



Oregon's Kitchen Table – City of La Pine – Downtown Vision

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In winter 2018, the City of La Pine (the City), in partnership with Oregon's Kitchen Table (OKT) and Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC), conducted a public outreach and engagement process to hear from people who work in, live in or visit the City and its surrounding areas about their hopes for downtown La Pine. There was a particular focus on a transit site that will be located downtown in the near future. This report provides an overview of the engagement process as well as high level findings.

ABOUT OREGON'S KITCHEN TABLE

Oregon's Kitchen Table is a program of the National Policy Consensus Center in the College of Urban and Public Affairs at Portland State University, and was created by a group of non-partisan, non-profit community organizations dedicated to helping Oregonians have a voice. Oregon's Kitchen Table creates public consultations to allow Oregonians to weigh in on policy questions posed by elected officials and public managers. OKT has been used at the state, local and regional levels to gather feedback from a wide variety of Oregonians using both our online surveying tool to solicit input from thousands of participants and in-person community gatherings of various sizes and formats. The online surveying tool is not intended to be a scientific study; rather it is one way to allow the public to share ideas, beliefs, and values with decision-makers.

We are committed to engaging community members from all walks of life - particularly communities that typically have not been represented or engaged in public processes - to achieve deep engagement.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

This engagement is part of a larger project that OKT has embarked on with lead partner Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council, Let's Talk Diversity Coalition, the Ford Family Foundation's leadership alumni, the communities of La Pine, Sisters, Madras, and Prineville, as well as other partners in each city to increase and broaden community engagement around economic development issues, priorities, and projects in each city. In each community, the partners are working to develop outreach and approaches to include the voices of community members which are not typically heard in public policy discussions. This effort is funded by Meyer Memorial Trust.

The project's goals include:

1. To work with underserved rural communities to help them achieve key community and economic development objectives;
2. To engage underserved populations – that are usually not engaged in policy decisions - within these communities in the service of the community and economic development objectives;
3. To test and ID citizen outreach and engagement tools that work well in rural communities, and which then may be used by these communities for future goals/processes;
4. To create a Central OR network to provide equitable citizen engagement and outreach so that Central Oregon as a whole has increased capacity to provide rural community outreach and engagement, including all rural citizens as well as particular groups, and the region is connected to broader outreach and engagement networks that it can tap into in the future.

The OKT survey provided some background on the City's desire to hear about people's current uses and hopes for the future of downtown La Pine as well as on the property purchased by ODOT for transportation use. Participants were asked a set of questions about their current use of downtown La Pine followed by a series of questions about what they would generally like to see more of. The next section of questions focused on the particular property that would have a transportation use but also has the potential for other uses: these questions tested out preferences for what kind of a space people would like to see as well as what particular uses they would like to have. A series of demographic questions also informed the City of La Pine of who responded to the survey.

ENGAGEMENT GOALS and PARTICIPATION

The goals of this project were two-fold: 1. to hear from as many people as possible who work in, live in, or visit La Pine about both their own personal, individual experiences in how they use or would like to use downtown La Pine; and 2. to focus specifically on a vacant lot in downtown La Pine a vacant lot where Highway 97, 4th Street, and Huntington Road meet that ODOT and the City recently acquired. This property must have a transportation/transit use but could also be used to provide other services. The input from participants through this engagement will help inform the City as it decides how to use that property beyond transportation uses.

712 people took part in the OKT consultation, with the majority (over 650) taking the survey online. The vast majority of participants selected La Pine as the community they live in (81%) and 75% of participants either visit downtown more than once a week or live in downtown.

Survey invitations were sent through the City of La Pine, Oregon's Kitchen Table, and a number of local partners. In addition, several local businesses and community groups circulated the survey, and a number of local organizations (the Chamber of Commerce,

City Hall, the Senior Center, and the library) all had paper surveys available. Local news outlets, including radio and newspaper, also publicized the effort.

