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MEMORANDUM

To:	City of Brighton
From:	Design Workshop
Date:	April 2, 2026
Project Name:	City of Brighton Comp Plan
Project #:	8681
Subject:	Engagement Window 2 Key Takeaways DRAFT for City Review

PURPOSE

This memo summarizes high-level findings from the recent Community Workshops, Open House #2, and Advisory Committee discussion. The goal is to highlight the engagement activities, what we heard from participants, and the recommended next steps to inform development of the Future Land Use Map and Comprehensive Plan.

Engagement Overview

During Community Engagement Window #2 (March 2026), participants engaged in activities designed to explore future growth options for Brighton and community priorities. This included a series of hands-on workshops, an open house, open community questionnaire, and an Advisory Group meeting. Activities focused on reviewing a draft vision statement, ranking the importance of draft community values, evaluating different potential growth scenarios, and exploring what "small-town" means.

This Engagement Window focused on potential scenarios for growth. These focused on determining how to accommodate an estimated increase in population of 16,512 person and jobs of 6,540 in the next 20 years[1]. Three scenarios were presented for feedback:

- Scenario A: Edge Expansion or Limited Growth
  - This scenario slows down growth and keeps Brighton much the way it is today. Most new homes and businesses follow existing patterns, with a focus on protecting farmland, open space, and the city's small-town feel. Fewer housing choices and jobs are added, and many residents continue to commute to work outside the city.
- Scenario B: Corridor & Center Intensification
  - This scenario focuses growth along major roads and key areas instead of spreading outward. It adds more housing choices, jobs, and transportation options in these areas while keeping existing neighborhoods mostly the same. By growing inward, Brighton can support new development while protecting more farmland and open space.
- Scenario C: Compact, Diverse & Attainable Brighton
  - This scenario concentrates growth in Downtown and near transit stops to create walkable, mixed-use centers. More homes, jobs, shops, and services are placed close together, making it easier to walk, bike, or take transit. This approach

[1] *Source: Colorado State Demographer 2025, US Census & ACS 2019-2023*

supports affordability and sustainability but would change the look and feel of these areas the most.

Participants at the Workshops were able to work together to "Create Your Own Scenario" mapping exercise using land-use stickers, marker, and sticky notes to identify preferred locations for housing, jobs, services, open space, and amenities. Participants then discussed overall tradeoffs related to growth, transportation, character, and environmental preservation.

The engagement boards are available on the project website:
https://www.brightonco.gov/comprehensiveplan

What We Heard: Key Themes

Strong Desire to Preserve Small-Town Character
Across all engagement events, participants emphasized maintaining Brighton's identity as a welcoming, close-knit community. Key aspects of this "small-town feel" include:

- Opportunities for homeownership and long-term residency
- Support for local and unique businesses rather than national chains
- Walkable gathering places and community-oriented destinations
- A desire for more coffee shops, entertainment options, and everyday amenities
- Concern about increasing corporate ownership of rental housing

Participants also noted a perceived divide between "old town" and newer areas, along with interest in revitalizing shuttered businesses and underused buildings.

Need for More Activity, Services, and Local Destinations
While downtown is seen as improving, many residents expressed that it still lacks vitality and diverse activities. Participants identified citywide needs such as:

- Family-friendly entertainment options
- Cultural and social gathering places
- More locally owned businesses
- Services beyond parks and restaurants
- Reduced reliance on neighboring communities for activities

Overall, residents want Brighton to function as a complete community where daily needs and leisure activities can be met locally.

Support for Agricultural Uses as a Core Characteristic of Brighton
Agricultural uses – focused on productive farms – were consistently identified as an important part of Brighton's history that should be supported into the future. Specific areas and ideas around agricultural uses and preservation included:

- Continued support for the Splendid Valley Area
- Support for existing farms, particularly those that produce local food
- Road and easement widths and locations to enable movement of farm equipment
- Industrial uses that support agricultural operations

Overall, participants expressed support for agriculture uses generally, as well as part of values related to open space preservation.

Strong Support for Open Space and Environmental Stewardship
Preserving natural areas emerged as one of the most consistent priorities. Top environmental themes include:

- Protection of open space, farmland, and natural beauty
- Maintaining access to parks and outdoor recreation

- Concern about development impacts near Barr Lake
- Interest in sustainable growth patterns
- Recognition of the difficulty of maintaining agricultural land

Environmental stewardship was repeatedly ranked among the most important community values.

