



## **Talk of the Town Webinar Questions and Answers**

### ***Talk of the Town 1: Leverage our own gravity***

1. What can be done to convince the Indiana Legislature to allow Central Indiana to develop its public transportation infrastructure?
  - a. Call/write/meet with your state legislator and local officials.
2. Monon and Main was a beautiful public space when it was grass and very old trees. Now it is all hard surfaces - totally uninviting for picnics, concerts...
  - a. Noted.
3. Is the plan to maintain R! single family lots in tact, or is the City going to try and rezone these types of lots. Given the larger lots in East Carmel, it is a concern about multi use rezoning.
  - a. This Comprehensive Plan update is not a rezoning. This Comprehensive Plan's Development Pattern Areas seek to maintain and enhance the character of different parts of Carmel, both in the urbanizing core and the rest of the City outside the core.
4. Public spaces like Midtown on the Monon are creating affordances for children to play and participate in their city in a very cool way that is different from playing in a park. How do you think the growth of child-friendly planning and design in streets and public spaces will positively benefit Carmel? Are there ways to design opportunities for seniors, teens, young adults to play in the same way?
  - a. Great. We hope Carmel continues to be attractive to families of all ages.
  - b. Public space and park design can incorporate activities for people of all ages. Carmel Clay Parks and Recreation focuses on accessibility and offerings for all ages.

5. With more demand for townhome/condo lifestyle, we're starting to see more rooftop living spaces. What approaches are successfully addressing viewshed (looking from) and privacy issues (looking toward) rooftop amenities?
  - a. The design and development review processes generally try to address these sorts of issues.
6. What are the top 3 issues you see that we face as a community?
  - a. Leverage our own gravity - Carmel can set the terms for its growth.
  - b. Move in, not out - Without easy land on the edges, Carmel's growth will occur through infill and redevelopment.
  - c. Complementary growth - Our next stage of growth, particularly outside of the Arts District, Midtown and City Center, will likely be more incremental to reflect the existing street patterns and fragmented property ownership.
7. What happens to the office development if more work from home? Probably too early to tell but your thoughts?
  - a. Post-pandemic work from home shifts will likely affect the commercial real estate market. How much and in what way is too hard to tell. Obsolete commercial buildings will always need repositioning or redeveloping, which has been underway in Carmel before the pandemic.
8. Will you be giving attention to the HomePlace area?
  - a. Yes, the Development Patterns, Street Facilities and Streetscape elements all apply to HomePlace. This plan does not currently include small area planning, however.
9. Are there examples of development standards that address public art (that is, art that is accessible by the public, and developer funded) as a requisite component of new development?
  - a. There are various ways to include public art in new development, including requirements such as 1% for public art.
10. Our public art advisory committee has an interest in developing a master plan for public art to integrate with the Comp Plan
  - a. noted.

### ***Talk of the Town 2: Move in, not out***

1. Comment: Yes, surface parking is a waste of public space. Car parking as a whole tends to ruin a city-scape. Very thankful that Carmel understands this and builds/designs a city for people, not cars.
  - a. Noted.
2. Comment: Less lawn was a selling point to us. We want our city to be our "playground". We don't want/need a big lot/lawn to pay for and maintain. The new development we are building in gives us that beautifully.
  - a. Noted.

