

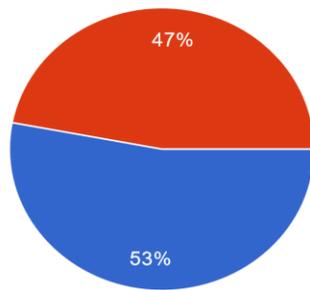
# Compilation of community input on Frenchtown Neighborhood First draft plan April 2021

Feedback period: Jan- Feb. 2021  
149 individuals gave feedback through a variety of methods  
(in-person, survey, phone, in writing)

## FRENCHTOWN DRAFT PLAN – PRIORITY AREA RANKING RESPONDENTS

Your connection to the neighborhood:

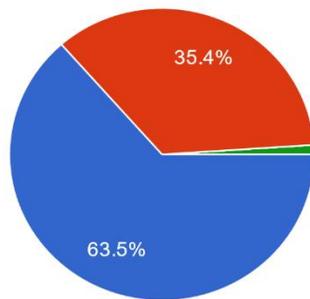
100 responses



- I am a Frenchtown resident (live within the neighborhood boundaries) [URL] [www.talgov.com/ftmap](http://www.talgov.com/ftmap)
- I am a nonresident stakeholder (ex: nonresident property owner, business owner, work or worship in the neighborhood, etc.)

What best describes your gender?

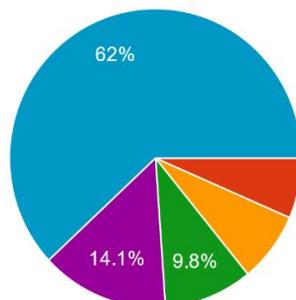
96 responses



- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say
- woman

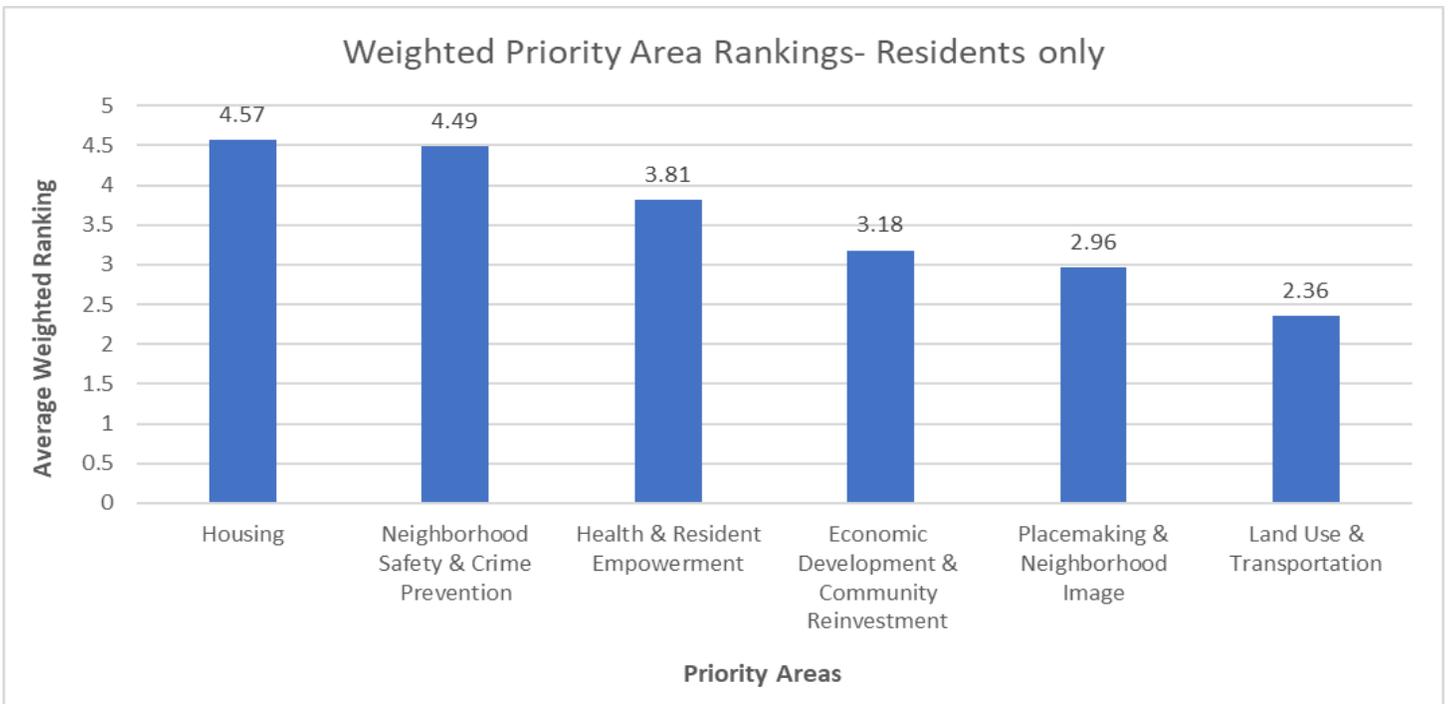
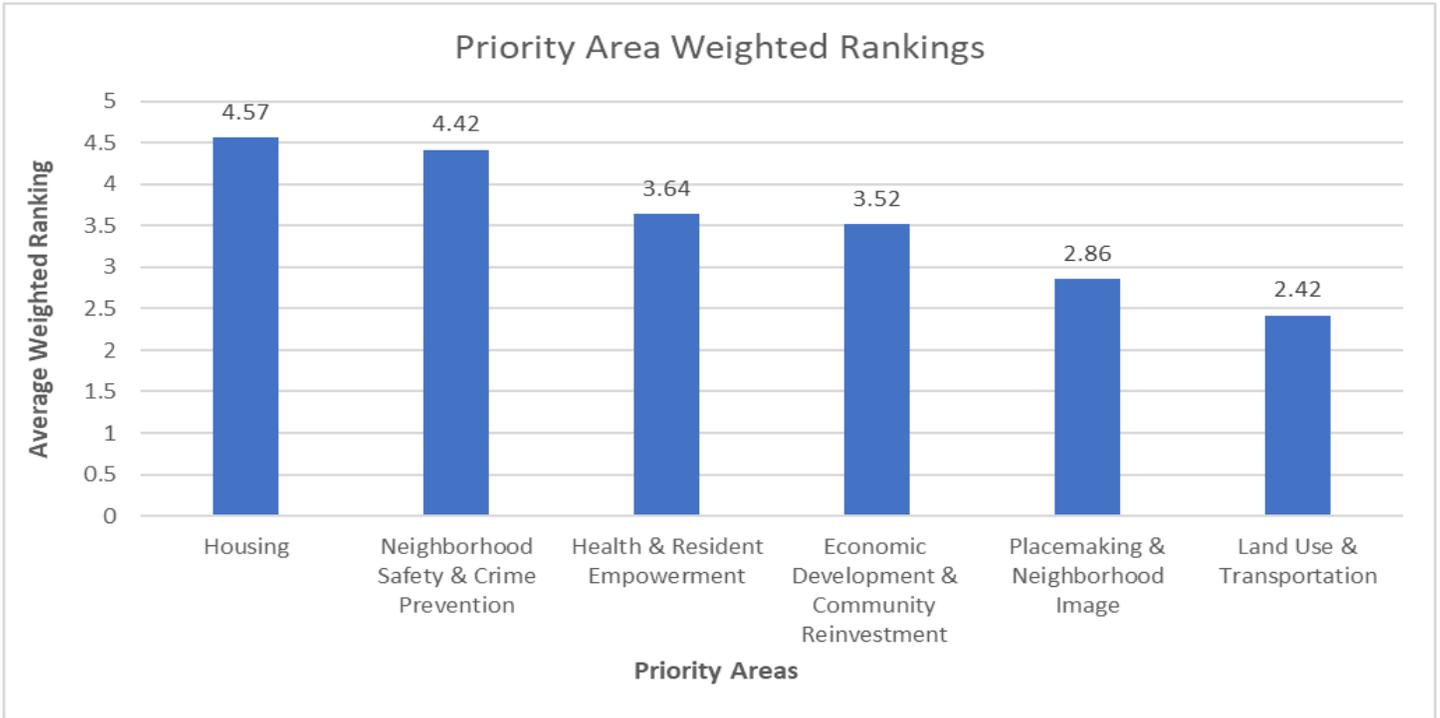
What is your age?

