForward.com](http://www.GarnerForward.com)