3. Why does Carmel need more commercial and more density? It already is one of the most walkable cities, has low taxes, and is one of the best places to live in the Country. What is the upside of changing what drew people here?
  - a. Property owners have the right to develop property within land use regulations. This plan seeks to guide the changes, not require change or stop change.
  - b. Carmel's low tax rate and high level of service delivery is a function of its efficient development pattern. Commercial uses pay higher property tax rates and contribute significantly to the property tax levy. Homesteads have the lowest property tax rate in Indiana, capped at 1%.
4. With retail, has Carmel abolished minimum parking standards and will they eventually adopt minimum bike parking or at least require it for new retail?
  - a. Carmel has not abolished minimum parking standards for most zoning districts; however, there are a few districts that allow for reduced parking or shared parking based on the proposed uses. There are minimum bicycle parking standards for new developments such as retail, office and multifamily residential.
5. To what extent is it possible, practical, and /or realistic, to allow residents of the affected neighborhoods to have input on neighborhood-focused proposals? To what extent must those decisions first be consistent with the comp plan?
  - a. A decision-making process that includes those most affected by a project is practical and possible. It would be particularly helpful in a situation where a builder wanted to veer away from recommendations in the comprehensive plan. There are examples of processes such as this in other cities.
6. I love the idea of 20 min neighborhoods! You mean 20 min walk, right?
  - a. That is correct, we are referring to a 20 minute walk.
7. There is already a plan for Clay Terrace to convert to a hotel and apartments, although that is in doubt because of bankruptcy proceedings by the current owner
  - a. Noted.
8. What stakeholder group wants businesses on the monon?
  - a. The businesses on the Monon. Allied Solutions and Merchants bank have decided to establish headquarters in Midtown.
9. What is the projected population in the next 20 years under these scenarios?
  - a. That is not in the scope of this plan update.
10. What stakeholder groups will ride their bikes to work and restaurants? How do you know?
  - a. According to the U.S. Census, over 800 workers living in Carmel, or 1.6% of the 51,327 workers over 16 living in Carmel, walked or biked to work (2019, ACS 5-year estimates).

11. Comment: My wife and I will be new Carmel residents when our home is finished in a few months. 100%, we chose to move to Carmel because of the ability to live a car-lite/car-free lifestyle due to the bike infrastructure. We have e-cargo bikes and plan to do everything most would do in a car, but with our bikes. We do require separated/protected bike infrastructure and the typical on-street bike lane will NOT do. If it were not for this design, we would not be coming to Carmel. Carmel understands the principal of cities for people, just like the Netherlands.
  - a. Noted.
12. What stakeholder groups have you met with?
  - a. Redevelopment Commission
  - b. Hamilton County Tourism
  - c. Community Relations
  - d. Community Services
  - e. Engineering
  - f. Library
  - g. One Zone
  - h. Parks
  - i. Planning Commission
  - j. Police
  - k. Public Art Committee
  - l. Schools
  - m. Street Department
  - n. Utilities
13. Addressing Missing Links for Multi use paths. Amen!
  - a. Noted.
14. Where I am going with the population growth question is how much additional park acreage should we also be planning for?
  - a. Carmel Clay Parks and Recreation plans for this.
15. Why do we need more businesses?
  - a. This plan does not take this position. This plan seeks to guide development as it happens in Carmel over the next 10 years.
16. How do existing zoning and HOA restrictions play into all this? Does the revised comp plan make a difference?
  - a. The Comprehensive Plan is a guiding document for use by City staff and Plan Commissioners. Zoning and HOA restrictions are not a part of this plan.
17. Are businesses rather than residents driving this comp rewrite?
  - a. A multitude of stakeholders have been involved. The Plan Commission and City Council will drive adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

18. I think transportation is a great public service to start looking at! Regarding inter-city transit, though, how will the Comp plan address bus/tram routes to and from other cities, such as Fishers and Indianapolis?
  - a. A separate transit study was recently conducted by the Department of Community Services, separate from this plan. The study considered options for circulation within Carmel and potential inter-city solutions, including the possible integration with the Red Line if it is extended into Hamilton County.
19. Comment: Speaking of downtown, Main St is a bit of a traffic sewer with car parking flanking both sides. I seriously hope to see Carmel reevaluate the Main st. It is meant to be a place of commerce and exchange, not a space for thru-put of traffic.
  - a. Noted.
20. As we think about Transit - how do citizens get involved in setting the standard for future transit opportunities - especially to ensure that a diverse team is considering the needs of a diverse community?
  - a. Call/write/meet with your state legislator and local officials.
21. We should not design bike infrastructure for moderate/experienced cyclists. We need bike infrastructure for all ages and abilities. Think mobility lanes rather than "bike lanes".
  - a. Noted.
22. While I would like to see more connection between locations. However, wouldn't it be difficult to maintain safety with being pedestrian friendly/walkability and having mass transit?
  - a. All transit users walk, use a wheelchair, or bike to and from a transit stop. Complete streets seek to maintain safe use of public rights-of-way for all users, particularly pedestrians.
23. I really like the large golf carts as a first step in transit.
  - a. Noted.