92 responses



- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35 - 44
- 45-54
- Above 54

## Feedback from Priority Area Ranking



## **COMMENTS:**

**Lena Simmonds (resident):** The old SAIL Bldg. is an eyesore and safety hazard. Why hasn't it been demolished? Seems like there's a hidden agenda; perhaps yet another student housing project.

**Rosie Clarke (resident):** In regard to the "Health & Resident Empowerment" section of priority areas, I believe something should be mentioned about the enforcement of regulations pertaining to non-smoking facilities, such as housing (whether shelters or apartment communities) where the elderly, disabled, children, and other high risk individuals who have to breathe in smoke from cigarettes and the aromas from marijuana against their will. This is due to the ill regard of residents who enjoy themselves in these types of "prohibited inside" activities while other residents who pay their rent have to suffer health issues due to inhalation of such chemical toxins in these "non-smoking" buildings because some smokers fail to step "outside" and smoke. These smells flow through vents and affect the vulnerable.

**Niya Hubbard (resident):** I would like to not have my front yard flooding with water due to mismanagement of the City allowing the builder to build on low land mark.

**Robert Jackson (nonresident- property owner):** Such a great location with much history. It should be revived with restaurants, businesses, coffee shops. Safe and secure for seniors and desirable for the next generation and young professionals. It's so close to FSU AND FAMU. Both acclaimed universities. The neighborhood integrity should reflect the price the value the history and the resources of the community can offer. Protect the seniors and current homeowners get build a community with a new blood and fresh air and make it a desirable place to live work and play

**Bill Wilson (nonresident):** I think that the basic plan is solid and represents a good job. The real test comes when you starting putting a priority on items as you build the financial ask. Until we get to the point of how much money are we asking for and where it will be spent this is a nice list of things we would like.

**Mila Tuner (nonresident):** For this to be a community-led plan, there are several gaps and biases. It seems more like an old-folks plan since the interests of established homeowners and business-owners dominate. I understand that is due to who participated in the process, but we've got to think beyond our personal needs to really consider the future.

## HOUSING:

-Homeownership is great, but it's not everyone's goal. What about improving conditions of other types of housing, especially apartments? How will you integrate apartment dwellers into the community? Who will advocate for residents in apartments and promote their concerns?

## ECON DVLPT:

-What are the roles and responsibilities of local banks, especially those within or bordering the community? Shouldn't they be required to invest in the community?

-How can you financially invest in arts just as much as businesses?

#### TRANSPORTATION:

-We need well maintained, continuous sidewalks.

#### PLACEMAKING:

-This priority area requires a lot of resident knowledge, resources (photos, videos, etc.), and expertise. Will residents be compensated for their time and effort? Are you seeking any grant funds for community history, preservation, or documentation?

#### SAFETY:

-Strategy 2.1 - The burden should not just be on residents to be "educated." Law enforcers need the education and training even more than we do.

-We do not need additional surveillance cameras. What happens to that data anyway?

-We do not want increased neighborhood patrolling. If anything, make the existing patrol more community-oriented. We do not need to be over-policed.

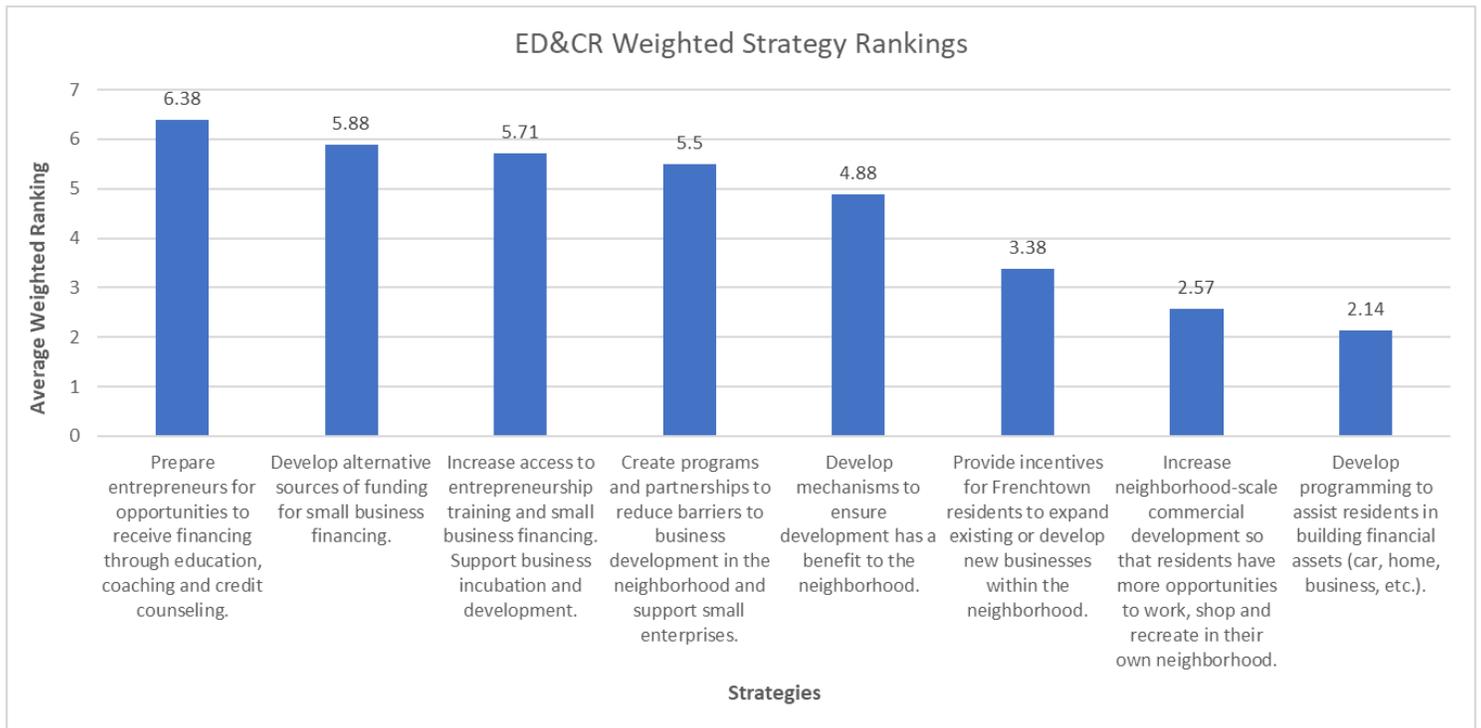
-Apartment dwellers need help to deal with domestic violence and other nuisances.

#### HEALTH EMPOWERMENT:

-Make community garden info more accessible. I finally found the garden, but there was no one there and I have no idea when they are present so that I can learn more and participate.

-There are numerous outreach activities planned, but none explicitly include a web or social media presence. That's where most young people get their information. How can we participate and be informed if we don't know what's going on? How will a website or social media accounts be maintained? Will the city provide a unique domain and host a website for us? Who will manage it? This can be a PAID job in itself.

## Economic Development & Community Reinvestment Feedback



**List up to 5 Action Items from this section that you think will be most important/effective:**

**Annie Harris (resident):**

Priority Action Items: ED&CR 2.1.1, 2.1.4, 3.2.1, 3.2.4, 4.1.3, Strategy 5.1

Comments: ED&CR 4.1.3- art as orientation- understanding business

**Penny Young (nonresident):** Strengthen educational and entrepreneurial partnerships with Lively, FAMU, FSU, TCC, commercial and banking organizations, businesses outside Frenchtown.

**Marcus Thompkins (nonresident):**

Action Item ED&CR 2.1.5:

Action Item ED&CR 2.1.1:

Action Item ED&CR 2.1.6:

Action Item ED&CR 1.1.1:

Action Item ED&CR 3.1.8:

**Vernon Deane (nonresident):** Alternative source of funding, increase scale for commercial development, Finances opportunities for entrepreneurs, Expand or develop new businesses

**Robin Colson (nonresident):**

1 - Partner with private sector to bring in 1 or 2 already-established trades or small production/manufacturing companies with living wage, benefits, worker protections, etc. willing to work with the realities of the community  
2- Provide training, funding, and partnerships needed to create locally owned trades and services businesses  
3- Educate Frenchtown (FT) residents on a model of keeping money within the community, i.e., the FT grocer goes to the FT mechanic who calls the FT plumber who shops at the FT grocer....

**K. Lennorris Barber (nonresident biz. owner):** Action Item 3.2.4 and 3.2.5

***What, if anything, is missing from this section of the draft plan?***

**Marcus Tompkins (nonresident):** I recommend including a program or initiative that partners with the School Board to include classes that prepare and test out students for various licenses and permits, that can aid them in skill development. The acquisition of these licenses and permits would enable graduating seniors or those who qualify, an opportunity to use them for financial independence.

