

Ready to Listen Engagement Summary Memo

Public Engagement Round 1

April 2023

1. Engagement Efforts

This memo summarizes public input collected during the first round of engagement for Ridgeville Ready. Input was collected from February 28 through March 13, 2023, in the following ways:

- **In-person workshops** – Three “Ready to Listen” workshops were held between February 28 and March 2 at various locations in the city.
- **Virtual workshops** – Two Zoom workshops were held on March 8 (6-7:30pm) and March 10 (12-1:30pm).
- **Online engagement** – Activities identical to the in-person workshops were available on the project website, RidgevilleReady.com.
- **Meeting-in-a-box** – Boxes containing meeting materials and activities identical to the in-person workshops were available for the Steering Committee to conduct small group meetings with their personal networks and organizations.

Facilitating the workshop activities at various locations and times, offering in-person or Zoom methods and posting activities on the project website maximized opportunities for community members to engage.

2. Purpose

Ridgeville Ready is a planning process to create a new Master Plan for the City of North Ridgeville. Since the current plan’s adoption in 2009, much has changed in the community, in the region and beyond. The first round of engagement provided multiple opportunities for the public to get involved. The input gathered helps identify the changing needs and values of the community, as well as lay the groundwork for the plan goals, objectives, recommendations and future character types and land use.

3. Outreach and Publicity

Spreading the word about the Ready to Listen workshops and online activities involved extensive outreach efforts. The 30-member Steering Committee played a large role in promoting round one and sharing the importance of participating in the master planning process with their personal networks, organizations, neighbors, families and friends. Additional outreach efforts included:

- 1,000 *invitational rack cards*
- 1,500 *coasters with the project logo and QR code to the website*
- 2 email blasts via MailChimp
- News post on RidgevilleReady.com
- Facebook posts, city website postings, mayor’s weekly videos, city newsletters and more

Distributed throughout the city by staff and Steering Committee members.

4. Workshop Agenda and Engagement Activities

In-Person and Virtual Workshop Agenda

The in-person and virtual workshops opened with an overview presentation about the planning process and importance of this opportunity for the city. Existing conditions were presented in the form of a game show, *Did You Know?* in which tables worked together to learn about their community and have a little competition. Participants were then asked to respond to a big picture question and mapping activities to share their ideas about the future of North Ridgeville. For the virtual meeting, the participants were assigned to a breakout room to discuss the big-picture questions. After this activity, everyone convened back to the main session and was directed to the project website to complete the mapping activity and exit questionnaire.

All activities were facilitated by a member of the consultant team to provide guidance and insight. Steering Committee members were spread out at different tables to record participant input and ensure activities were completed in a timely and civil manner.

Engagement Activities

A. Big Picture Question: What are the greatest opportunities for North Ridgeville?

Participants were asked to reflect individually and then share their thoughts with their small group. A Steering Committee member recorded each participant's response on a recording form.

B. Mapping Assets and Opportunities

Participants were asked to individually identify on a map both assets (places people want to see replicated in the city and reflected well on the community and proud places to show visitors) and opportunities (undesirable places that need improvement and places participants would not take visitors). After individually identifying the places, each person was asked to place five green sticker dots (assets) and five red sticker dots (opportunities) on a large table map. As a group, they were asked to:

1. Circle clusters of green and red dots
2. Name the clusters
3. Explain why the place was an asset or opportunity.

A Steering Committee member recorded each cluster's 'why statement' on a recording form.

C. Exit Questionnaires

The exit questionnaire contained demographic questions to help the planning team determine if participation reflects the US Census Data for the City of North Ridgeville.

5. Results

The input collected from the in-person and virtual workshops, meetings-in-a-box and online activities is summarized below. Input is organized around themes. Percentages in parenthesis indicate what proportion of comments collected relate to the theme.

A. Big Picture Question: What are the greatest opportunities for North Ridgeville?

- **Expanding and attracting different types of businesses and industries (15% of responses)**
 - Utilizing properties to grow and bring in more businesses and industries and help improve the tax base
 - Developing an industrial and/or commercial park
 - Bringing in and attracting new businesses, an anchor (i.e. IT) and small businesses
 - Bringing in businesses with higher paying positions
 - Developing open lands and underutilized properties with commercial uses

