

PLAN GALLATIN!

PURPOSEFUL AND PLANNED GROWTH

Q&A from June 4, 2020 Town Hall

The questions in blue were asked during the live, on-line Town Hall attended by more than 100 community citizens. The alphabetized answers are provided by City staff. If you have a question not answered here, please email it to EDAInfo@GallatinTN.gov.

1. **If we grow with the compact trend now, will the ag land and other greenfield be preserved by the city? Or come 2070, will this be used for more growth?**
 - a. While the city will not infringe upon a property owner's right to sell their land for allowable development, there are various strategies that can be deployed to help preserve greenfield if it is important to the community.
 - b. The process begins with identifying a vision for land conservation, along with specific goals, objectives, and targets as part of the comprehensive plan.
 - c. PlanGallatin can be used as a launching pad to evaluate the appropriateness for a range of strategies that often include public acquisition for park space, land banking by private non-profit organizations, tax incentives targeted at land owners who preserve their own land, and development regulations that encourage open space as part of a site plan.
 - d. All properties have a designated zoning classification, whether in the city or in the County. The City's AG zoning requires a minimum lot size of 2.5 acres. Most of the County zoning surrounding the city allows for 40,000 sq. ft. lots (.92 acre lots).
 - e. Generally, in areas of the City with the AG zoning designation, the AG district was intended to be a holding district until development demands warranted a change consistent with the Character Area (Land Use) and other policies identified in the Comprehensive Plan.
 - f. The land use map is the intended development pattern envisioned by the city. This is implemented by establishing zoning consistent with this land use map.
 - g. There are many areas where the zoning is inconsistent with the land use plan so future rezoning and reuse/redevelopment of properties is expected to eliminate/reduce the inconsistencies.

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2. **Will the compact trend equate with more apartments and rental property as opposed to individual real property ownership?**
 - a. This is hard to speculate. This type of housing (owner-occupied or rental) is based on market demands.
 - b. The compact trend may result in more condominiums or townhouses which are owner type units. However, there are many areas of town where single family units are offered for rent.
 - c. The City does not regulate housing based on form of ownership or require detached home to be owner-occupied.

3. **If we are so concerned about conserving land, why are we not putting a policy in place to mandate for every acre developed, one acre is preserved?**
 - a. Such a policy could be established and incorporated into the zoning regulations. This is commonly done under the clustering option offered by many zoning codes and briefly described and endorsed by the Comprehensive Plan. Also, see answers to Question #7.
 - b. However, this does not result in a decrease in density or the number of units permitted on a tract or parcel of land.
 - c. There is also the challenge of determining whose private property you will not allow for development and whose gets to develop. How do you compensate the person who is required to stay fallow or agricultural?

4. **Is there consideration of reducing the extent of the Urban Growth Boundaries to preserve green space and reduce cost of services?**
 - a. On March 10th, Planning Director Bill McCord did present the City Council with a plan to reduce Gallatin's Urban Growth Boundary. This does not guarantee green space will be preserved or that it will reduce the cost of services.
 - b. The City Council voted to keep the UGB the same. The Council also added an approximate one square mile area where the Liberty Creek Schools are being built and the area surrounding Ocana community.
 - c. Reducing the UGB would not mean preservation of green space. Property owners in the county can ask for zoning changes, if not in place already, to develop residentially and commercially.
 - d. Reducing the UGB or keeping it the same does not create an impact on City services. The UGB is simply the limit to which the city could annex property – but only at the request of the property owner, per state law.
 - e. The impact comes if/when a property owner asks to be annexed and the City Council approves the annexation. At that time, the City must prepare a plan of service for that property – including police, fire, and trash pickup, etc.