Specific outreach was done in order to reach those in particular age categories (over 60 and between 14 and 18 years old), income levels, and veteran's status through the schools, the City Council's student representative, the Senior Center, veterans' groups, and the La Pine Community Kitchen. Demographic participation breakdowns include:

- 11% of participants were 25 years old or younger, with 8% of the total between 14-18 years old;
- 33% of participants were 61 years or older, with 4% older than 75 years old.
- 12% of participants had incomes less than \$30,000 per year; however, a large number (21%) either did not know or preferred not to share their income level.
- 17% of participants were veterans or service members.

FINDINGS: COMMONLY HELD HOPES

Across demographic groups, there were several common themes:

- There is a strong desire to see additional food options for both downtown La Pine and the recently acquired property, especially a coffee shop of some type and food carts / farmers market.
- People also want to see opportunities / spaces for gathering with one another in downtown, including for kids and families.
- Several people said they wanted to see the City be able to maintain the vacant lot, no matter what type of use it has beyond transportation.
- There is concern about safety and ongoing maintenance for the future of the transportation property, particularly because it is located next to a highway and has the potential for public restrooms.
- Many people are interested in finding ways to meet the needs of community members of all ages - from young children to senior citizens - and want to see any improvements or additions to downtown serve multiple age groups at the same time.
- People often expressed a preference for design / aesthetic that echoed La Pine's natural setting.

OVERVIEW OF RESULTS

CURRENT USE OF DOWNTOWN LA PINE

The vast majority of participants either visit La Pine more than once a week or live in downtown La Pine (75%), and 74% say that they visit downtown La Pine for some type of shopping or dining.

Besides the activities listed in the survey that participants could choose from, several also opted to share additional activities not listed. Common responses include:

- Visits to doctor / medical appointments
- Bank
- Post office / mail
- Library
- Volunteering at various locations
- Visiting with friends who live in downtown
- Getting gas
- Haircut
- Sporting events
- Community events

The two communities that most participants are going to besides or instead of La Pine are Bend (45%) or Sunriver (28%).

HOPES AND DESIRES FOR DOWNTOWN LA PINE

When participants were asked about what they'd like to see for the future of downtown La Pine, responses clearly focused on food, beverage, or recreation options.

The top three responses for what participants would like to do more of downtown were "Go to a coffee shop" (21%), "Go to community events" (19%), and "Walk or sit in a park" (18%). Participants most often selected "More kinds of shops and restaurants" when asked what they would like to see more of downtown (30% of responses). And almost half of all participants selected the statement "I would like to see downtown La Pine offer more options for shopping and eating" as the one that most closely reflected their opinions from those offered.

When asked what they would like to see or do more of in downtown La Pine, Participants who selected "other" most frequently added in shopping, more restaurant / food options including coffee shop or brewery, swimming, or a movie theater.

POTENTIAL USES FOR VACANT LOT

As with downtown La Pine as a whole, participants favored food / beverage related amenities for the vacant lot acquired by ODOT and the City. "Food trucks or farmers market" was also rated as the top priority for what participants would most like to see at

the property where Highway 97, 4th Street, and Huntington Road meet, with “café / coffee shop” coming in second.

There was also significant support for “a place that makes downtown more beautiful”; green space / landscaping was ranked more highly than public art.

When provided with a set of pictures depicting transit / city centers of different designs and offering different amenities, participants overwhelmingly preferred **Picture A** and **Picture F**. **Across all groups**, many commenters expressed a desire for versatility or flexibility with the use of the space. Many wanted to be able to see the lot designed in such a way that it could be used at different times of the year and that different populations (age groups, tourists, residents) could all use.



A. City park with places to sit, water play area, trees, bathrooms, and food

For those who selected Picture A (46%), many explained that they selected that picture because they liked the idea of a place where people could interact with one another and connect. They were also drawn to a place where kids could play while adults could visit with one other and enjoy food or beverages.

A sampling of comments that reflect common responses to **Picture A** are below.

PICTURE A PREFERENCE - EXCERPTED COMMENTS

Feels cool relaxing and entertaining. Easy place for visitors and locals alike

It has a bit of many things to do: food, relax, talk and eat. Would be more permanent. The current park does not provide these except at events.

I think it has the most versatility to hold functions and gatherings like a farmers market or a car show.