- **Improving specific and underutilized properties and buildings with better uses (14%)**
 - Creating a town center or downtown
 - Having a mix of uses
 - Ensuring connections between developments
 - Developing specific sites into commercial or a mix of uses. Location and potential opportunities mentioned:
 - Southern part at the interstate access (commercial or entertainment)
 - Underutilized or vacant properties along Center Ridge Road (mix of uses with retail and commercial that are connected) and at the closed gas station, motels and previous AT&T building
 - Sites adjacent library and city hall (mix of uses)
 - Intersection at Lorain and Center Ridge Roads and 83 and Center Ridge Road (commercial)
 - Area along Sugar Ridge and between Sugar Ridge and the railroad
 - Improving lands along the CRR

- **Expanding or adding public amenities, facilities, programs (11%)**
 - Providing a pool and recreation/community center
 - Creating indoor activities for youth
 - Improving existing parks
 - Building other facilities (i.e., aquatics, art gallery, performing arts center)
 - Adding additional amenities (i.e., bike and walk paths, educational opportunities, lake for water sports)

- **Providing more things to do (7%)**
 - Adding more sit-down restaurants, shopping and local shops so residents do not have to travel outside of the city
 - Planning more festivals

- **Improving school facilities (5%)**
 - Providing a STEM school
 - Upgrading facilities
 - Building a new school and addressing student growth
 - Improving the school system
 - Investing in schools to attract more residents to live in the city

- **Improving road infrastructure (5%)**
 - Addressing traffic
 - Improving roads
 - Connecting streets and adding roundabouts

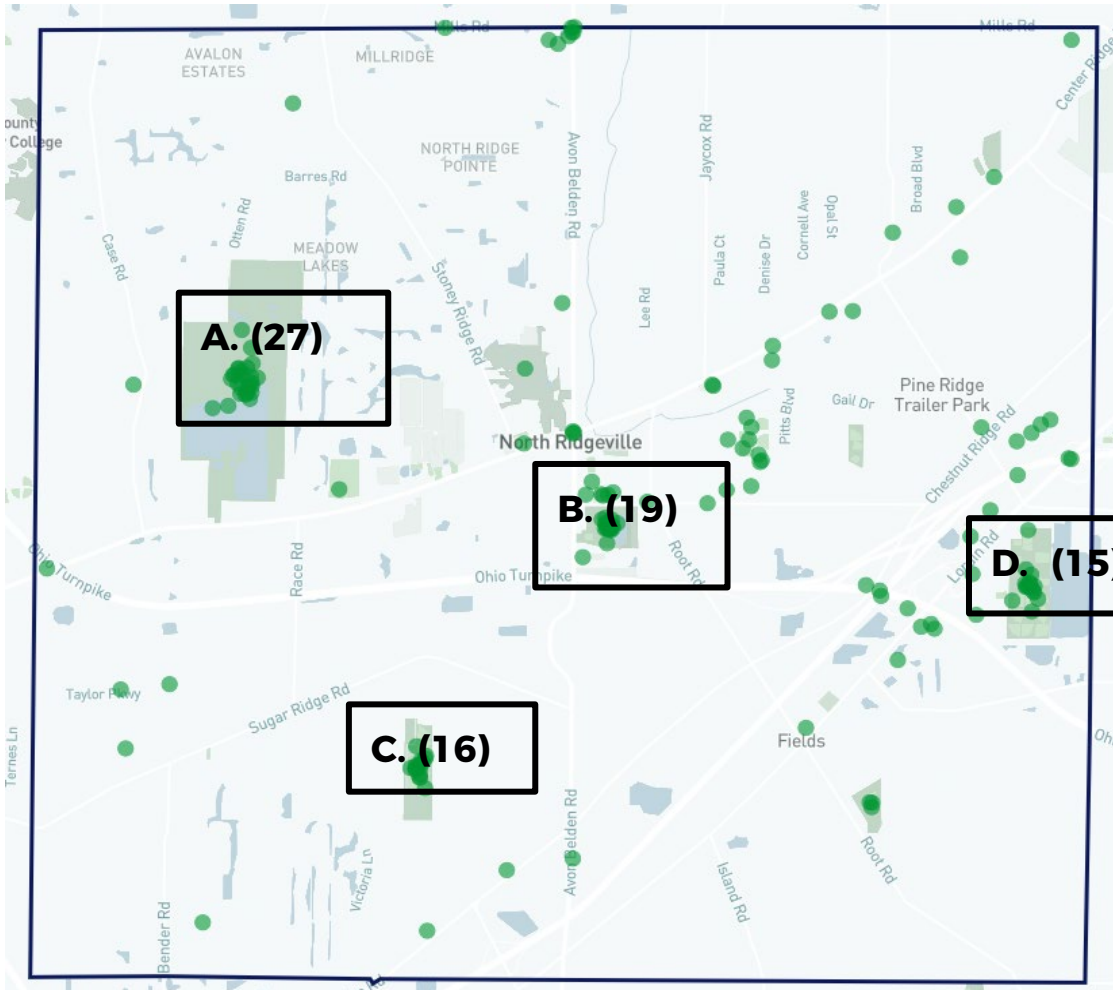
- **Improving the city's visual aesthetics (5%)**
 - Adding more landscaping (i.e., trees) and signage (i.e., welcome signs and banners)
 - Beautifying areas (i.e., at major entrances, along Center Ridge Road)
- **Increasing pedestrian connectivity between neighborhoods/areas (4%)**
 - Connecting neighborhoods and parts of the city with sidewalks
 - Improving walkability and adding bike paths
- **Planning for additional park lands or green spaces (4%)**
- **Existing city location and accessibility (3%)**
 - The existing city location is an asset as it is close to the airport and directly accessible from highways

