

‘Fairfield Forward’: What’s next for the city after it listened to the community?



The city of Fairfield is in the middle of developing a new comprehensive plan. It’s expected to be ready for City Council approval later this year.

MICHAEL D. PITMAN/FILE

Photo: Michael D. Pitman

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By **Michael D. Pitman**, Staff Writer

FAIRFIELD —

Fairfield’s new planning document designed to guide the city into the future is expected to be wrapped up by this summer.

The city started the process with the help of a Cincinnati-based engineering company in May 2018 to develop an updated comprehensive plan it’s calling “Fairfield Forward.”

The plan will help direct future development, redevelopment and reinvestment of the community. Topics that will be addressed in this working plan include infrastructure, housing,

Over the past several months, city officials have reached out to the community at city events, an open house and public workshop, as well as interviewing key city stakeholders, to find out what the city needs to improve, and what it doesn’t need.

Fairfield Planning Manager Erin Donovan-Lynn said council should be “proud” of the feedback they have received.

“What you haven’t heard anything negative, any concerns about our core services,” said Donovan-Lynn during Monday night’s update presentation to City Council. “I think we’re doing something right. We are a community people want to live in, they just want to make it a little nicer in certain areas.”

Fairfield Development Services Director Greg Kathman said people were “tremendously complementary” about the city, but he and Donovan-Lynn told City Council, residents and stakeholders that they want to have more connectivity and a “health community” — which means more sidewalks, and hiking and biking trails.

“People want to live in a walkable community,” said Donovan-Lynn. “People want to be able to walk to different places, and want that lifestyle.”

They also want better variety of sit-down restaurants over fast food, and more things to do in the evening, such as more breweries.

Fairfield adopted its first comprehensive plan in 1966, and it has been updated several times since then. However, it hasn’t been updated since 2009. Other things the public wanted to see include improved property maintenance enforcement and design guidelines, and more passive parks and community events and programming, according to the presentation. They wanted to see fewer used car lots.

Kathman said a surprise of what residents wanted to have were splash pads.

“This was not necessarily on our radar when we started this plan,” he said.

At Fairfield’s National Night Out this past August, Kathman said many parents with young children requested this feature which has been popular in Hamilton and Middletown. It was the second-highest answer to a survey question on parks amenities.

“I think we may have hit upon something,” he said.