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5. **Many friends and neighbors are concerned about the number of multi-family rental residences being built in Gallatin. Is there a plan to ensure that infrastructure, schools, roads, etc., can handle the concentrated growth?**
 - a. Yes, as for infrastructure over which the City has authority, which generally addresses water and sewer availability, roadway capacity, recreation facilities, electric service.
 - b. The City has no adopted level of service standard in the code or Comp Plan for these facilities. However, developments are required to complete Traffic Impact Studies which often results in developers being responsible for street improvements.
 - c. The City has no authority regarding the Sumner County School system.
 - d. Every request for new development – whether residential, commercial, or other – is sent by the City to the Sumner County School Board for comments. The City relies on those comments to determine impact.
 - e. Sumner County School Superintendent Del Phillips says his administration keeps track of all new development and build-out timetables. He said the School Board uses those to recommend when and where new schools should be built. He said they also use the information to determine rezoning of students every year or two years.
 - f. The School Board has historically taken action to provide facilities to accommodate growth and continues to do so.

6. **We already have enough development approved to accommodate a population of 60,000. The 2045 projections shows 65,000 in Gallatin. Why are we continuing developing our City at such a fast pace?**
 - a. The City does not specifically try, nor should it try, to match a projected population with a set number of housing units or lot types. This should be set by the market.
 - b. The market supply of land available for a variety of housing units must exceed to the minimum necessary to support a projected population to ensure that the cost of housing is not inflated beyond the ability to provide affordable housing for all existing and future residents.
 - c. This frequently means that anywhere from 1.5 to 2.5 times the minimum amount of land is available to meet these needs during the planning period.

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7. **Suggestions regarding preserving greenspace. How about a public donation fund for a trust to acquire greenspace. NOT higher taxes!**
 - a. The City has provisions in the land development regulations to accommodate this.
 - b. This is currently applied when new development occurs on properties that contain flood zones and where future greenway corridors are designated. Additional opportunities should be explored by adopting policies and code amendments that encourage cluster or conservation subdivisions.
 - c. The Land Trust of Tennessee does just this. Some property adjacent to Gallatin has already been preserved by the trust. Several other properties in Sumner County have been preserved. Please visit LandTrustTN.org
 - d. Last year, the City purchased three private properties for preservation.
 - e. Would you be willing to spearhead a conversation about going through the Land Trust of Tennessee to help acquire property – and creating the public contributions to it?

8. **Has there been any interest or activity regarding the Gallatin opportunity zones for restoration of the downtown area?**
 - a. Yes and No. Yes, there has been interest. No fund or developer has chosen to take advantage of the Opportunity Zone in Gallatin.
 - b. Gallatin's Opportunity Zone spreads from the core downtown and east to Airport Road where there are industrial properties.
 - c. Shortly after the federal government created Opportunity Zones, the City developed a prospectus for the zone in Gallatin. You can see it at GallatinGetsIt.com – then scroll to the bottom of the page. Or put this in your browser:
<https://www.gallatintn.gov/DocumentCenter/View/5026/Web-Version-Final-Gallatin-TN-Opportunity-Zone-Prospectus-PDF?bidId=>
 - d. If your question includes interest in historic preservation, the property owners downtown have been reluctant to establish an historic district which might restrict one from demolishing an historic or iconic building. This also limits the city in requirements for new construction in the historic downtown to be cohesive with the character of the area.
 - e. In most cases, new buildings downtown do not require parking. However, often lending institutions will require parking with a new development which reduces the possibility for a more compact development pattern.
 - f. We strongly promote the historic downtown

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9. **Are there other measures of success, such as tree canopy preserved and reduced stormwater runoff?**
 - a. A new Stormwater Ordinance was adopted by the City Council in 2015 and further amended in 2018. This includes a City Stormwater Utility.
 - b. Detention/retention facilities and water quality treatment facilities are required on most newly developed sites.
 - c. A big emphasis of the Stormwater Ordinance is on a practice called runoff reduction. Runoff reduction requires new developments to retain the first inch of rainfall on their site.
 - d. In addition, the Beautification Committee is now reviewing possible code changes that will address landscaping including preservation of mature trees.