Other ideas shared (2% or less):

- Addressing flooding.
- Attracting youth and families
- Adding medical, health or social services
- Considering opportunities for older adults (i.e., improving senior center, general planning for older population)
- Developing a brand and identity
- Improving public transportation
- Improving public utilities
- Improving zoning
- Limiting housing development
- Maintaining existing character / small-town feel
- Maintaining level of safety
- Providing affordable housing

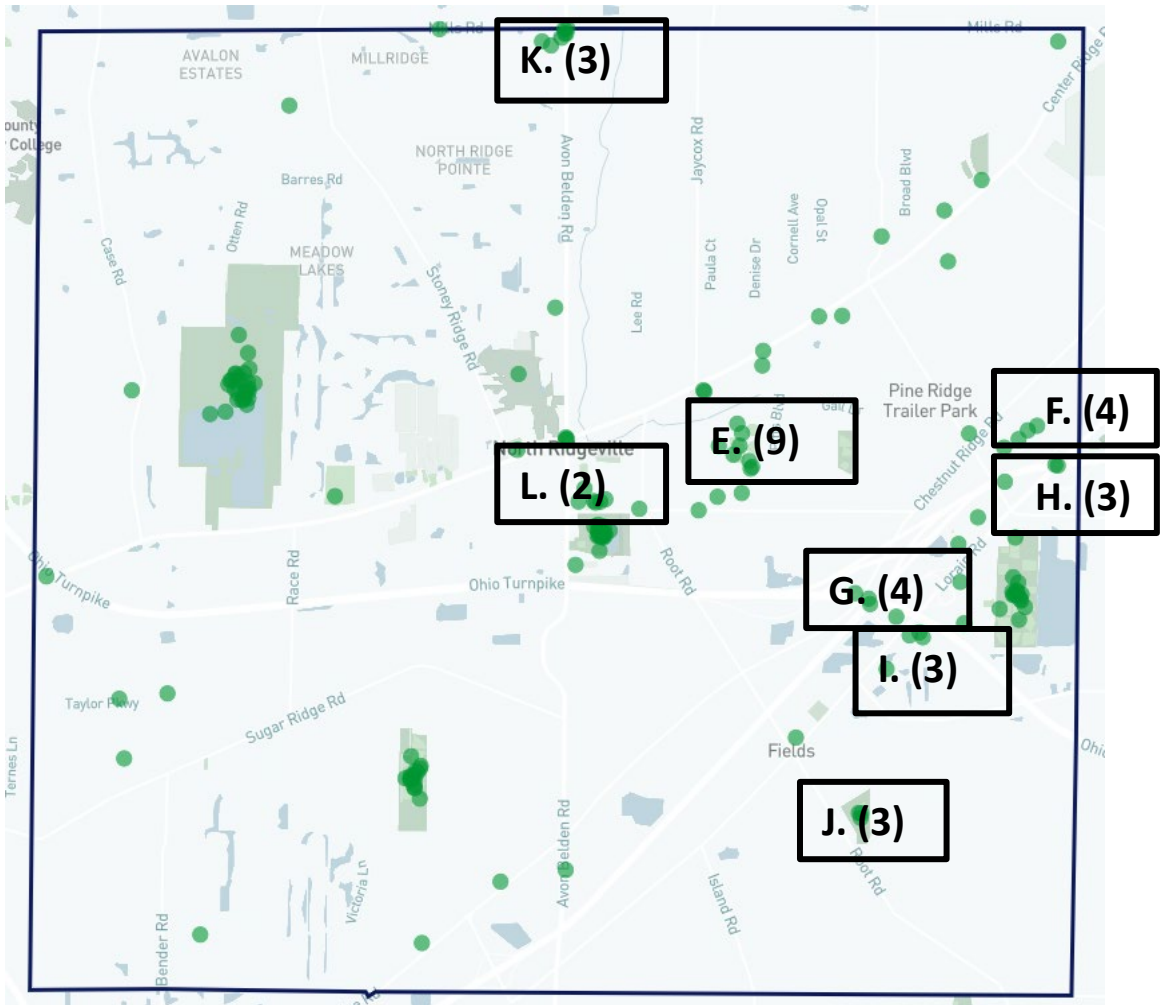
B. Mapping Activity

Assets



Location (# dots)	Name	Existing Use(s)	Assets