**Vernon Deane (nonresident):** Consideration of Frenchtown Community Development Corporation 501-C3 Non Profit Organization

**Robin Colson (nonresident):** Adequate unskilled/middle-skilled jobs appropriate for community residents

***What, if anything, needs to be changed or removed?***

None.

***Any other comments:***

**Alexis McMillan, owner of Economy Drug:**

- Would like to see Frenchtown Merchant Association resurrected
- People don't shop here
- Safety is of concern
  - Banners/flags stolen, barber shop sign smashed in
  - Wants to see more foot patrol by TPD
  - Panhandling, people urinating on her building – ongoing issue

**Geri Seay (nonresident business owner):**

- Idea to develop intern/apprentice program with local businesses (barbers, funeral parlor, salons, car repair, restaurants, plumbing)
- Training on licensing, record keeping, etc. needed
- No affordable space in the neighborhood for small biz.

- Bethel AME has commercial kitchen- how can that be utilized more
- Would like to see vocational training at SAIL site for youth and adults

**Marcus Tompkins (nonresident):** I would add that there needs to be more door to door communication so that residents are more involved and informed (post Covid, or if there is a way to do it safely during this time).

**Vernon Deane (nonresident):** A Frenchtown Community Development Corporation would be a strong resource and support for a number of strategies considered above

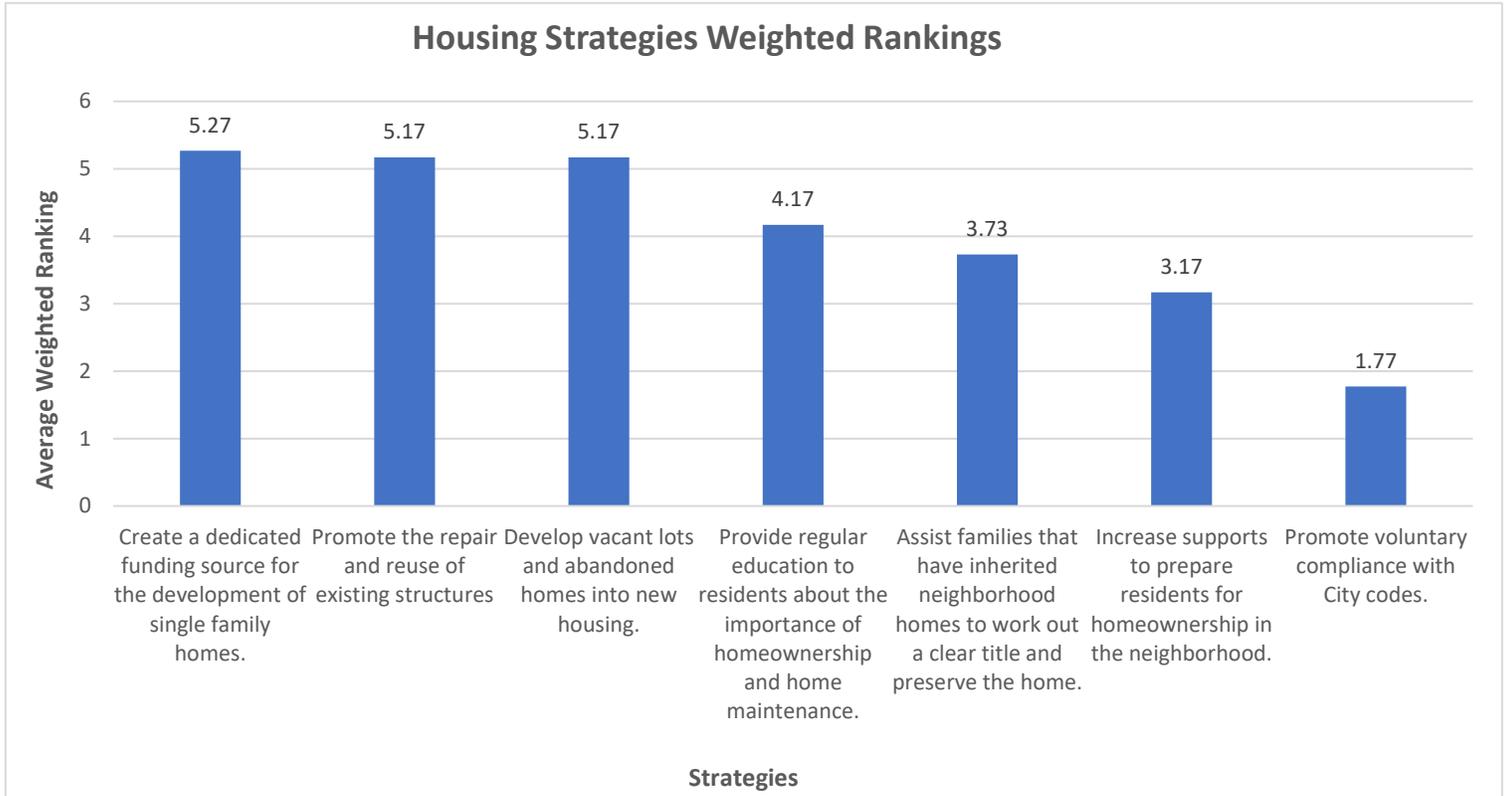
**Robin Colson (nonresident):** Good jobs, union jobs, livable wage jobs with healthcare and sick leave have to come first. Love items 1.1.3, 3.1.1 and 5.1.2. Add an item about locating a hardware or home repair store in Frenchtown. I don't think there is any place nearby to buy needed home repair and maintenance tools.

**Homer Lee Austin (resident):** The neighborhood for their children's college education/daycare 3 dollars per week or month for school benefits

**Penny Young (nonresident):**

- Workshops in Frenchtown for juniors and senior in HS about entrepreneurship.
- Apply for Main Street USA federal grants/state grants for business development and enhancement

## Housing Feedback



***List up to 5 Action Items from this section that you think will be most important/effective:***

**Penny Young (nonresident):** Door-to-door information delivered for education on this subject more than once. Involvement of residents themselves to confer with City and CRA on support/planning/resources. Workshops in community with TCC, FAMU, FSU, banks, insurance for owning and keeping homes

**Marcus Thompkins (nonresident):**

- Action Item H 1.1.1:
- Action Item H 2.1.2:
- Action Items H 3.1.2:
- Action Item H 4.1.1:
- Action Item H 5.1.3:
- Action Item H 3.1.1:

**Kerry Stichter (nonresident property owner):** Tear down abandon unrepairable homes, Clear lots of debris and keep manicured, pave streets, fund money for existing homeowners to make improvements

**Vernon Deane (nonresident):** Restorations of existing structures, New Development, Funding source single family homes, Educate residence ownership/maintenance, Clear title home preservation

**Ellis McKinney (nonresident property owner):**

1. Assistance with heir property titles is a major issue for most properties
2. Home Mortgage Loans availability from local banks are limited because of low property appraisal.
3. Converting vacant lots into residences are based on my first two priorities, which could also be made possible with HUD assisted funding.
4. Working with the property owners. communicating where funding is available ie, home loans for new construction, and remodeling of existing home.
5. Code Compliance is important, and I maintain three vacant lots, two on Gibbs Drive and one on Delaware Street, and I maintain per City Code , but nearby residents, like to use Delaware Street lot for dumping, any suggestion?

**Tesheia Givens (resident):** Providing existing homeowners financial assistance to repair homes inside and out. Educating the community with information on homeownership, maintaining homes, creating and understanding wills, financial resources, and assist individuals & families with getting proper paperwork completed for the transfer of inherited property. Assisting with business ownership in the neighborhood.

**Annie Harris (resident):** Priority Action Items: H 1.1.2, 2.1.3. Funds are needed to assist residents with upkeep

***What, if anything, is missing from this section of the draft plan?***

**Marcus Tompkins (nonresident):** I think that there should be an inclusion for Below Market Rate housing. It increases eligibility for moderate income earners. This can increase the tax base, while mitigating gentrification to some degree. Also it addresses the squeeze of the middle income earner, who doesn't qualify for low income/ affordable housing, but is still vulnerable to financial insecurity. Also I would add that there needs to be protections for renters if landlords receive a grant for housing rehabilitation. The protection I have in mind is to contractually obligate the landlord to not increase rent for a specified time. The landlord would provide proof through lease agreements. Failure to do so would result in repayment of the grant. Lastly, I believe, if not already established, there needs to be a neighborhood association established to develop congruency, consistency and organization.