If we want a place that will draw people downtown, I think A has the best opportunity to be a destination--as opposed to something people simply drive by. I like the idea of trees and landscaping as La Pine is trying very hard to clean up it's pass-through image and become a place where people want to stay. That said, I don't feel a water play area is the best use of our money. I do love the idea of live music in a gathering place like this. The goal is to get people downtown. Food and live music are big draws for that.

It seems open inviting and flexible in how it can be used

A -- because it's a picture with PEOPLE interacting, it's a flexible space, and suggests a quality of community rather than singular function

The water feature can be made into an ice skating rink in the winter and shallow pool in the summer. Picture A just seems more like what you might see in La Pine. The others look more like what you'd find in big Cities and not family/community feel.



F. Transportation Center with a place to stay warm or dry, open space, trees, and places nearby to eat

Among those who selected Picture F (22%) as the one they preferred the most, many mentioned that they liked the architecture and felt like it fit La Pine. They also liked the openness of the space and its simplicity.

Many comments in this group also noted wanting to see space that could be used across multiple seasons with dry and warm space for winter and open, outdoor space for summer. Excerpted comments from those who preferred B include:

PICTURE F PREFERENCE - EXCERPTED COMMENTS

We need a warm enclosed area for winter yet an outdoor space too for summer to enjoy grounds and art, music, food, etc.

I like that it's open and clean and provides a good transportation hub, it looks like the type of place that would be staffed during use hours and locked at night. I would like to see the lockers, bike racks, parking and coffee shop of pic B but that one is too crowded with plants and looks to be unsupervised.

The architecture fits the area, cover inside places and outside space. Could use more greenery

Fits the La Pine/Mtn lodge image of how I see La Pine; Hard Surfaces that won't deteriorate too much in snow; vegetation that's easy to maintain; place to get in out of the wind/snow/weather to wait for transportation or meet up with those coming in to town. Could be used for gatherings, public restrooms

It seems to welcome out-of-town visitors and allow comm. members to hold events (spacious area).

When asked what other thoughts they had about additional uses of this lot, comments often included a desire to see shopping or eating options or some kind of swimming facility in this space. Several participants commented that they had no preference for any of the pictures of potentials for the site and would rather leave La Pine as is; however, other participants expressed a desire to see growth in La Pine. Participants also expressed concerns about safety related to this area, either due to traffic or sidewalks, and worries that any new structures or uses might not be safe. These viewpoints are reflected in the following excerpted comments.

Question: Is there any other use you'd like to see?

EXCERPTED COMMENTS

Anything that goes there should be someplace the surrounding businesses can support. It needs to be easy to take care of and a reason to go to this location downtown.

Bike racks, maybe even covered. And definitely covered seating for food trucks. Check out the Happy Valley Food carts at <http://happy-valley-station-food-carts.business.site/> for an example, or the Mercado at: <http://www.portlandmercado.org/>

Can green space and event space be the same? Combined for the best of both? I've been asked so much where the best place a stroller friendly space to walk and get mom/baby out of the house might be... Sadly I have to say there isn't.

Due to traffic concerns, any activity that encourages playing or loitering, I am not excited about having in the downtown area. My family owns property near this location. Crime is an issue, as is trespassing and garbage.

I think whatever is put there that it be the model for what we would like the main street to look like in the future.

Mulched walking path along the perimeter.
I would also like safe bike paths in the community.

Our community is very outdoors oriented and alot of visitors come to enjoy our archery season on top of all of the locals that love it. It would be nice to see a public but safe range for families and hunters to teach the art of archery and how to take care of our wilderness

Finally, participants were invited to share any additional thoughts on the future of downtown La Pine.

As in other places, several commenters shared concerns about safety and maintenance of downtown as a whole and potential uses of the vacant lot. Again, responses included

disagreement about how much / how fast they wanted to see La Pine grow; however, many participants expressed a desire to see downtown and the vacant lot primarily serve community members' needs rather than tourists or visitors.

The following two selections of excerpted comments are a sampling of some of the common viewpoints participants expressed in this final opportunity to share their thoughts in their own words.

Question: Is there anything more you would like to let the City know about downtown or the transportation and downtown center space?