A. (27)	Sandy Ridge Metro Park	Metro park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beautiful, natural area • Wildlife • Amenities • Trails • Attracts visitors • Gathering spaces
B. (19)	South Central Park	Public park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green space • Access to nature • Amenities • Outdoor events and recreational programs

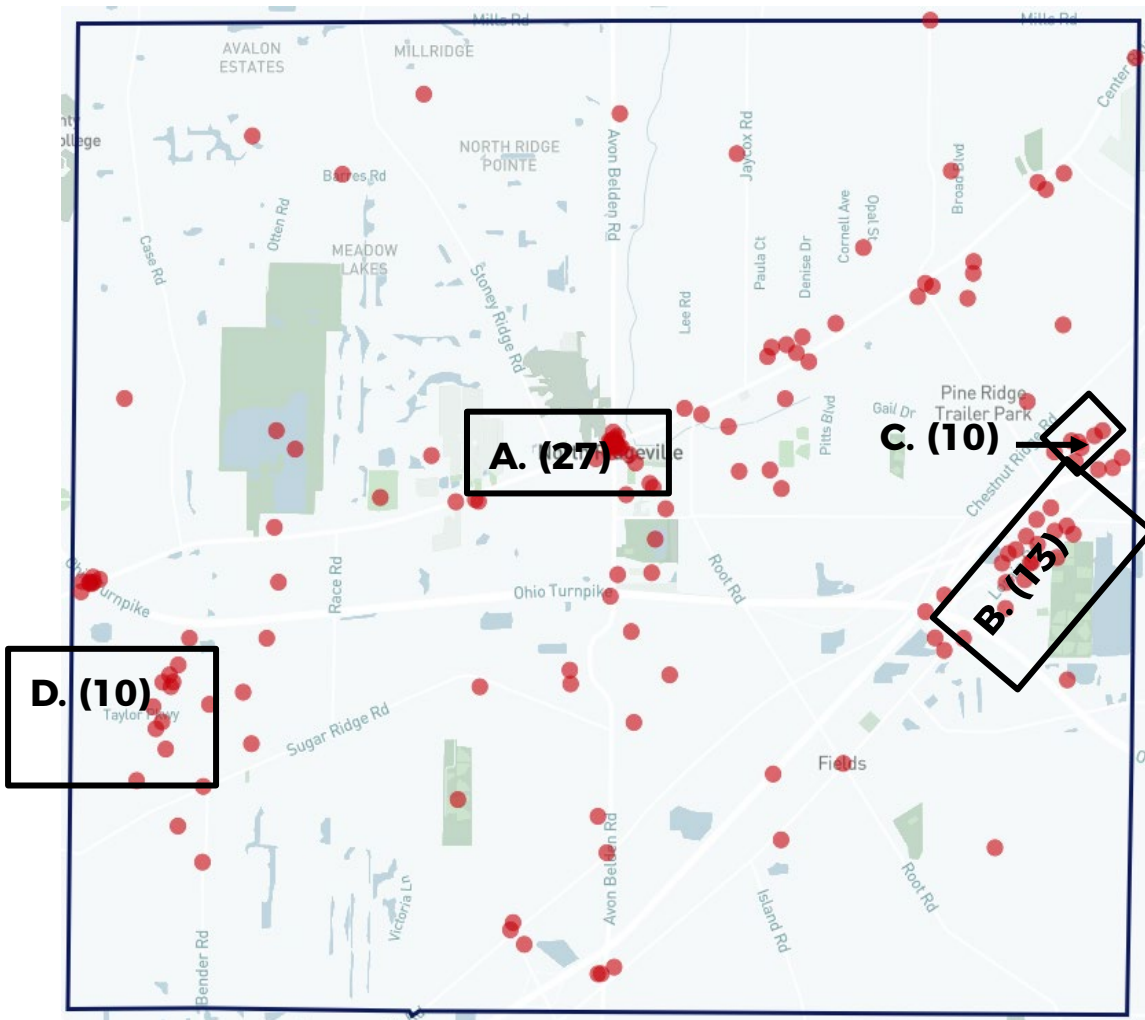
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attracts visitors
C. (16)	Shady Drive Complex	Public park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amenities • Attracts all ages, • Hosts recreational activities, organized sports and tournaments
D. (15)	Victory Park	Amenity, Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attracts visitors • Hosts games and recreational activities