10. **The two trends you presented focus on extremes. What about a middle of the road approach?**
 - a. Middle of the road, or inclusion of other trends, is possible and quite likely.
 - b. Although it is expected to diminish, a sprawl development pattern may still be desired by certain persons. However, based on the increasing value of land and construction costs, the long term viability of this development pattern and the ability for a majority of the population to be able to afford land under this pattern is not in the financial interest of local governments.
 - c. Three trends were presented based on all the previous input from the public. This is not an either/or selection. All three trends are in place now and will continue based on existing zoning.
 - d. The process is not complete and won't be until the City Council approves the plan. The purpose of this most recent survey is to gage the public's enthusiasm for or against a trend. The survey does include the option for you to provide a trend not mentioned in the survey.

11. **I think that it is not Lock 4 Road that is the issue. All the trails in the park are open to cyclists, hikers, walkers, runners, etc. There should be separate trails for each use. Response from another attendee: The bike trails were built with a lot of volunteer hours.**
 - a. Lock 4 Park belongs to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The City has a lease with the Corps for use and maintenance of Lock 4 Park. Any additions or changes to the park must be approved by the Corps.
 - b. They would certainly consider additions/improvements as long as they are acceptable to the Army Corps of Engineers, especially if they are installed by volunteers with little to no expense to the city.

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- 12. What are plans to address population growth with impact to overpopulated schools, needed increase in fire, police, medical, and improving our roads which need repairs, and traffic flow? Also, needed improvement entrance of the intersection of Gallatin Road and Douglas Bend where many accidents occur? Additionally, speed enforcement on Douglas Bend? Repaving needed on Lori Lee and Lee Etta Drive?**
- a. The School Board is responsible for planning for the schools to accommodate the school age population. As in years past, they have constructed new schools and rezoned schools to maximize the use of existing facilities. (Also, see answers to Question #5.)
 - b. Roadways in the City are maintained by the State (for State highways) and the City Public Works Department. Public Works coordinates with Public Utilities and the Engineering Division to identify and schedule roadway repaving/reconstruction.
 - c. The City also uses general funds and special revenue funds to provide a match for transportation improvement grants to construct new roadways or widen roadways to accommodate traffic growth.
 - d. The Big Station Camp Boulevard Transportation Improvement District was created to partner with area property owners to pay for future improvements to Big Station Camp Boulevard.
 - e. One immediate improvement to traffic flow is very close to going to construction. The City is managing an ITS Signal Coordination grant that will connect and coordinate 25 traffic signals in Gallatin including all of those along US HWY 31E and in the downtown square area.
 - f. The City has not noticed an elevated crash rate at the intersection of Nashville Pike and Douglas Bend Road. We will check accident history and monitor the intersection in the near future to determine if further action is needed.
 - g. The City of Gallatin performs speed enforcement along Douglas Bend Road from Nashville Pike to approximately 3500 feet from that intersection. Speed Enforcement on Douglas Bend Road south of the City Limits is the responsibility of the Sheriff's Department.
 - h. Lori-Lee and Lee Etta Drive are county roads and maintained by the county. Please contact the Sumner County Highway Department at 615-452-2632.

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13. I love the neighborhood sidewalk program concept!

- a. The City has an extensive list of priority sidewalk projects.
- b. The City currently has three sidewalk grants, one just completed on Browns Lane and two more in the design phase – adding a sidewalk along Hancock near Rucker Stewart Middle School west to Lock 4 Road, and adding a sidewalk on Nashville Pike from Green Wave Drive to Lock 4 Road.
- c. However, funding is not readily available in the short term to address all needs in the city.

14. Can we review setbacks in urban core and maybe review grandfathered zoning issues?

- a. This can be considered when the zoning code is up for renewal. The Comp Plan may include a policy to update the Zoning regulations.
- b. Grandfathered zoning is governed by Tenn. Code Annotated 13-7-208. The City has limited ability to change these provisions.
- c. All buildings, regardless of zoning district, must comply with the Building Code.