### ***Talk of the Town 3: Unlock Complementary Growth***

1. Will you please post the chart from the previous slide? Or is it already posted somewhere?
  - a. All Talk of the Town webinars are posted online on the City of Carmel's YouTube Channel and Facebook page.
2. How was the transition to the Quiet Neighborhood "well handled" east of the Orthopedic Facility south of 111th St? A beautiful set of homes is being bulldozed.
  - a. This Comprehensive Plan update will not have affected past developments.
3. Sure there are estates in the SW area. But I think the use of that term for this is too broad. There are many more traditional subdivisions similar to those in the west and north (I live in one). And it's time for this area to be more actively included in the city comp plan, rather than excluded as it was, for various political reasons, in the current plan.
  - a. Noted.

4. I am surprised to see the Estates section shown going east to US 31 where the City has taken everything east of Spring Mill for commercial uses, whereas the previous planning was all Estate Residential and the lovely homes with landscaping are being demolished for office space (for which there is currently little demand).
  - a. Noted.
5. What is a "walk score"? What can we learn from looking at Walk scores, in downtown, vs. the walkscore of other parts of Carmel??
  - a. See [walkscore.com](http://walkscore.com) for more information. Walkscore measures the walkable access to destinations from an address.
6. Did I miss Home Place? It deserves special attention
  - a. The Development Patterns, Street Facilities and Streetscape elements all apply to HomePlace. This plan does not currently include small area planning, however.
7. I also see that the Michigan Road triangle impinges on the previously shown Estates area as well. So is the new plan to nibble away at the Estate area so that eventually nothing is left?
  - a. This Comprehensive Plan's Development Pattern Areas seek to maintain and enhance the character of different parts of Carmel, including in south west Carmel.
8. Good work including major roads for special consideration. That seems to be the practical trend underway with Carmel planning re individual projects. But More north-south considerations needed, especially West of US 31.
  - a. Noted.
9. Hi! While excited to implement more walking & biking friendly neighborhoods, what efforts will be made to make that safe? Crosswalks, flashing lights, speed bumps, etc? I live on Towne Rd. and the increased driving has made it feel more unsafe, as it becomes a thoroughfare to Westfield.
  - a. As part of the comprehensive plan we will develop multiple street type recommendations. Where these street typologies are recommended to be designed will be based on a variety of factors, such as traffic counts, land uses, etc. Developing more complete streets that are safe for all users will be a focus. Some of the elements of complete streets include on street parking, tree lawns, on street bike infrastructure, better signaling and improved cross walks.
10. What neighborhoods will you target to increase walking/commuting to work?
  - a. This process will not target specific areas for bike or walk commuting; however, neighborhoods that are proximate to mixed-use areas will likely be favored when it comes to improved walkable and bikeable infrastructure.
11. As an electric vehicle owner, it would be great to have more options to charge. It's predicted by the year 2025, half of all car sales will be electric. GM will only make electric vehicles by 2035. How can we prepare for electric cars as they become more increasingly popular?
  - a. This plan can propose policies to expand charging infrastructure; however, it will not recommend specific charging locations.

12. Where do you see pilot projects?
  - a. This plan has not located pilot projects.
13. Is there no female voice at the core of this planning effort? Does your presence here mean that a ten-year plan for Carmel is being developed by young, white men?
  - a. This Comprehensive Plan update efforts includes numerous consultants, city staff, and elected officials of various backgrounds beyond the three hosting this webinar.
14. How is the "pilot project" of Monon Greenway Blvd served by putting a play area in the middle of the walking path, forcing walkers into the bike lanes? It is not working for pedestrians like me.
  - a. This Comprehensive Plan update did not call for the play area in Midtown.
  - b. Noted.
15. Could you elaborate on the PUD issue? How would you tackle infill parcels which seem to be the target of PUD?
  - a. This Comprehensive Plan's Development Pattern Areas seek to maintain and enhance the character of different parts of Carmel, both in the urbanizing core and the rest of the City outside the core. The Comprehensive Plan is merely a guide for zoning and rezoning decisions.
16. In counties that aren't so fully developed, such as nearby Hancock County, city and county officials are inclined to just attract big box distributors and manufacturers, and to develop thoroughfares for that purpose. Residential and retail areas would continue to be elsewhere – classic examples of sprawl. What do you advise for future planning in such communities? Is a push towards walkability a viable strategy? What early steps have been effective elsewhere to nudge such areas into the build environments and quality of life you've described here?
  - a. This Plan does not make recommendations outside of Carmel.
17. Is there a plan to address the noise generated by US31 and 421 for residential neighborhoods within a mile from those major roads?
  - a. This Plan does not make recommendations about noise generated by US31 or 421.
18. Will you be posting all of the questions you have received during and after your Webinars? If so, where and when? This would be helpful before the last Webinar.
  - a. Webinar questions will be posted on the Comprehensive Plan project website at [www.carmeldocs.com](http://www.carmeldocs.com).