**Ellis McKinney (nonresident property owner):**

Discussion about development of grocery /retail rally located, 4th Avenue, or Old Bainbridge Rd.

**Tesheia Givens (resident)**: Provide more job placement assistance, affordable afterschool programs at neighborhood community centers. Safety plan for the community. Violence continues, drug abuse, drug dealing, prostitution, homes being broken into.

**Penny Young (nonresident)**: Local residents work with architects and landscapers to rehab and remodel homes

***What, if anything, needs to be changed or removed?***

None.

***Any other comments:***

**Sandra Williams (resident)**: Need home repair funds

**Homer Lee Austin (resident)**: I need help with lead pipe plumbing.

**Dorothy Bouie (resident)**: Housing is the top priority for me. We have been talking for years, and not much have happened in a cohesive manner.

**Jeffrey Rollins (resident)**:

Any housing assistance programs should allow repairs to plumbing and roofs- including asbestos shingles. He is aware of neighbors losing insurance due to asbestos shingles.

**Delta Johnson (resident)**: Most important: home repairs, better sewage, better streets such as cleaning, use of old buildings in neighborhood. Need roofing and plumbing to be included in home repair funds

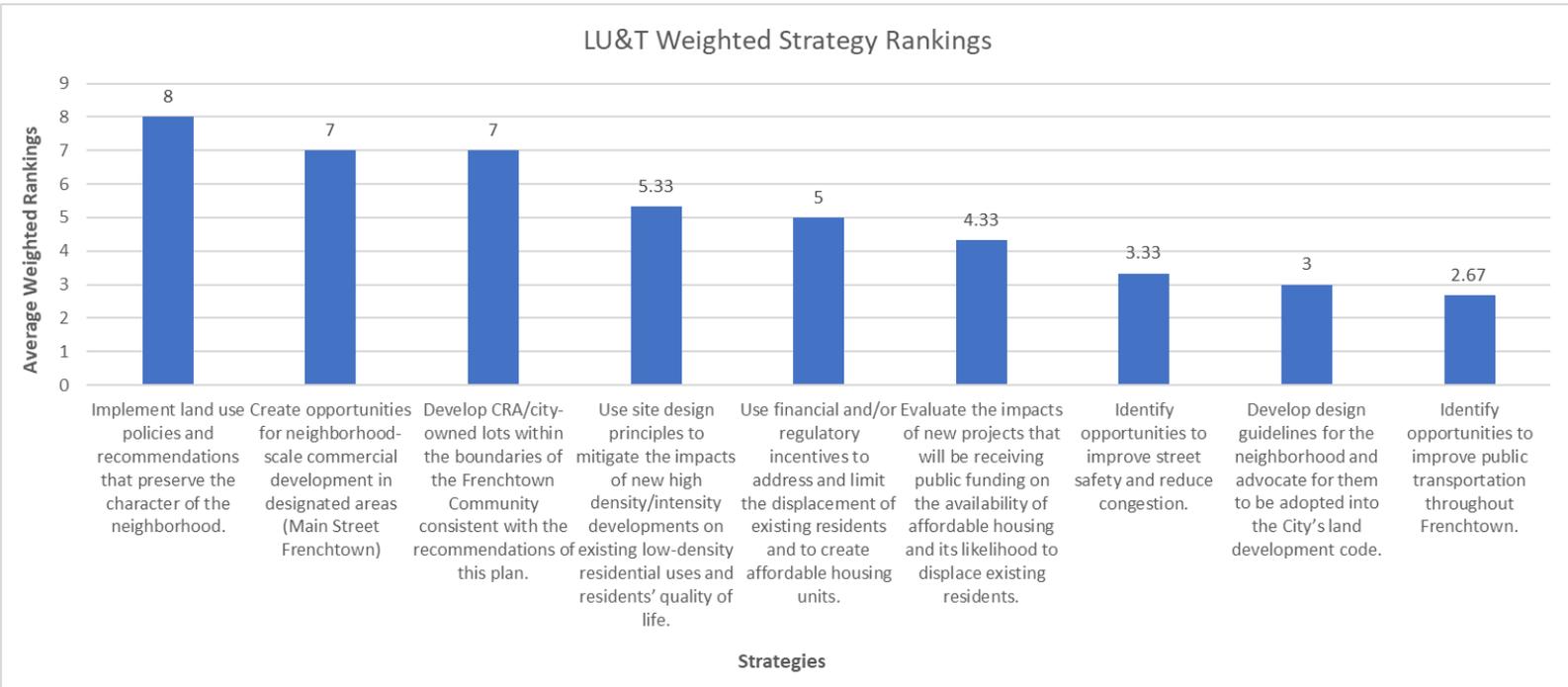
**Marcus Thompkins (nonresident)**: I believe door to door communication (post Covid) and partnering with area schools would be beneficial. For schools, I envision in-class visits, morning announcements on the telecom or tv and friendly email blasts.

**Vernon Deane (nonresident)**: Looks Good

**Ellis McKinney (nonresident property owner)**: I would like to know the future comprehensive development plan for the Frenchtown district, surely there should be substantial quality retail development, a least one central shopping area with grocery, drugstore, hardware, etc.. Residents should not have to travel to Monroe or Tennessee Streets to shop for basic necessities, and a priority effort given to maintain the majority of Frenchtown Community to single family homes, to preserve resale value, not multifamily developments, for rental units.

**Robin Colson (nonresident)**: I think this section is great - really well done.

## Land Use & Transportation Feedback



***List up to 5 Action Items from this section that you think will be most important/effective:***

**Annie Harris (resident):** Priority Action Items: LU&T 1.2.1, 2.21

**Marcus Thompkins (nonresident):**

Action Item LU&T 3.2.1:

Action Item LU&T 2.1.2:

Action Item LU&T 2.1.1:

Action Item LU&T 3.1.1:

Action Item LU&T 4.1.1:

***What, if anything, is missing from this section of the draft plan?***

**Marcus Thompkins (nonresident):** Within the Central Urban land use, there needs to be a provision to exclude student housing from being developed. Student housing development consumes the limited space available for development, as well as creates a transient environment that is inconsistent with

establishing permanent housing solutions in the neighborhood to further develop a sense of place/community.

**Penny Young (nonresident)**: Work with Interfaith Creation Care on land use (environment). Designate one-way streets system and street rehab to reduce congestion

***What, if anything, needs to be changed or removed?***

**Marcus Thompkins (nonresident)**: Action Item LU&T 3.1.2: Needs to be edited to read "Advocate for publicly-funded projects that INCREASE the availability of affordable housing in the neighborhood to contribute to the creation of new affordable housing units in the neighborhood and/or the strengthening of the existing housing units."