15. Growth is inevitable, but the traffic has really gotten a bit crazy. Where is the city focusing efforts currently with regards to traffic?

- a. The Albert Gallatin/Hatten Track extension is under construction and is designed to be a northern bypass around Gallatin – relieving traffic on Nashville Pike/U.S. 31 between SR109 and Airport Road.
- b. The City plans to widen Airport Road by adding a center turn lane from Hwy 25 south on Airport Road to the section that was recently widened. Construction is delayed until the city has better data on revenue collections during the pandemic.
- c. One immediate improvement to traffic flow that is very close to construction is the city-managed ITS Signal Coordination grant that will connect and coordinate 25 traffic signals in Gallatin including all of those along US HWY 31E and in the downtown square area.
- d. There are various smaller intersection improvements being considered and some in the works for implementation soon. The most notable are a turning lane additions at the intersection of Long Hollow Pike at North Belvedere Drive and Big Station Camp Boulevard.
- e. There are other long-term transportation projects listed in the Gallatin on the Move 2020 Plan. Some of them are speculative and some await future funding opportunities.

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16. It appears that there is a disproportionate volume of residential properties vs. commerce (stores, higher end restaurants, grocery chains). For a small city, we have more gas stations than we could ever want. What is being done to attract more retail (dept. stores, Trader Joe's) and nice restaurants (J. Alexanders, BrickTops)?
 - a. The most popular request the Gallatin Economic Development Agency gets is for high-end restaurants, particularly a Bonefish Grill.
 - b. High-end restaurants usually require a minimum median income, which Gallatin achieves.
 - c. They usually also require a minimum population of 40,000 in a 3-mile radius of where they locate – a requirement Gallatin does not achieve. When you put a pin on GreenLea Blvd, the 3-mile radius pop. in 2019 was 30,848. A pin on the courthouse downtown shows a 2019 pop. of 23,765.
 - d. As for retail shopping, the industry was already in great flux because of online sales vs. brick-and-mortar. The pandemic has added even more uncertainty for retailers and the future of how they will operate profitably. One example of pandemic impact is a development that would have included a breakfast restaurant and retail shops. This development got a site plan approved by the City before the pandemic, and has now chosen not to proceed.
 - e. In short, the decision to construct commercial uses in the City is market driven. However, they are required to construct these uses in areas zoned to permit commercial uses. The Planning Commission generally approves site plans for these areas.

17. We would love to see downtown Gallatin develop with nice restaurants, unique shops, beautiful inns/hotels. How likely is this scenario?
 - a. The current restaurant and shop owners in downtown Gallatin might take offense to the idea that they are not nice and unique. There are good restaurants and unique shops in downtown Gallatin now.
 - b. The City has promoted the idea of a boutique hotel in downtown Gallatin as a project for an Opportunity Zone fund, but no developers have expressed real interest.
 - c. The City itself is not in the retail or restaurant business. It takes a private owner or company to pursue those options and run with them. However, the Gallatin Economic Development Agency is always on alert for retail and commercial prospects that would be a good fit for downtown.
 - d. The Gallatin EDA has reached out to a variety of unique dining operations encouraging them to visit the downtown and consider locating there. The City is also open to Public/Private Partnerships that would add retail and hotels downtown.

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18. How will you mitigate downtown flooding as you increase density in the urban core?

- a. A new Stormwater Ordinance was adopted in 2015 and further amended in 2018. This includes a City Stormwater Utility.
- b. The City is currently partnered with the USACOE on a Federal Section 205 which is a Flood Damage Reduction Project. The project will construct a detention pond feature in Triple Creek Park that is specifically designed to improve flooding conditions along Town Creek for the developed downtown area.
- c. The City is examining other grant funding opportunities to buyout often flooded properties.
- d. The City's Downtown Master plan includes ideas and concepts of removing buildings that were along Town Creek to improve creek flow, reduce flooding, and add green space near the Square.
- e. In addition, the Floodplain regulation of the zoning code severely restricts construction in a flood hazard area.
- f. Extraordinary measures must be taken when constructing in flood hazard areas. Staff strongly encourages developers to avoid these areas when considering development plans.