## ***Talk of the Town 4: Shape the growth***

1. Have any of these engagement tactics. been employed for this comp plan revision?
  - a. At the time of the recording of this session we had not conducted in-person engagement due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but since we have conducted widespread in person engagement around Carmel.
2. How will the City protect current Single Family homeowners? How can we be involved in the process of the new Comp Plan?
  - a. The in person engagement that was conducted after this episode was a good way to get involved and there will be multiple opportunities to have your voice heard during the process of adoption. This plan will make recommendations when it comes to land use, but it will not be a zoning document that regulates the types of homes that can be built around Carmel.
3. Are there “best in class” features, processes etc, at each of the three levels, that Carmel lacks currently?
  - a. With so much change and growth occurring in Carmel there are several opportunities for refreshed small area plans in key areas.
4. Interesting question is the “looking at front porch & looking at development” Question: Are there conversations taking place between developers and residents? It often seems that new development doesn’t always seem to consider the impact of existing residential areas.
  - a. The City encourages developers to meet with nearby residents to discuss a proposed development and potential concerns prior to any public hearings required for approvals. These discussions often continue during the approval process with the Planning Commission and City Council.
5. The city not engaging beyond 1 neighbor is a problem for the whole neighborhood. The city completing its design plan with the developer before the neighborhood finds out about it. The city designing a building with the developer that is vastly different from the neighborhood both in style and in density is a problem. The city approving a building opposed by the whole neighborhood In short, the city decides what it wants to do and established neighborhoods can have no effect
  - a. Noted
6. How can the comp plan include affordable housing?
  - a. A comprehensive plan can establish policy goals to study the existing housing supply and encourage a variety of housing types and sizes to reach the needs of the community.
7. What roles are appropriate for a firm like yours, or certain city entities, or a community foundation to play in leading the public input activities you’ve described? Sometimes it seems like developers, such as Old Town Design Group, set the direction of the city’s look and layout, while public input seems less influential.
  - a. Consulting firms, city staff and officials, and community organizations can play a variety of roles in public input activities, depending on whether the input is needed city-wide or for a specific site. Examples include moderator, collaborator, or professional or technical expert.



- b. A developer's influence is typically limited to an individual site under the guidance and/or requirements of a variety of plans, ordinances, codes. The City also encourages developers to meet with nearby residents as early as possible to discuss proposals and potential concerns.
- 8. I'm Dr. Tim Hannon, a city councilor at-large. To the average Carmel citizen, the comp plan/rezoning/ variance approval process is complex, opaque and perceived to be one sided. A number of steps need to be taken to educate, engage and directly advocate for citizens and neighborhoods during the planning and zoning process, which is stressful even under ideal circumstances. This webinar series is a good start, but there needs to be a long term commitment to improve the process from the standpoint of Carmel residents.
  - a. Noted.
- 9. What standards will you be recommending for possible infill projects in large lot residential areas? With potentially increasing density, how do we save open space for parks to serve that density? What are recommendations for re-use of all the large asphalt parking lots?
  - a. The Development Pattern Areas of this plan guide the character of land uses in different areas of Carmel.
- 10. How does the small area plan on the Hamilton county border with Marion county account for the impact of non Hamilton county residents?
  - a. This Comprehensive Plan update does not currently include small area plans.
- 11. From your current explanation, the "comprehensive plan" you are working on has nothing to do with the comprehensive plan we have had up until now which did assure zoning for property owners, even though the advent of the PUD undermined this characteristic. If so, why bother? If everything is just "conceptual" and can be changed in the weeds, what purpose does it really serve?
  - a. The Plan Commission uses a Comprehensive Plan to guide zoning and development decisions.
- 12. Who are the stakeholders for a particular part of town?
  - a. The people living, working, investing, or visiting there.
- 13. As a follow up to this comment, can you then address best practices for education, engagement and advocacy for citizens in the planning and zoning process. Thank you.
  - a. Staying connected to all of the public meetings that occur related to planning and zoning, participating in processes like this one, coordinating community and neighborhood events/conversations and volunteering your time on local boards are all ways to stay more plugged into the issues facing your community.
- 14. Can you sign up for email announcements?
  - a. For information specific to the Comprehensive Plan update, email Adrienne Keeling ([akeeling@carmel.in.gov](mailto:akeeling@carmel.in.gov)) to be put on an email list for announcements.
  - b. You can also sign up for weekly [Carmel Newsletters](#) via email with information about additional events and projects around the city.