***Other Comments:***

**Steve Spurlin and Linda Tomlinson (residents)**: Bus stop across from Lincoln Center on Macomb needs a bench/shelter

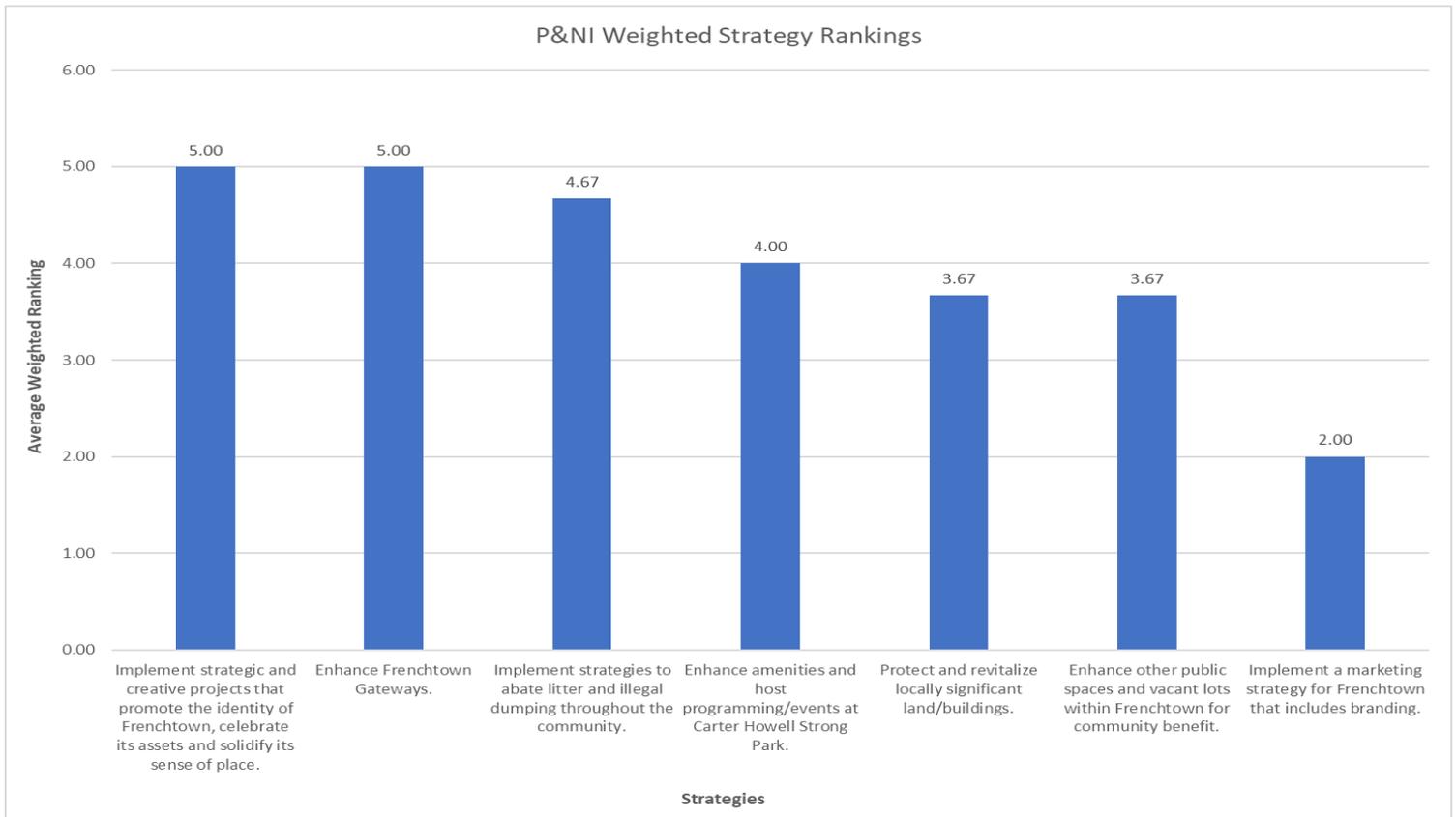
**Robin Colson (nonresident)**: Love LU&T 2.2.4

**Richard Dusenbury and Geri Seay** - advocating for Historic Preservation Overlay of Macomb Street "Mall" and other areas

**Cheryl Collier Brown (resident)**: Would like the City to implement traffic safety features on Brevard Street between Duval and Bronough. This includes additional signage, illuminated signs showing drivers their speed, and left turn signals at both intersections to address traffic back up.

***\*See also submission from Richard Dusenbury***

## Placemaking & Neighborhood Image Feedback



**List up to 5 Action Items from this section that you think will be most important/effective:**

**Annie Harris (resident):** Priority Action Items: P&NI 1.1.1, 1.1.3, 1.1.4, 1.1.5, 1.1.8, 1.1.9, 1.2.2., 2.1.1

**Marcus Thompkins (nonresident):**

Action Item P&NI 1.1.9:

Action Item P&NI 1.3.1:

Action Item P&NI 1.4.1:

Action Item P&NI 2.1.2:

Action Item P&NI 3.2.1:

**Vernon Deane (nonresident):** Revitalize land/buildings, enhance public spaces and lots, Strategic creative projects, abate illegal dumping/littering, Invest in Carter Howell Park

**Casey Rychlik (resident):** Improved community policing. I witnessed violent crime on my street a couple years back, police outreach and follow up was awful. Used to see some efforts at

community policing, none now. Open air drug and prostitution market on Dewey needs to be addressed.

City plan to fix up Ashmore's is great.

No left turn from south bound Old Bainbridge traffic onto eastbound Brevard; it is the cause of a lot of congestion and backed up traffic. That intersection is a mess.

Old Bainbridge sidewalks should be wider and safer. Bike lanes or dedicated bike paths would be amazing.

Grocery desert needs to be resolved closer to Brevard. Big investment at Tennessee St. is not accessible to citizens of Frenchtown without vehicles.

4th Ave to Dewey to FSU Campus should be a Blueprint Gateway project.  
FSU>>Frenchtown>>Levy/Park Midtown Gateway. Would alleviate some of the traffic on Old Bainbridge.

I am in favor of some speed control. Have spoken to other property owners who are not. I can say that people use the 600 D blocks like a drag strip between Old Bainbridge and Dewey.

**Dorothy Bouie (resident):** Improve lighting, remove city clay pipes in Goodbread and other streets, underground utilities, assistance with removing dead or decayed trees throughout neighborhood, enforce existing laws on the books resigned to improve neighborhoods- such as old cars. Buy ole Ashmore.

**Penny Young (nonresident):** Create an Adopt a Street system with recognition and rewards. Regular articles on Frenchtown in newspapers

***What, if anything, is missing from this section of the draft plan?***

**Marcus Thompkins (nonresident):** Partner with Tennessee St. boundary businesses to start a branding campaign to identify Frenchtown as their place of service.

**Casey Rychlik (resident):** The draft is very ambitious. I didn't see Dewey addressed specifically. It is terribly neglected and an important street in terms of traffic and as a hub of crime.

***What, if anything, needs to be changed or removed?***

**Casey Rychlik (resident):** They're not used by residents. Utilized by homeless and transient folks. Not in favor of turning holding pond at Dunns Street into public area. Some grants for fencing to resolve these would be

***Any other comments:***

**Annie Harris (resident):** Ashmore Building- create a committee on development of the bldg. I would like to be on the committee.

Homeless sleeping on back porch at Taylor House- upkeep

**Robert Brown (resident):**

It is my desire to see this done before I die: Dr Martin Luther King had a dream. I have a dream that people in Frenchtown (or people who hung out there) were known by their nicknames. I would like to see gov. names and then nicknames placed on bricks around Fred Lee Plaza.

Thank you kindly.

**Alexis McMillan, owner of Economy Drug:** Historic preservation of the block with her store important

**Geri Seay (nonresident business owner):**

Historic Preservation:

- National Registry Properties, Historic District
- Historic overlay

Paddle boats at Carter Howell Strong Park

**Steve Spurlin and Linda Tomlinson (residents):**

**Goodbread Community Playground Improvements:**

During a neighborhood walkthrough, our Mayor was impressed with our effort to create a little park in an empty lot for the local children. He committed the city to help improve the playground's safety and utility. To this end, we request:

1. A street light to illuminate the area after dark.
2. A kids water fountain with appropriate drainage.
3. Assistance levelling part of the area, including tree stump removal.
4. More sand for the kids sand box.
5. Help/advice setting up a cooling water mister for the kids for hot summer days.

We and the community are willing to contribute our time and labor to maintain the playground and provide picnic items. We have built and maintained the playground for about two years now but would appreciate a little help from the city.

One other item: one corner of the playground serves as a dump for the clamshell waste collection. The people who operate the clamshell used to carefully rake up and loose items that the clamshell missed and the city would occasionally dump some sand into the depression created by the clamshell digging. They have stopped doing this. I notice the clamshell crew still does that for other areas in the city. Who do we need to contact to get them to cleanup here in Goodbread Ln.?

**Marcus Thompkins (nonresident)**: I recommend partnering with KCCI in the development and implementation of Placemaking ideas. Also, when I think of the negative perception Frenchtown can have, I think about crime, litter, crumbling infrastructure, and poverty. Though these perceptions can paint the neighborhood in a negative light, I believe there are some truth to their happenings. I really think the Neighborhood First Plan helps with addressing these issues. Thanks you guys.

**Vernon Deane (nonresident)**: The timing could not better for the strategies listed above. Once successful with prioritized strategies it will set the stage for all the others. When we come together as a community and change the attitudes of nonbelievers the battle is half over. Once the positive projections from the fruits of hard work our numbers involving community participation will surely rise. That is when we Solidify Sense of Place and the residents of Frenchtown assumes its new identity. Once the conception of Frenchtown's New Identity prevails the Branding will identify itself.

**Casey Rychlik (resident)**: There are historic elements to this neighborhood that I am not qualified to speak to but have great respect for. I will say that I own historic properties around town and am not in support of consenting to any regulation from the local Architectural Review Board in restricting my properties in Frenchtown. That is not an effective mechanism to improve this neighborhood. I am interested to see where this goes and hope to participate. I thank everyone who has volunteered their time on this initiative thus far, I hope to contribute moving forward.