19. As of the (May) 20th, the city has already approved 6,989 housing units...enough for almost 17,000 new folks. At 200 new residents a month, that's enough housing for 85 months. This doesn't count future approvals. Any comment on this?

- a. See the response to question #6.
- b. Some zonings are already in place. It often takes 2-4 years for a developer to acquire property and go through the development review process before construction can begin and then another year to complete the first phase of construction.
- c. The currently approved units are not all ready for construction. Many of these are simply developments on paper. They have yet to pull permits for construction.
- d. To provide a fluid, affordable market, a generous supply of housing units must be available, not just the minimum needed to accommodate the population at any given time.

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- 20. I live off Lock 4 Road. The access to the wonderful park at the end is awful and terrifying. Why is there not a multi-purpose path along Lock 4 for walkers, runners, and cyclists?**
- One of the main reasons is cost.
 - The City initiated a sidewalk/biking plan for Lock 4 to the park more than 12 years ago.
 - The cost estimate has been prohibitive because of the amount of right-of-way the city would have to acquire from private property owners.
 - The city is not inclined to initiate eminent domain (or condemnation) to add sidewalks.
 - Either way, the private property owner is entitled to compensation for any of their land the city would need to acquire. To arrive at just compensation, the City must have each property surveyed and appraised. There are a minimum of 20 properties that would be impacted.
 - As new properties develop adjacent to Lock 4 Road, except for new homes on existing lots, the City requires that sidewalks be provided. A future greenway to connect Lock 4 Park to the interior of the City is indicated in the Gallatin on the Move 2020 Plan.
- 21. Are the builders of new homes in Gallatin charged an impact fee? If so, how much and when was the fee instituted?**
- They are charged permit fees by the City and must pay an Adequate Facilities Tax to Sumner County.
 - New homes to be constructed in new master developments along Big Station Camp Creek Boulevard are required to enter into an agreement to fund improvements to this roadway (see response question #12.)
- 22. When and how is zoning determined?**
- Zoning/rezoning is approved by City Council. Zoning is usually established upon annexation but are subject to change when requested by the land owner.
 - Staff reviews the requested changes for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, including the designated land use/character area assigned to the property, and makes findings which may be adopted by the Planning Commission.
 - The Planning Commission makes a recommendation to City Council.
 - Public Hearings are held as part of every zoning/rezoning request at both the Planning Commission and City council.

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- 23. What is the current plan for future development (redevelopment) of the South Water corridor now that we have the Windsong development going in?**
- South Water Avenue has a variety of existing zoning including commercial zonings. The Comp Plan designates most of the corridor for Commercial Corridor-Revitalization character area.
 - The current Comprehensive Plan includes several illustrations of possible redevelopment options for this corridor.
 - An existing building/business on South Water, as long as it is in use, is grandfathered in and cannot be made to comply with today's architectural, landscaping and sign standards.
 - If a building/business goes fallow for three years, and a new business wishes to open, it must submit a new site plan and should be required to meet today's landscaping and sign standards.
 - The City, over the last 14 years, has discussed ideas of how to encourage or incentivize existing property owners to give their properties a facelift, or fresh look, or general cleanup in appearance, but this cannot be enforced unless they are violating building codes or other codes.
- 24. To whom is GNRC most directly accountable?**
- Local Government elected officials in northern Middle Tennessee communities who comprise their membership.
 - Visit <https://www.gnrc.org/269/Organization-and-Membership>
- 25. Transportation? Bus to Nashville. Park/Ride. Community van to surrounding residential parks. Progress on School building at Beech School.**
- The City has worked for more than 12 years to have the RTA (Regional Transportation Authority) provide bus service to and from Nashville and Gallatin in addition to the existing service.
 - There is a park-n-ride on Enterprise Drive, off GreenLea Blvd, across from the "back" entrance to Volunteer State Community College.
 - Currently, the RTA only provides service to Nashville twice in the morning and from Nashville at least twice in the afternoon.
 - The RTA has not been amenable to adding routes at a cost that would be reasonable to the City of Gallatin.
 - It is a discussion the City continues to have.
 - The Comprehensive Plan includes potential future fixed routes or demand for responsive public transportation in Gallatin, but there is no funding yet.
 - Public School construction at Beech, which is not in the Gallatin City limits, is the responsibility of Sumner County Schools.

