

The Bandera PROPHEET

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City comprehensive planning sessions have begun

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The Bandera Prophet

“The layout of the community was very intentional, but it has grown up,” Simplecity.Design CEO Matt Lewis said during an open house and workshop last week.

The “Design Rodeo,” held March 10, was the first of two open houses in which city residents were encouraged to participate both in-person and virtually. Held at the Best Western Suites & Saloon on Main Street, citizens and other community members provided input on issues that included historical preservation and authenticity, economy and housing, transportation and connectivity, and infrastructure and nature.

Lewis said one comprehensive goal was to figure out how new community needs and development would be able to utilize the city’s existing limited infrastructure.

“We heard similar themes during the workshop,” Lynda Humble said, highlighting comments such as, “build it for future generations,” and “it’s our past and history, our western heritage, that allows Bandera to be what it is today.”

Humble said she heard “robust conversation” about a bypass around Bandera, which she said half of the reactions were in favor, half were against. One overwhelmingly agreed upon sentiment expressed, Humble said, was to keep chain stores out of town.

On the subject of housing, Lewis said the conversation started and stopped with infrastructure.

“There’s a real need for additional housing - everybody seems to agree,” Lewis said, adding it all circles back to lack of infrastructure. “We can’t have what we want, because we can’t service what we need.”

He said supply versus demand in the city limits poses a serious challenge that will require creative solutions.

“We’re going to have to have a bold conversation,” Lewis said, adding he feels Bandera is at a crossroads. “There isn’t enough duct tape to hold the infrastructure together. We’ll have to make hard choices.”

Most comments were in agreement regarding tourism and economy, and preserving Bandera’s western heritage.

“Your branding has been one of your biggest success stories,” Lewis said, adding the next step was to begin putting things together, allocating dollars for resources. “The next time will be a real conversation where we get into solving these issues.”

Last Wednesday was the first half of the second phase for the comprehensive planning session. Phase 1 was the discovery phase, which cost \$28,105. Phase 2 when complete will cost \$88,490. Two more phases remain.

The next workshop, the Code Rodeo, will be held April 7. Once held, Simplecity will synthesize the information and put together a plan to present to city council.

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