## Neighborhood Safety & Crime Prevention Feedback



**List up to 5 Action Items from this section that you think will be most important/effective:**

**Annie Harris (resident):** Priority Action Items: 1.1.3, 2.2.1, 2.5.1

Comments: Upkeep at vacant properties

**Charles Davis (resident):** Police patrolling

**Bernice McMillan (resident):** Meet & Greet and ongoing engagement with the TPD Advisory Councils (Adults and Youth); more police presence and surveillance (i.e. cameras) at high crime areas, which have been extremely helpful at reducing crime on my block, known as "D Block". Youth involvement and changing their perception of law enforcement would be instrumental for maintaining improvements. Home improvements for run down houses and signage on empty lots - some of which the homeless congregate and/or crime activity takes place. Some streets need sidewalks.

**Zon Reed (nonresident property owner):** Cleaning up the drug dealers. The "known drug dealing house" at 724 Preston St is destroying the area. The drug dealer are tenants and not the owners. Sad - it's ruining the street. I had guest that were going to stay in my house - but they went to a hotel because they were so scared. I've called the police to help and even

offered them to use my house as a stake-out to stop the drug dealing - but nothing has happened and the problem is just getting worse.

**Marcus Thompkins (nonresident):**

Action Item NS&CP 2.2.2:

Action Item NS&CP 2.3.2:

Action Item NS&CP 2.4.2:

Action Item NS&CP 2.4.5:

Action Item NS&CP 2.4.6:

**Vernon Deane (nonresident):** Increase opportunities for youth and law enforcement to engage, Physical improvements, Public safety relationship, Training programs

**Penny Young (nonresident):** Organize sports/leisure/academic events among residents/youth and police officers

***What, if anything, is missing from this section of the draft plan?***

**Charles Davis (resident):** More Police presence

**Bernice McMillan (resident):** Where will funding to support these various initiatives come from?

**Marcus Thompkins (nonresident):** Addressing the causes of crime. I think there needs to be more emphasizes on what causes certain crimes and having action items that identify probable solutions towards them. Also, I would add that there needs to be community officers who specifically service Frenchtown and area schools.

**Lara Wiggins (resident):** More social work and community-based programs

**Vernon Deane (nonresident):** Investing in YOUTH, resources, giving them a purpose providing them opportunities

**Penny Young (nonresident):** Set up a Neighborhood Watch for truants and dropouts and provide a safe place for youth to learn. Have youth and law enforcement walks the neighborhood and discuss improvements and pride.

**Robin Colson (nonresident):** Please add a complementary item to 2.1- something like "Develop and/or connect law enforcement with empathy-building, "walk a mile in my shoes" initiatives to educate them on the realities of everyday lives of residents.

***What, if anything, needs to be changed or removed?***

**Bernice McMillan (resident):** Sidewalks need to be added on some streets, i.e. down Dewey St.

**Lara Wiggins (resident)**: Any involvement with police

***Other Comments:***

**Steve Spurlin and Linda Tomlinson (residents)**: Goodbread needs better lighting

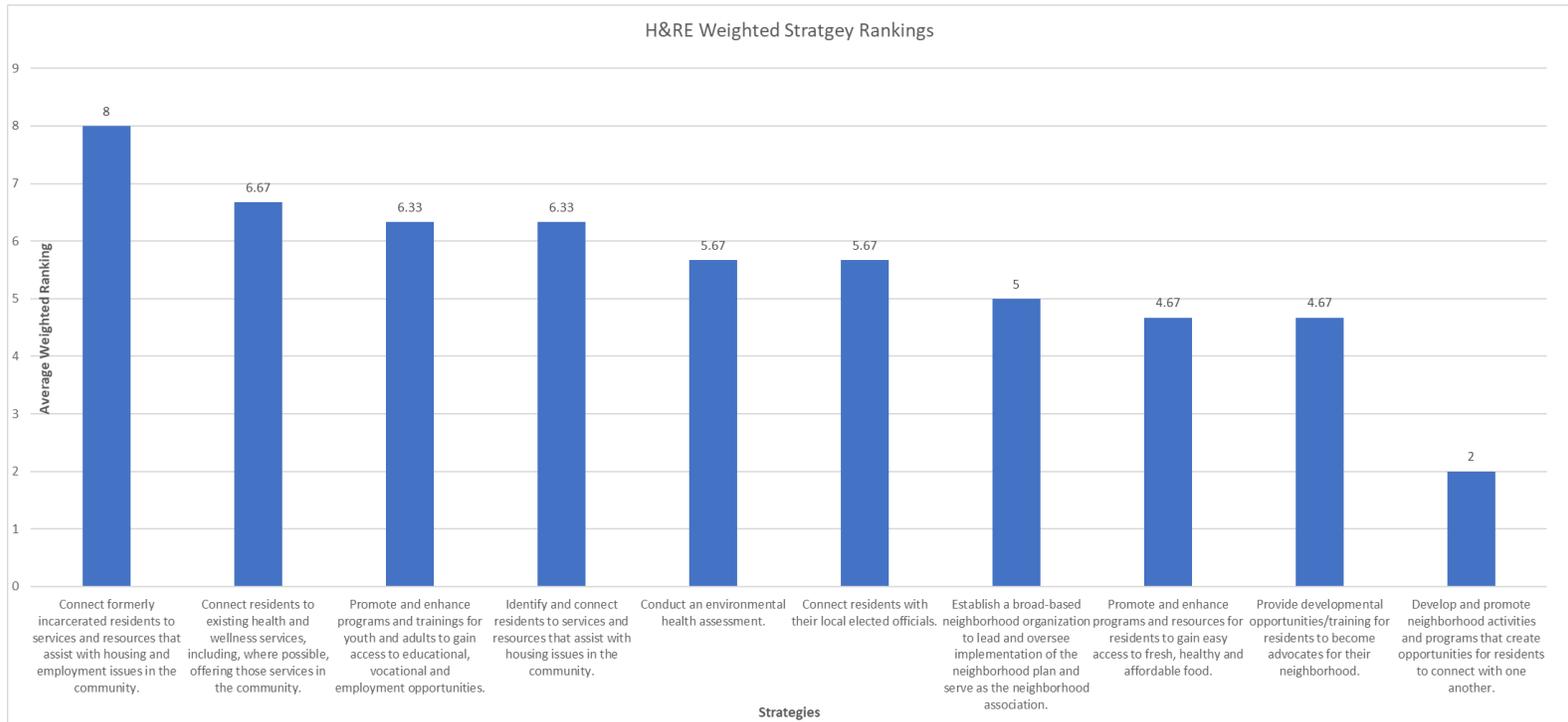
**Bernice McMillan (resident)**: This is a great start. Hopefully, these initiatives will be fully implemented.

**Zon Reed (nonresident property owner)**: Until the drug dealers and hookers are cleaned up - it's going to be difficult for people to feel safe in the area.

**Marcus Thompkins (nonresident)**: I believe jobs, better neighborhood maintenance, improved relationships between community members and the police, and outreach to area schools will be a great benefit. Thank again!

**Vernon Deane (nonresident)**: Law enforcement take their time responding to calls/concerns from crime infested communities. Once we change attitudes/mind sets and habits it restores purpose, confidence and instills respect. We as a people have to change and rebuild our community in all aspects from the "Mortar to the Mind"! When we care and respect ourselves in our community's law enforcement will also, "and we won't need their services as often". When we invest in our youth and raise our children properly to the best of our ability there is "LESS CRIME & MORE MARKET VALUE"!

## Health & Resident Empowerment Feedback



***List up to 5 Action Items from this section that you think will be most important/effective:***

**Annie Harris (resident):** Priority strategy: H&RE Strategy 6.1

***What, if anything, is missing from this section of the draft plan?***

**Penny Young (nonresident):** Work with Creation Care/environmental groups/community gardeners on food production. Connect ex-incarcerated people to heal/mental health/social services through specific open houses. Work with law enforcement to identify.

***What, if anything, needs to be changed or removed?***

None.

***Other Comments:***

**Robin Colson (nonresident):** Love action item 6.1.3. Specifically work on bringing a WalMart "market" to Frenchtown They have these in Tampa and they are great.

**Penny Young (nonresident):** Use Lincoln Ctr health center as vaccination hub.

## Feedback from seven Dent St. Property Owners

As property owners on the 600 Block of Dent Street. We would like to make the following requests and recommendations.

**1. Address stormwater drainage issue at 617 Dent Street.**

Ms. Niya Hubbard purchased her home at 617 Dent Street in 2009. The home was constructed as part of the Tallahassee Lenders Consortium initiative to construct affordable owner occupied single family residences in Frenchtown. The property is plagued by a drainage issue that leaves standing water in her front drive for days at a time. This drainage issue is bad for esthetics in the neighborhood, breeding ground for mosquitoes and other insects; most of all, it has a detrimental effect on Ms. Hubbard's quality of life and use of property. Where she has invested heavily in improving Frenchtown; we ask for the City of Tallahassee to help remedy this issue.