EXCERPTED COMMENTS

A space for a weekly farmers market to serve all of south county would be great. A place to sell food, crafts, hear live music, etc. A great place for community members to meet, and socialize and buy local products. It would be great for our community, local businesses and good for the environment.

As people drive by draw people's attention with beauty and well designed buildings. Visually invite people to get out of their cars and walk our town and want to spend time here!

Encourage current residents to not isolate themselves but desire to "go to town" and meet with friends and interact and contribute to our wonderful growing community.

Focus on the purpose of the center - don't turn it into an event center, playground, or museum for art. There are others places to go for those things. La Pine needs a transportation center - so keep the focus on bus and taxi service plus the needs that go with those things, which are shelter and food.

I am pleased to see things are being done to make downtown more walkable. Not everyone wants to walk from place to place while shopping or going to lunch or coffee, but it would make it more appealing to people passing through and encourage them to stop.

I like the idea of better transportation but the downside to that is it attracts more places for homeless and drugs to occur. I don't think it would make our community nicer and part of the reason I moved here is because it's a small community I would like to keep it that way.

I love downtown LaPine's character, though would like to see it more walkable. I hesitate to request more shops, etc (even though I would like that to some extent) because I don't want it to become like Bend.

I think our town area needs to stay as green and natural as possible. Incorporating nature into anything we do stays true to La Pine.

EXCERPTED COMMENTS (cont.)

La Pine currently has no obvious center. The business layout is unwelcoming and businesses are hidden. There is really nothing that grabs you as you pass through town. Our signage is congested. Sign pollution and poor layout makes everything hard to read EXCEPT major national brands like McDonalds. I truly don't understand why we make everything hidden. Store front are either facing sideways or are set back behind other buildings. This town center is a chance to GRAB the traveler's attention and in one look, give them an overall message that must encapsulate the future of La Pine. We have green space for parks we live in a HUGE play area called the Newberry Monument. Hwy 97 attractions and the state park offer legitimate places to visit all that nature can offer. Please do not waste this opportunity on another green space. An event space that is warm, can be open year 'round and offer the best music, art and food that La Pine can offer could be the beginning of a widespread artist's movement. Sisters is too posh now. Bend is too expensive. La Pine is already luring artist here. Take advantage.

PLEASE....NO PUBLIC BATHROOMS! We understand the need for it BUT the negatives may outweigh the positives in the long run and once it's a 'done deal' La Pine is stuck with it. Suggest you wait for more city positive growth before adding.

Sat market space in summer sounds like a LOT of foot traffic. Safety of crossing the nearby streets a big danger. Maybe partially fenced in where people can't cross roads except at corners

The addition of the decorative street lamps and grass/flowers by the light on 97 has added immensely to the look of the area. It would be nice to see that carried throughout the rest of 97 thru town.

There are several areas already in La Pine that are play areas. Would like to see those utilize instead of adding another unused place to sit or play.

try to keep downtown a hometown & not a metro

Yes, I think they need to be careful about creating something that takes a lot of maintenance, or that will be very inviting to transients, putting additional burden on law enforcement. Side note: I grew up and went to school in La Pine, and still have family & friends there, so my growing family and I visit several times a year. One thing I don't like is the big push that I see from some organizations for La Pine to grow, grow, grow. It's already teetering on the edge of not being a nice little town any more.

CONCLUSION

The results of this engagement provide a sense of the values and beliefs held by those who participated at this particular time about downtown La Pine. They also reveal some of the different individual viewpoints that people have about downtown La Pine's future and what kind of community they would like to live in.

Across the different demographic groups, some clear areas of agreement do emerge. At different parts of this survey, many participants shared their desire for opportunities and spaces that would promote community gathering. This was also evident from responses to "other" in the first question when many people added in "volunteering with different organizations" and / or "visiting with friends". Selections of the kind of space people most preferred when thinking about additional uses for the vacant lot echoed that wish. There are also some areas where people's concerns about the future of downtown La Pine emerged, from wondering if there is enough space to accommodate the transportation needs alongside other uses to ensuring ongoing maintenance and safety of the site.