## ***Email Questions & Comments***

1. City government used to tout the “unique” districts in Carmel, but it now appears to want all areas to be more urban and more alike.
  - a. This Comprehensive Plan’s Development Pattern Areas seek to maintain and enhance the character of different parts of Carmel, both in the urbanizing core and the rest of the City outside the core.
2. The proposed plan seems overly focussed on expanding density and compacting living spaces, as a way to enhance the growth in City tax revenues.
  - a. The upcoming draft plan will address Development Pattern Areas for the entire City, some of which are urban, others suburban, others more rural or natural, including the Estates and White River Corridor.
  - b. Property tax revenue is an important revenue source for municipalities in Indiana to pay for public services.
3. The example of New Urbanist development in Dublin OH is not directly applicable, since its focus was on a specific area near the city core. This proposed Comprehensive Plan update appears to be aimed at imposing higher-density urban development throughout all of Carmel, which is something entirely different.
  - a. The upcoming draft plan will address Development Pattern Areas for the entire City, some of which are urban and mixed-use, others more suburban.
4. I am not hearing anything in the conversation about maintaining and respecting the cohesiveness and integrity of existing residential neighborhoods. Such protections need to be included in the updated Comprehensive Plan.
  - a. This Comprehensive Plan’s Development Pattern Areas seek to maintain and enhance the character of different parts of Carmel, both in the urbanizing core and the rest of the City outside the core.
5. From my observations, the things that have attracted many folks to Carmel over the years have been: suburban space, family-sized homes with usable lots, good schools, safety, and natural surroundings. We need to fully preserve that option for the future.
  - a. Noted.
6. Most residents on the west side of Carmel oppose the intrusion of commercial development into or near their neighborhoods. The downsides of extra noise, traffic, lighting, etc., outweigh the potential advantages. Existing homes in west Carmel, situated on medium-to-large sized lots and away from commercial development, are in very high demand.
  - a. Noted.
7. Trying to split up residential lots, and/or to encourage the widespread use of ADU rentals, will not be well-received by most Carmel homeowners.
  - a. Noted.
8. The Village of West Clay is often touted as a successful example of mixed-use development in residential areas. But the businesses there have struggled historically. The number of neighborhood customers was insufficient, and “walkable” businesses lobbied hard for drive-thrus in a separate commercial district in order to survive. A small local grocery store closed down after a couple of years. A gas station will soon be built right next to retirement residences. And many homeowners in the Village of West Clay

have found out that living in houses just a few feet apart from their neighbors, with most of their windows being side-facing, is often problematic. The architecture is attractive, but the day-to-day realities are not always as rosy as some would like you to believe.