**2. Speed control on Dent Street.**

Vehicles drive at excessive speeds down Dent Street. Speeders are a combination of rental tenants and their guests as well as vehicles cutting between Old Bainbridge and Dewey. This is a nuisance and hazard to the health and safety of residents, pedestrians and most importantly the many children that live on the block. Owners are working toward creating consensus on appropriate form of speed control, but we'd like to explore our options.

**3. Lighting.** Improved street lighting all the way down the 600 Block of Dent Street would improve safety.

**4. Improved community policing.** Police presence seems to be reduced to answering calls. Some community policing would help. Having contact with a TPD officer that acts as liaison for the neighborhood may be helpful. Open air drug market (especially at Dewey St.), prostitution and trespassing is a daily issue.

**5. Stormwater Pond on 600 Dunn Street**

The Frenchtown First plan specifically mentions utilizing the stormwater management pond on the 600 Dunn Street block as a possible public space. As adjacent property owners, we adamantly oppose anything like this currently.

**6. Sidewalks**

Sidewalks on the southside of the 600 Block of Dent Street would enhance pedestrian safety. Owners are still working toward creating consensus, but it's an option we'd like to explore.

**7. Eliminating unsanctioned footpaths.** These are used by non-residents for drug use and prostitution. They are unsafe and serve no practical use for residents. City grants to construct fences for a few of these would be helpful.

Cary Ryehlek  
617 Dent St.

Juan Campos  
643 Dent

Lucia J. Robinson  
633 W. Dent St.

[Signature]  
617 Dent St

Grant Rosenberger  
626 Dent

[Signature]  
626 Dent

Luella Call  
626 Dent

As property owners on the 600 Block of Dent Street. We would like to make the following requests and recommendations.

**1. Address stormwater drainage issue at 617 Dent Street.**

Ms. Niya Hubbard purchased her home at 617 Dent Street in 2009. The home was constructed as part of the Tallahassee Lenders Consortium initiative to construct affordable owner occupied single family residences in Frenchtown. The property is plagued by a drainage issue that leaves standing water in her front drive for days at a time. This drainage issue is bad for esthetics in the neighborhood, breeding ground for mosquitoes and other insects; most of all, it has a detrimental effect on Ms. Hubbard's quality of life and use of property. Where she has invested heavily in improving Frenchtown; we ask for the City of Tallahassee to help remedy this issue.

**2. Speed control on Dent Street.**

Vehicles drive at excessive speeds down Dent Street. Speeders are a combination of rental tenants and their guests as well as vehicles cutting between Old Bainbridge and Dewey. This is a nuisance and hazard to the health and safety of residents, pedestrians and most importantly the many children that live on the block. Owners are working toward creating consensus on appropriate form of speed control, but we'd like to explore our options.

**3. Lighting.** Improved street lighting all the way down the 600 Block of Dent Street would improve safety.

**4. Improved community policing.** Police presence seems to be reduced to answering calls. Some community policing would help. Having contact with a TPD officer that acts as liaison for the neighborhood may be helpful. Open air drug market (especially at Dewey St.), prostitution and trespassing is a daily issue.

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\_\_\_\_\_ Casey \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ 850-559-4909 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Ray Snow \_\_\_\_\_

## Comments on DRAFT Frenchtown Neighborhood First Plan, December 2020 Richard Dusenbury

Comments #1. Item #1 explains this assertion:

**The aspirations of Frenchtown for Frenchtown MUST be written into City of Tallahassee (COT) local codes (e.g. zoning, land use, housing discrimination, and administrative code).**

The Frenchtown Neighborhood First plan (draft) continues the City of Tallahassee (COT) approach to land use regulation. COT officials, appointed and elected, ignore knowledge of best practice and principles of urban design; nor will COT address social justice in land use in Frenchtown. Instead, COT officials make land-use decisions in Frenchtown based only on the answers to this question: “What do you want?”

“What do you want?” is a political question of benefits, advantages, privileges, and gain. The Frenchtown answer to the question “what do you want?” has been quite consistent for the past 25 years. Frenchtowners have a keen interest in personal-use aspects of Frenchtown such as hearth and home, heritage and history, character and identity.

Frenchtown neighborhood leaders have been obliging toward COT’s request for Plans. They have, on demand and repeatedly, produced Frenchtown Neighborhood Plans in whatever format COT has demanded at that particular moment. Neighborhood First is the third COT Frenchtown Plan I have participated in, and I am a relative newcomer.

The Housing section in this Plan is an improvement over prior plans (kudos to the knowledgeable participants including Jim Bellamy, Bill Wilson, and Curtis Taylor). On the other hand, the Land Use section of this Plan is no better than was the “Placemaking (Devan Leavans)” or the “Steering Committee (Nancy Miller)”, and is worse than the ones preceding these. However, the most important land-use feature of all Frenchtown Plans is that **the Plans lack legal or practical force.**

COT asks the “what do you want?” question of all constituencies interested in Tallahassee such as bankers, realtors, investors, business owners, government officials to name a few. Naturally, non-Frenchtown constituencies have no interest in personal-use aspects of Frenchtown such as hearth and home, heritage and history, character and identity. Non-Frenchtown constituencies’ answer to “What do you want?” is commercial. Land is cheap, the location is coveted, but the housing detracts and is considered to be *blight*. I cannot resist noting County Commissioner Bill Proctor’s quip that the term *blight* seemed to be a code word for *black* neighborhood.

COT INC supports the non-Frenchtown constituencies. Like them, COT INC wants Frenchtown to be replaced by “central urban” or “high density” or “University Transition” or any development that fits the strategic goal for COT INC. COT disingenuously terms these projects to be “neighborhood revitalization”, but it is the same old *urban renewal* which James Baldwin defined accurately years ago (his

wording), “Urban renewal means Negro removal.” Like Rats’ Row, Porter’s Quarters, Smokey Hollow, COT works aggressively to achieve the *urban renewal* of Frenchtown.

For example, “What do you want, Pinnacle (a Miami company)?” Do you want five stories, not three or four? Do you want Macomb Street? Do you want to front on Macomb Street, or do you prefer to front on Georgia Street? If you do not want to front on Macomb, shall we reopen Macomb? Oh, you want to own the entire Macomb Street right of way. Fine, we will give you the east half of it that abuts your property, but that would mean a type B land-use review. That would require publicity of the transaction, but we can keep this under the table by having COT retain title while the rights of title to the entirety are donated (free of charge) to Pinnacle.

Leaders of the following organization opposed Casanas Village, a five story, tax-credit subsidized rental building built on the Frenchtown Village Marketplace site: NAACP, Urban League, Frenchtown Neighborhood Improvement Association, Carolina Oaks Homeowners Association, Front Porch Initiative, and Bethel Baptist. Reverend R.B. Holmes wrote:

I strongly agree with Annie Harris, president of Carolina Oaks homeowners association and a courageous voice in Frenchtown, who said very clearly, “We must attract stable homeowners and greater business opportunities.” Moreover, the major stakeholders in Frenchtown, such as Economy Drugs, Carolina Oaks homeowners association, the Tallahassee Urban League and a host of African-American churches and businesses understand we have come too far to turn back and allow a development project that is not in the best interest of the community.

COT, Incorporated, Pinnacle, Incorporated, and the Big Bend CDC, took everything they wanted, including an interest free COT loan without which the project could not go forward.

The Standard is another example of this COT “what do you want?” approach. COT asks, “What do you want, Landmark (Atlanta)?” Oh, you want a density exceeding 45 units per acre where the backyard apartments take up most of the block? No worry. City will sell you a little Macomb frontage PUD parcel abutting the backyard apartments, and you can have any density you want for student housing. Want the other end of the block too. Got a zoning problem in dealing to acquire Strong, Jones property. No worry, COT planners will devise rezoning Brevard Street, and work it through the Commission (passed unanimously, by the way). Note that Brevard Street appears prominently in this Neighborhood First plan for land-use regulations changes. City property is fair game for COT to deal to others where the aim is to alienate local ownership rights to non-local investors.