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- 26. What are plans for funding new schools to accommodate growth without raising taxes?**
- Those decisions are made by the Sumner County Commission and the Sumner County Board of Education.
 - The City of Gallatin has no authority over the school system nor the County Commission. The City also has no authority or vote on the budget for Sumner County Schools.
 - The City of Gallatin has not raised property taxes in several years.
- 27. Our internet options are terrible. When is Gallatin going to demand fiber for our personal residences, not just businesses?**
- This would be a question for the private service providers.
 - This is also a discussion to have with your state representatives – both in the State House and State Senate – as to what state laws might be able to achieve or encourage private fiber companies to provide.
 - There are also federal regulations that tie the hands of local governments.
- 28. Why only two scenarios?**
- Please see answers to #10.
 - Three scenarios were offered. Current trend, sprawl trend and compact trend. The survey allows respondents to offer alternative trends.
 - Hybrid options will also be considered.
- 29. Do potential employers have a preference for density?**
- Not in terms of planning and zoning.
 - When manufacturing, distribution, technology companies and the like look at potential sites, they primarily look at the labor shed in a 30-minute to 45-minute drive time from where they might locate. Prior to the pandemic, Gallatin's labor shed was very healthy, although unemployment was very low in the city (approximately 3%).
 - Potential employers are concerned about a trained, available workforce.
 - Retail employers prefer more density, not for employment, but for sales.
 - Generally, employers also want a variety of housing options to support their work force. They also value sufficient infrastructure and good schools.
 - Contrary to what some of us who live here might think, Sumner County has a very good school system with nationally recognized schools and programs. It is not hard to sell potential companies on the worth of Sumner County Schools.
 - Volunteer State Community College and Welch College are also tremendous assets.

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- 30. SR 386 stops as a highway at GreenLea. Traffic is almost backed up to that exit at rush hour. What is the plan to extend that road?**
- SR 386 actually converts to Long Hollow Pike at the intersection with Long Hollow Pike – the traffic signal there.
 - The City's Comp Plan shows a cloverleaf, elevated interchange at SR 386 and Long Hollow, but the City Council felt that such an interchange would never be built and has allowed an at-grade intersection and development on all four corners of that intersection.
 - The 2040 Regional Transportation Plan includes a widening project on SR-174, Long Hollow Pike, from the intersection of SR-386 to SR-109.
 - <https://forwardsumner.org/community-development/netcorridor/>
- 31. Possible work from home trend incorporated into planning yet?**
- Yes. The City also allows certain home-based businesses per Section 12.03., Gallatin Zoning Ordinance.
- 32. How has the present pandemic affected our future outlook for our planning growth?**
- It hasn't yet!
- 33. How do you expect bringing this amount of new jobs if we mainly focus on technology industries...datacenters?**
- As is outlined in Gallatin's Strategic Plan, the city will continue to pursue traditional manufacturing.
 - Focusing on technology driven companies is an addition to, not a replacement for, our pursuit of new jobs. Technology was chosen specifically to diversify employment opportunities in Gallatin, and to bring higher pay into the jobs equation.
 - The Strategic Plan of the Gallatin Economic Development Agency (EDA) also includes recruitment of corporate headquarters.
 - EDA's are not typically involved in retail recruitment; however, the Gallatin EDA has successfully recruited retail to the city.