As La Pine continues to work on planning for this space and engages in design work, the City might consider additional (or next phase) community engagement approaches or models that offer space and time for people to gather with one another in person as a community.

Appendix A. City of La Pine – Annotated Survey

INTRODUCTION

The City of La Pine is looking at downtown and its future. The City wants to know how people who live in or visit La Pine often use downtown now and how they would like to use downtown in the future.



Map provided to give general layout of area. Produced by SERA Architects in 2015. Some locations might not be current.

Also, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the City just bought a vacant lot where Highway 97, 4th Street, and Huntington Road meet. That property must be used in some way for public transportation for the community. But we can use that space for more uses, too.



The City wants to hear what hopes you have for downtown La Pine as a whole and for this lot. But, reaching that vision will take all of us. We need as many people as possible who live in and around La Pine to share your opinions. **So please fill out this survey.** We value your opinion!

Oregon's Kitchen Table (OKT) will give a report of the answers to in this survey to the City and others working on downtown in La Pine. The report will also be posted on OKT's website (www.oregonskitchetable.org). All answers will be confidential (private). They will not be tied to your name. or contact information, per OKT's privacy policy.

QUESTIONS

1. How often do you spend time in downtown La Pine?

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=708
More than once a week	72%
A few times a month	15%
Once a month	3%
Less than once a month	4%
Rarely or never	3%
I live in downtown La Pine	3%

2. What do you do when you visit downtown? Check all that apply.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=2320
Shop for food	24%
Shop for other things	20%
Go to a sit-down restaurant or bar	17%
Get fast food	13%
Go for meetings	7%
Go to school	5%
I work downtown	7%
Other	7%

3. What would you like to do more of downtown? Check all that apply.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=1906
Go to a coffee shop	21%
Window shop	15%

Walk or sit in a park	18%
Go to community events	19%
Use the restroom or be able to clean up	8%
Enjoy public art	11%
Other	7%

4. What would you like to see more of downtown? Check all that apply.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=1843
More kinds of shops and restaurants	30%
More places to stay overnight	6%
Activities or places for kids	18%
Park or greenspace	18%
Event spaces	12%
Enjoy public art	10%
Other	6%

5. Where do you go instead of downtown La Pine to do the things you want to do? Check all that apply.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=1479
Wickiup Junction	12%
Gilchrist / Crescent	2%
Sunriver	28%
Bend	45%
Redmond	6%
Somewhere else in Deschutes County	5%
I live outside of Deschutes County	2%

6. As you think about the future of downtown La Pine, which one statement most closely reflects your opinion? Please choose only one, even if you like a number of the statements.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=700
I would like to see downtown La Pine become a place for community events.	6%

I would like La Pine to become a place where people enjoying the outdoors in Deschutes County come to eat, clean up, and stay overnight.	11%
I would like to see places in downtown La Pine where people can relax and enjoy nature.	10%
I would like to see downtown La Pine offer more options for shopping and eating.	49%
I would like to see downtown La Pine as more of a place for youth and families to gather.	16%
I would like downtown La Pine to stay pretty much as it is right now.	8%

7. How important is it to you that downtown La Pine offer attractions (such as public art or greenspace) for people to stop and see? Circle one.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=703
Very important	20%
Important	30%
Slightly important	27%
Not important	11%
Not important at all	10%
Don't Know or No Opinion	3%

8. How important is it to you that downtown La Pine offer places where people can meet to socialize or for events? Circle one.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=707
Very important	35%
Important	33%
Slightly important	20%
Not important	5%
Not important at all	5%
Don't Know or No Opinion	2%

9. How important is it to you that downtown La Pine offer places where kids and families can play or gather? Circle one.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=708
Very important	27%



Important	38%
Slightly important	22%
Not important	5%
Not important at all	6%
Don't Know or No Opinion	3%

10. Oregon Department of Transportation and the City just bought a vacant lot where Highway 97, 4th Street, and Huntington Road meet. That lot must be used for public transportation in some way for the community. But we can use that space for more uses, too.