What do you want for Frenchtown, COT? Oh, wow. Look at all that *blight*. OK, let’s see what we can do with infrastructure. Let’s wipe out the commercial center and split up the neighborhood with a four-lane street widening. Let’s remove the blocks of residences with storm water control pond. Let’s run campaigns of CITY code enforcement, demolition, and take-over of, real estate. COT appointed officials will facilitate any transfers of rights usually associated with titled ownership (right of way, easement, interpretations) in behind-closed-doors deals to facilitate the *urban renewal*

of Frenchtown. The land-use professionals in COT just ask “What do you want?” of any potential investor, and their expertise is in navigating rules and regulations to insure that Frenchtown aspirations do not interfere.

Concluding Item #1, the Plan cannot be effective in achieving Frenchtowners’ self-aspirations unless it has legal force. Also, amending COT local code is a task for CITY professionals. They are the experts in the intricacies of zones, uses, standards, etc., and they must bring the details to Frenchtown and lobby changes through the Commission. These points have been made by several of us, and they need to be part of the Plan.

Item # 2. This evaluates the LU section of the Draft Plan.

There is one instance in which code changes like those advocated in Item #1 appear in the Draft Plan. It is an overlay for Goodbread LUT 1.1.6. That is wonderful. If overlays are a good way to give force to the Frenchtowners’ self-aspirations, then that is perfection. As to a Goodbread Overlay, the Plan should specify that COT professionals have the responsibility to develop the details of the overlay, bring options and alternatives to the neighborhood, and lobby the overlay through the Commission.

**The LU section should advocate the overlay approach to all the rest of Frenchtown.**

So far, the Plan for all of Frenchtown except Goodbread follows the COT pattern of land use regulation described in Item #1. Examples include code enforcement, the Brevard Street corridor development, and the effort to alter the RP classification of property north of historical Frenchtown. All of these transfer authority to COT rather than empowering the neighborhood.

Another top-down proposal from COT land use staff is the campaign aimed at attacking “non-conforming” uses. You might think it a good thing to be rid of “non-conforming” uses, but here is how it looks to me. This property is currently RP2, “residential preservation”. COT land use regulators wish to reclassify RP property to encourage more (bigger, newer, grander) non-residential development of the RP2 property by removing the RP zoning. This COT plan for “non-conforming” RP parcels was not discussed in the Plan session I attended at Lincoln. I believe it comes from COT staff, not from Frenchtown residents.

Instead of the top-down, CITY control of land use in Frenchtown, I suggest that the Plan require that COT land-use planners retain RP everywhere it exists, and create a bottom-up, empowering process. There is a process for installing traffic calming in which all affected property owners must be canvassed (with public meetings) only after information on traffic flows has been measured. Why not require COT to administer such a process for any current non-conforming use that is to be enlarged in any sense? Empower Frenchtown, not COT INC.

There is hand waving at valuing *The Scale and Character of the Neighborhood* when making land use decisions. However, there is nothing as to how these are to

become COT code (e.g., LUT1.1.7). To repeat, Frenchtown aspirations for Frenchtown must be incorporated in COT codes in ways easily invoked by residents. This comment applies to all the LUT strategies and actions items.

Item #3. Here are a couple of stand-alone criticisms of the Draft.

Unlike any prior neighborhood plan going back over 15 years, this plan has chosen not to recognize FNIA as a neighborhood association for Frenchtown. I object.

A trivial LUT item. Action Item LUT 1.1.5 seems to state the opposite of the intent (“allow for” stuff “not consistent with the character of the neighborhood”).

Item #4. This item invokes a decision making principle for land use, and gives examples applicable to the Plan:

**All COT land use regulation actions, decisions shall require the creation, use, and publication of information as to (1) best practice, (2) principles of good urban design, and (3) social justice.**

4A. Urban Design information.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is an example of good urban design. Wikipedia has a good item on it. CPTED analysis is relevant across several Plan areas (land use, zoning, safety, crime, transportation). It should be formally included in almost any actions I can imagine (permitting, code enforcement, interpretations, deviations, variances, etc.) The design of intersections, lighting, structures, amenities, sidewalks should all take into account principles such as open sightlines, self-evident oversight as to behaviors and uses, and so forth.

For examples of crummy design, take a look at Macomb Street from 300 through 600. It has been designed to carry vehicular traffic down the middle of historic Frenchtown splitting the neighborhood into east and west. Try crossing Macomb at Georgia Street. There are no pedestrian markings. Recall that COT is supposed to be all hot about walkable urban environments, and here walkability has been intentionally destroyed. COT professional should be bringing CPTED analysis to Frenchtown.

4B. Best practice information.

COT staff do not possess, and are unwilling to discover, best practice. Just as a reminder, best practice does not mean polling what other Cities do to address a particular situation. Best practice means imitating a City which has an acknowledged reputation for addressing a situation in a superior way.

An example is best practice for the location of below-market rental housing. A retired land-use employee (Gordon Hansen) sent me a study of best practice guidelines for locating below market rental property on line. Of the half-dozen principles, every one

of them was violated in locating Casanas Village on the Frenchtown Village Marketplace site. Information as to best practice does exist, and professional level COT personnel should bring it to the table.

4C. The last reform is social justice. We know that life chances and opportunities in our City differ by race. These inequities have been baked into law and custom such that they are systemic. They do not depend on personal racial prejudices to persist. Remind yourself that Tallahassee is the most racially segregated City in the country.

Points at which the Draft Plan touches on systemic racism offer an opportunity to be more forthright to be anti-racist, and not just be neutral.

Heirs' property: This is an important social justice issue. Recent reporting estimates the enormity of black land ownership dispossession at 90% and 98% of black agricultural land between 1910 and 2000. This massive dispossession is a huge wealth transfer from African-Americans.

Throughout the great dispossession, access to legal protection for Blacks' life and real property was weak to non-existent. The lack of reliable legal process extended to testamentary transfers. It became best in Black families to avoid testamentary transfers of property in favor of reliance on state inheritance rules to transfer property at death. It takes few decades for real property ownership to be spread across multiple generations and branches of families that may be geographically scattered.

H3.1.1 – H3.1.4 are all related to this injustice, and it is great to see them in the Plan. Perhaps the Plan should assert a claim to COT resources to help unravel heirs' title interests as a contribution to social justice. Unfortunately, COT INC, has a track record of using its authority to facilitate the perfection of legal title to the end of monetizing Frenchtown realty for transfer to outside control. Can the Plan control COT INC from clearing title to enrich COT INC or non-residential developments for non-Frenchtowners to own as investments? Can H1 and H3 items specify programs guidelines so that the properties will be owned by Frenchtown homeowners and residents?

I also have a comment on ED&CR3.1.5 that involves social justice and best practice in urban design. This is the item on acquiring the Lee Park property (currently owned by Leon School and operated as a community center on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue. I propose a public park development for the property that would be so spectacular that the park would attract city-wide usage (a usage akin to Cascades Park). Frenchtown's neglect deserves rectification through such a project. The best practice aspect of this is that positive additions to a neighborhood should accompany City determination to concentrate tax credit subsidized rental projects in the neighborhood (Goodbread Hills and Casanas Village).

One such spectacular use would be a playground for the disabled. After you stop laughing, google **Magic Bridge Playgrounds** and take a look. These parks, originally with children in mind, are a hit with the elderly. Motions in swings, for example, are great fun and enhance balance for the doddering. The accessibility designed into these parks makes them great gathering places.

My notion is to claim the park for Frenchtown on grounds of social justice, and to think big. I am thinking outdoors because COT INC seems relatively competent in outdoor development. What about a full-scale replica of the Martin Luther King, Jr. monument in Washington, DC on the Lee Park site?

I support the repurposing of the first floor of the Renaissance Center to its original use. Great idea. As with everything else in the Plan, such usage needs to be implemented in ways that empower the neighborhood, and not as a top-down program imposed on the neighborhood. Again, I think the perfidy of COT and social justice could be asserted.

In closing, I ask that a specific social justice item be included in the PLAN. The action is to amend the COT Housing Discrimination Code to make housing discrimination from “disparate impact” illegal under City code. At present, COT Legal (Mr. Lewis Shelley, then City Attorney) opinion is that housing discrimination from “disparate impact” even though illegal under the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968 is legal under COT local code.

The Frenchtown connection is that tax-credit subsidized below market rentals in Tallahassee are concentrated in Frenchtown (Goodbread Hills and Casanas Village). As noted in Item #1, Frenchtowners viewed Casanas Village as harmful to the neighborhood and in violation of City-approved Frenchtown Neighborhood Plans for the site.

This does not seem to be a big ask. It is shocking that COT is mired in 1960s type segregation claiming local law preempts Federal Law.

Sincerely, Richard Dusenbury

Neighborhood First plan comments Feb 2 2021