- a. Noted.
9. Walking/biking to local businesses may sound desirable, but it is largely impractical. It is impossible to provide most of the goods and services that a resident would need within that limited distance. Big-box stores in a commercial corridor offer economies of scale that are very difficult for small local businesses to compete with. Having a restaurant within walking distance might offer some convenience, but residents will generally seek out a variety of dining options which will inevitably be at more-distant locations.
  - a. Noted.
10. While improvements in bicycle paths are clearly desirable, the proposed Comprehensive Plan places too much wishful emphasis on bicycles becoming a standard form of transportation in Carmel. Many unchangeable factors discourage non-recreational bicycle use on a regular basis, such as: inclement weather, inconvenience, excessive travel time, personal health limitations, safety concerns, limited carrying capability, undesirability of showering at work, etc.
  - a. Noted.
11. The talk about using the Monon Trail as a commuter “highway” for many more bicyclists would obviously affect recreational users in a negative way. Carmel needs to be careful not to overcrowd and overdevelop areas that may have helped draw people to live here.
  - a. Noted.
12. Is the City planning to allow sidewalks, trails, and streets to become clogged with golf carts, Segways, and scooters? This would be dangerous for pedestrians, and aggravating for motorists.
  - a. The Policy Goal “Improve Mobility Options and Functionality” outlines how adding alternatives to driving can help Carmel become more resilient and adaptable. This includes adapting to some congestion at certain parts of the day, which will occur in a growing city. Pedestrian safety is also a specific objective of this plan.
13. Public transportation may sound good on paper, but it is impractical in Carmel. Nonstop commuter buses from Carmel to downtown Indianapolis were not successful, even when heavily subsidized, and with plenty of convenient parking available. Even if a bus network were in place, it would still often be difficult for residents to get from their homes to a location where they could access public transportation. And on the other end, it would often be difficult for residents to then get from public transportation to their eventual destination. Waiting and inconvenience would be involved, and Carmel residents do not generally have an appetite for either. For the most part, they will not give up their cherished SUVs.
  - a. Noted.
14. Insufficient attention is being given to true and proper transitions between commercial areas and residential areas. Disguising a commercial structure to look more like a residential structure is only cosmetic. Changing its looks does not change its function, or the associated negative ramifications. Also, planting a few small trees on a narrow strip of land does not provide a sufficient buffer between incompatible uses.
  - a. Transitions are a focus of the Development Pattern Areas in this plan.

15. Several woodland areas have been levelled for recent development projects in Carmel. Stronger protections for the remaining wooded areas are needed, or the considerable urban growth being proposed will only accelerate this undesirable trend.
  - a. Preserving and/or replanting trees has been a requirement for private development in Carmel for many years. Green infrastructure can also help with maintaining natural stormwater systems and natural habitat.
  - b. While property owners in Carmel have the right to develop or sell their land to a developer, they also have the opportunity to donate or sell their land to a trust or other land conservation organization.
16. The City should not overdevelop the White River corridor. Give nature its last remaining stronghold in our area. There is no need to transform a beautiful and peaceful retreat into just another crowded and uninspiring entertainment venue.
  - a. Noted.
17. The pandemic has shown us that packing too many people into too little space can be problematic. It is a good lesson for all of us.
  - a. Noted.
18. Carmel City government needs to back away from telling residents how they should want to live, just because the City wants to reap ever-increasing tax revenues. This re-planning effort appears to be all about the money, carefully hidden behind the tenets of New Urbanism trendiness. This level of social engineering by City government is becoming too heavy-handed.
  - a. The City of Carmel's delivery of high-quality public services is a function of its fiscally responsible development pattern, since property tax revenues are an important piece of the City's budget.
19. There are plenty of housing options available for residents in Carmel who want to live in or near the downtown mixed-use environment and/or near commercial development. But the choice made by many established homeowners, to live in a zoned residential-only environment, in single-family homes with yards big enough for their children and grandchildren to play in, needs to be respected and codified as well.
  - a. The HOAs and current residential zoning generally do protect existing neighborhood development patterns.
  - b. The real estate market is largely driven by market forces, demographic changes, changes in preferences, etc. The comprehensive plan and development ordinances of the city aim to shape and manage the growth Carmel is experiencing.
20. It is relatively quick and easy for Carmel homeowners to get to the busy city core when we want to. Do not bring the core to us. We will visit, but many of us do not want to live that way.
  - a. Noted. Development Pattern Areas should address the residential character of neighborhoods outside of the core.
21. I recommend that City planners and consultants observe how Zionsville, IN, has handled development. Zionsville has grown considerably over the years, but in a measured way that has allowed it to maintain its scale, integrity, and authenticity.
  - a. Noted.