Responsible Growth Coupled with Safety and Economic Vitality

Participants broadly support continued growth but want it managed carefully. Most important values identified include:

- Responsible growth
- Parks and open space
- Environmental stewardship
- Safety
- Economic vitality

Secondary but still important values include community character and affordability. Concerns were raised about homelessness, substance use, and ensuring growth improves quality of life rather than straining community resources.

Transportation is a Critical Issue Across All Scenarios

During both Scenario Comparisons at the Open House and "Create Your Own Scenario" activities at the Workshops, traffic and mobility concerns strongly influenced reactions to future growth options. Common themes include:

- Concern about traffic increases, particularly along Bromley Lane
- Desire for better connections to jobs and services
- Need for transit and "smart transportation" to support higher density
- Recognition that development patterns are closely tied to transportation capacity

Participants consistently noted that more compact growth could be acceptable if supported by strong transportation improvements.

Mixed Preferences on Growth Patterns

Feedback on the alternative scenarios suggests no single option fully meets community expectations. Key takeaways include:

- Scenario A (lower-density growth) appealed to those seeking less congestion and preservation of existing character
- Scenario B (corridor-focused growth) raised questions about balance between housing and jobs, particularly near Prairie Center and Downtown
- Scenario C (more compact growth) generated the most concern but was seen as potentially viable with significant transportation investments

Many participants expressed interest in a hybrid approach that balances growth, preservation, and infrastructure capacity.

Preference for Strategic, Phased Growth

Participants emphasized planning growth carefully over time rather than pursuing rapid expansion. Key ideas include:

- Growth should be paced and coordinated with infrastructure
- Density should be paired with transit and services
- Expansion should avoid overcrowding key corridors
- Natural areas adjacent to Barr Lake should be protected
- Some residents prefer outward expansion rather than building taller

"Create Your Own Scenario" Mapping Exercise Results: Land Use Preferences

The interactive scenario mapping activity revealed several spatial patterns:

- Concentration of mixed-use and commercial activities along major corridors

- Continued support for residential areas in existing growth zones
- Strong emphasis on preserving large open-space areas and agricultural uses
- Interest in community amenities near established neighborhoods
- Limited support for extensive industrial expansion in new areas

Participants frequently clustered development in already urbanizing areas while leaving peripheral natural areas intact.

Advisory Committee Insights
Advisory Committee members reinforced many community workshop and open house findings, particularly:

- Importance of creating pathways to homeownership
- Need to strengthen connections between old and new parts of the city
- Support for local businesses and diverse amenities
- Desire to maintain Brighton's identity while accommodating growth
- Recognition that transportation planning is essential to any future scenario

Committee members also encouraged addressing social challenges and ensuring growth benefits existing residents.

What We Heard: Preferred Land Use Types

Each engagement opportunity includes questions related to preferred land use types. Using images to illustrate different types of residential, commercial, civic, and industrial land uses, participants were able to identify land uses they wanted to see more of, less of, or the same amount.

A majority of participants identified Agricultural Industrial and Mixed-Use Industrial opportunities as things they would like to see more of in Brighton. From a commercial perspective, most participants supported more mixed-use retail uses and general commercial uses. For residential land uses, a majority of participants supported Low Density Residential uses, followed by Mix-use Mid-Density Residential development. There was a near even split amongst participants who wanted to see more of and less of High-Density Mixed Center uses. Most participants expressed a desire to see less heavy industrial uses into the future; however, additional input from the Planning Commission and City Council will help guide a more balanced approach to industrial land uses.

