

The following chapter discusses the top seven community priorities and community goals that were identified during the planning process.

On the opening evening of the design charrette, residents participated in activities to determine their priorities for developing a vision for Laytonville. The top seven priorities are addressed in order of the number of votes received.

- Central Park/Plaza/Village Concept – 48
- Affordable Housing -- 37
- Waste Water Treatment -- 34
- Walking/Bicycling/Running/Horse Trails -- 33
- Sustainable Development -- 29
- Preserve Open Space -- 26
- Slow Vehicle Speeds -- 22



Figure 2-1 Participants voted with dots to determine the top priorities for Laytonville.

1. Boundaries and Identity of Laytonville's Town Center

Leading up to and throughout the early part of the charrette, there was a lack of clarity about where the Town Center begins and ends and how to best signify it. High traffic speeds, lack of pedestrian-orientation, and a lack of visual continuity contribute to this confusion. Participants agreed that creating a “central park”, “plaza”, or “village concept” for Laytonville is critical to creating a safe place where people can be together, conduct commerce, shop at the Farmer’s Market, and gather in community. Through this process, community members defined the Town Center as the large block that is bounded by Branscomb Road, Willis Avenue, Ramsey Avenue, and including Highway 101. The community vision for Laytonville’s Town Center includes the following elements:

- Skate Park,
- Public Gathering Space,
- Bakery,
- Public Restroom,
- Swimming Pool,



Figure 2-2 and 2-3 Murals contribute to the existing character of the Town Center.

- Incorporation of local art-work and murals to promote beauty, and
- Improving Laytonville’s identify and amenities for travelers along 101.

Chapters 4 and 6 discuss the Town Center.

2. Affordable Housing

Laytonville lacks affordable housing for working class members of the community such as health care professionals and teachers. The lack of housing options in the community significantly contributes to declining enrollment in the school system as families struggle to find places to live and are forced out



Figure 2-4 Small-lot affordable housing in town centers contribute to vibrancy and affordability.

of the area. Local business employees must often seek housing in surrounding communities. Participants in focus groups and workshops spoke of the need for housing in the downtown area of Laytonville, within walking distance to schools and employers, and affordable to the working class. Possible locations and scenarios for downtown work-force housing are explored in Chapter 6.

3. Waste-Water Treatment

The shape, size, and walkability of Laytonville will be governed by which waste-water treatment option the community chooses. Currently, low-density land-use prevails in the downtown area because large portions of parcels must be set aside for septic systems and alternate leach lines, thus maintaining large distances between destinations. Infill development and increasing the density and mix of uses in the Town Center will be important for developing more sustainable land-use patterns and for the community to realize its vision. The chosen waste-water treatment will need to be consistent with level of growth that the community wants to see. De-centralized systems may provide opportunities for infill development in the Town Center that can provide affordable housing, recreation, and economic development opportunities desired by residents. A centralized sewer system may pave the way for unchecked growth. Unofficial community input received during the charrette indicated community preference for de-centralized

systems. This issue is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 9.

4. Pedestrian, Bicycle and Equestrian Circulation Many participants in this planning process – especially youth and seniors – articulated a desire and need for improved trail systems and sidewalks in and around Laytonville. Some trails exist, and are regularly used, but there is concern regarding traffic safety, year-round accessibility and desirability. Branscomb Road, Willis Avenue, and Highway 101 are common pedestrian corridors, but lack adequate pedestrian infrastructure. The equestrian community



Figure 2-5 Unmarked pedestrian crossing on Branscomb Road.

also desires better connections and safer conditions, especially along Branscomb Road and Highway 101. “Connecting the dots” for pedestrians, bicyclists and equestrians is explored in Chapter 3.

5. Sustainable & Economic Development

Sustainable development balances the fulfillment of human needs with the protection of the natural environment so that these needs can be met, not only in the present, but in the indefinite future. It includes local economic development as well as social equity and opportunity. Throughout this process, the community voiced a strong vision for Laytonville developing sustainably. Buying local and supporting the downtown business climate allows goods, services, and income to, in turn, sustain local families. Reducing consumption of fossil fuels by creating a more walkable community, buying locally, and investing in renewable energy will reduce the energy footprint of Laytonville’s businesses and residents, and contribute to a more sustainable future – and a better bottom line. This issue is discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

6. Preserve Open Space

People live in Laytonville because they love the rural environment and what it offers – open space,

quiet, privacy, clean air, and clean water. Ranching, farming, and forestry also rely on undeveloped natural landscapes.



Figure 2-6 Agricultural lands surround Laytonville

The LAMAC-endorsed Town Planning Principles state that Laytonville should develop compactly, in order to preserve these precious resources. Compact development, infill development, and smart land-use go hand-in-hand with open space and agricultural land preservation. Recommendations made throughout this report support the preservation of open space and rural landscapes.

7. Speed and Safety of Truck and Vehicular Traffic along Hwy 101

There is a strong desire to slow traffic and increase safety along the stretch of Highway 101 that passes through Laytonville's Town Center. "Traffic calming" slows vehicle speeds, creating safer pedestrian conditions, and has an additional benefit of lessening the impact of heavy truck traffic and automobiles on the Town



Figure 2-7 "Mother's Day Flower Truck Incident", one of multiple incidents involving trucks colliding with Main Street buildings. Photo courtesy Lorne Strider.