Please rate which of these you would most like to see. Start with 1 being the one you like the most out of all of these. Number all the way to 8, with 8 being the one you like the least. Only use each number one time.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8
Food trucks or farmers markets	42%	19%	10%	8	7	5	4	5
Green space, landscaping, sitting area	12%	20%	16%	13	13	11	7	6
Public restrooms	8%	12%	18%	12	13	11	15	12
Public art	2%	3%	8%	17	16	20	16	18
Event space	5%	11%	14%	18	17	15	12	6
Café, coffee shop	16%	19%	16%	10	11	12	9	6
Play space	9%	10%	11%	13	16	14	18	11
Information kiosk (a booth or stand with information)	5%	6%	8%	9	8	12	19	37
N=	692	689	692	677	676	655	658	65

Is there any other use that you would like to see?

Responses provided to the City of La Pine.

11. What do you think might attract people to use this space?

Please rate which of these are most important to you. Start with 1 being the most important out of all of these. Number all the way to 6, with 6 being the one that is least important to you. Only use each number one time.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
A place where people can stop and rest	11%	15	13	16	20	24

A place where people can gather or meet each other	14%	18	23	22	19	6	
A place where people can come in from the cold, rain, snow or heat	9%	13	17	20	20	21	
A place where people can get something to eat or drink	31%	23	19	14	8	5	
A place that helps make downtown more beautiful	21%	21	17	12	16	17	
A place where people can play	14%	12	12	15	17	30	
N=		687	687	683	676	674	672

12. Here are some examples of downtown or transportation spaces. Circle the letter next to the one you like the most. Please choose only one, even if you like more than one.



A. City park with places to sit, water play area, trees, bathrooms, and food



B. Transportation center with places to park cars, coffee shop, lockers, bike racks and plants



C. Bus stop outside or next to the high school with places to sit and public art



D. Transportation center with seating, small event space, live music, a place to stay warm or dry, and bathrooms



E. Space with places to sit, play areas, games, public art, and bus stops



F. Transportation Center with a place to stay warm or dry, open space, trees, and places nearby to eat

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=684
A. City park with places to sit, water play area, trees, bathrooms, and food	46%
B. Transportation center with places to park cars, coffee shop, lockers, bike racks and plants	14%
C. Bus stop outside or next to the high school with places to sit and public art	2%
D. Transportation center with seating, small event space, live music, a place to stay warm or dry, and bathrooms	6%
E. Space with places to sit, play areas, games, public art, and bus stops	9%
F. Transportation Center with a place to stay warm or dry, open space, trees, and places nearby to eat	22%

13. Can you tell us a little bit as to what you like about the picture that you chose above?

Responses provided to the City of La Pine.

14. Is there anything more you would like to let the City know about downtown or the transportation and downtown center space?

Responses provided to the City of La Pine.

MORE ABOUT YOU

Now we are going to ask a few questions about you. This is to help us make sure that we know we are hearing from the whole community. You can choose to answer these questions or not.

15. How old are you?

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=708
14 to 18 years old	8%



18 to 25 years old	3%
25 to 35 years old	13%
36 to 45 years old	16%
45 to 60 years old	27%
61 to 75 years old	29%
More than 75 years old	4%

16. Where do you live?

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=708
La Pine	81%
Gilchrist / Crescent	1%
Bend	3%
Sunriver	5%
Redmond	<1%
Somewhere else in Deschutes County	3%
I live outside of Deschutes County	5%

17. What was your total household income in 2017?

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=698
Less than \$15,000	4%
\$15,000 to \$29,999	8%
\$30,000 to \$49,999	15%
\$50,000 to \$64,999	15%
\$65,000 to \$89,999	16%
More than \$90,000	21%
I don't know or prefer not to answer	21%

18. Are you a military veteran or service member?

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=705
Yes	17%
No	80%
I prefer not to answer	3%

19. What is your gender?

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=705
Female	61%
Male	35%
I prefer to self-describe	4%
I prefer not to answer	<1%

20. What races and ethnicities are you? Please check all that you identify with.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=755
African American / African	<1%
American Indian / Alaska Native	3%
Asian	<1%
Hispanic / Latino	3%
White	79%
I prefer to self-describe	12%
I prefer not to answer	2%