Comprehensive Plan Next Steps and Key Quesions

Based on engagement findings, the planning team will move forward with the next steps in the Comprehensive Plan process. This includes the following key activities and deliverables to be reviewed in Engagement Window #3:

1. Refine a Preferred Growth Framework for the Future Land Use Map
Develop a hybrid of the scenarios for the next round of community input. Based on the direction received to date, this is anticipated to include an approach that:

- Preserves key environmental assets and open spaces
- Supports economic development and local businesses in key corridors and areas
- Balances housing types and affordability
- Focuses growth where infrastructure can support it
- Integrates increases in development with transportation system improvements

2. Integrate Transportation Planning
Coordinate land-use recommendations and the Future Land Use Map with mobility improvements, including:

- Corridor planning for Bromley and major arterials
- Transit opportunities and regional connections
- Multimodal infrastructure (walking, biking, transit)
- Strategies to reduce traffic impacts of new development

3. Strengthen the Vision and Values
Refine the draft vision statement and values statements to reflect identified priorities:

- Small-town character
- Responsible and sustainable growth
- Economic vitality with local identity
- Safety and quality of life
- Building on agricultural heritage for future generations
- Preservation of natural beauty

Key Questions

To support continued progress on the Comprehensive Plan, the City Council and Planning Commission are asked to consider the following key questions. The planning team will use these questions to guide the conversation at the April 14 Work Session, with the intention of integrating direction into the draft document, Future Land Use Map, and Vision Statement. It will be important to gain consensus on these key issues in order to continue working toward final plan adoption at the end of 2026.

- **General Land Uses.**
    - **Industrial Land Uses:** Based on the community feedback, there is some mixed direction related to industrial land uses, however there is clear recognition that Brighton is very well positioned for these types of land uses. Does the group support expansion of the North Brighton Area for Industrial Land Uses, including Warehousing and Distribution, Energy Industries, Industrial Mixed-Uses, and Agricultural Industrial Uses?
    - **Mixed-Uses:** There is strong support for Mixed-Use Development. Based on existing conditions, feedback from developers and property owners, and previous economic studies, any mixed-use development will likely need to be horizontal mixed-use in order to be financially viable. Does the group support this direction for Mixed-Uses?
    - **Residential Uses**: There is general support for diversification of Brighton's housing stock. What types of residential development and densities is the group comfortable including?
    - **Agricultural Uses**: There is support for active agricultural uses. Based on the feedback, this appears to be strongest in areas of Splendid Valley and South Brighton. Does the group support agricultural preservation policies for these areas of the community??

- **Future Land Use Map.** Based on the feedback to date, the planning team suggests the following land uses be included in the five opportunity areas and related to transportation. Does the group support this direction?

- **North Brighton Industrial:** Include mixed use, medium density development in the eastern portions of this opportunity area. Include low to medium intensity industrial uses in the remaining portions of the area. Allow adaptive re-use opportunities for residential and mixed-use development in older warehouses.
- **Downtown:** Maintain existing development patterns, while allowing additional density at 2–4 stories in height and introducing residential uses that are not currently permitted in the Downtown zone district.
- **Bromley:** Continue to support commercial and residential development along Bromley, focused around transportation stops. Provide a buffer of lower density development and open space to the south to create a transition to the agricultural lands in Splendid Valley.
- **South Brighton:** Incorporate commercial, light industrial, and mixed-use opportunities adjacent to major transportation connections, particularly around E-470 and I-76, while evaluating whether future industrial development should be concentrated in these southern corridors or primarily directed north of Baseline.
- **Barr Lake:** Preserve this area as open space, natural areas, and agricultural uses. Limit new development in this area.
- **Transportation Connections**: Plan for more intensity around key corridors, including E-470, I-76, and US 85. Integrate rail connections to improve connectivity of different industrial areas. Plan for the implementation of the Transportation Master Plan, particularly along key corridors such as Bromley, Bridge, and Baseline, especially with future public transportation routes in effect.

- **Other Topics.**
  - **Small Town Character**: Based on the feedback, "small-town character" includes a sense of safety when walking and biking, having farms that showcase agricultural heritage, and having parks and events that bring neighbors together. To what degree should small-town character (safe routes, working farms, transportation, events) be expressed in the goals and values of the Comp Plan?
  - **Historic Preservation**: There were some participants who raised historic preservation as a value to include in the Plan. Does the group want to see more historic preservation focus in the Comprehensive Plan and/or next community engagement window?
  - **Senior Housing**: A number of participants raised support for housing and services that cater to seniors. Does the group support this as a separate housing typology that should be included in the Comprehensive Plan?
  - **Attainable Housing:** Most participants support the development of townhomes as a way to expand starter-home options and improve housing attainability. However, these projects can be costly to build and may offer limited financial return for developers. What policies or incentives could help make townhome development more feasible while still achieving community housing goals?