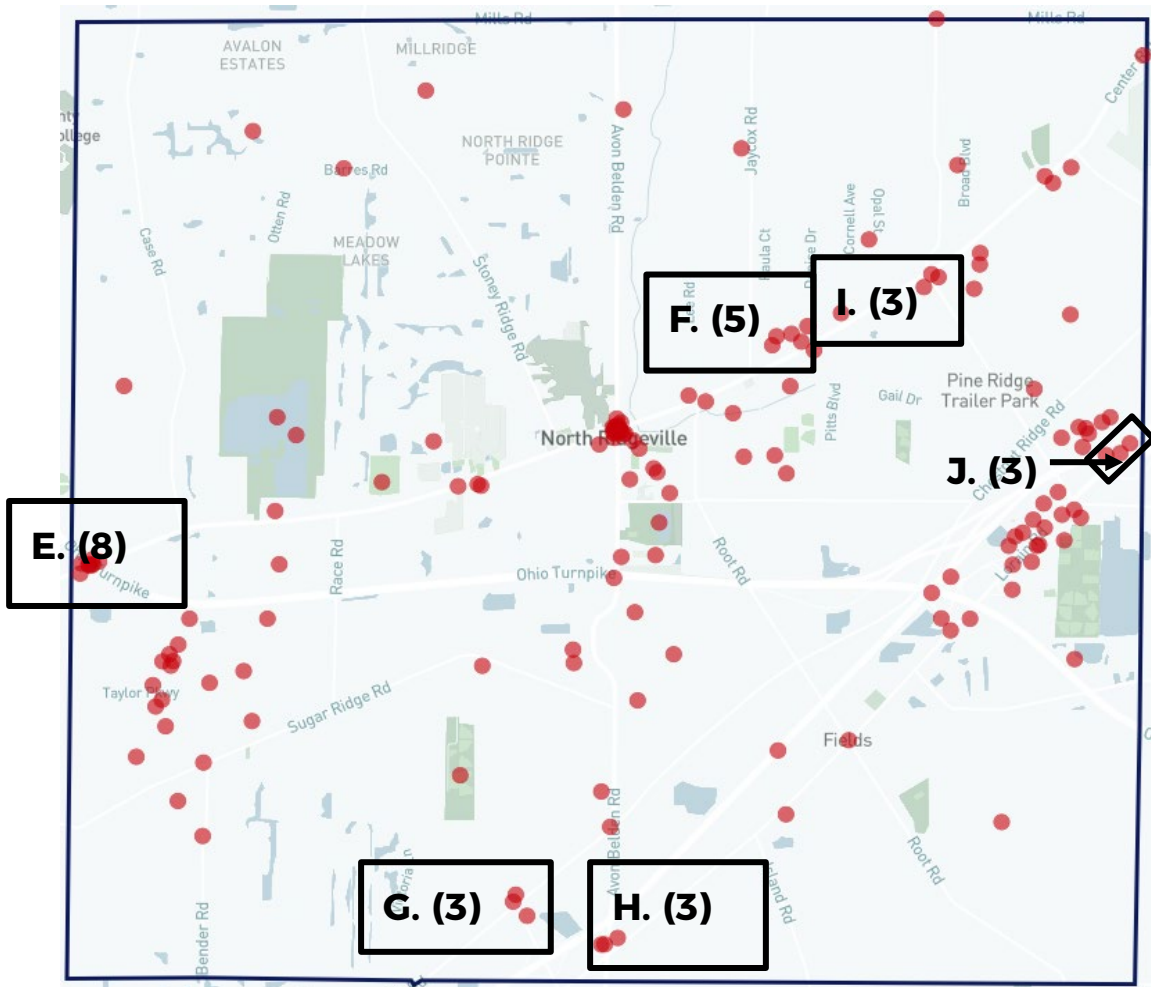
Location (# dots)	Name	Existing Use(s)	Assets
E. (9)	School	Public school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to grow and expand

F. (4)	Cypress Avenue	Open land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site can accommodate commercial, industrial or retail
G. (4)	480 Access	Vehicular hwy access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access into the city, and to existing restaurants and drive thru
H. (3)	480/I80	Vehicular hwy access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access into the city
I. (3)	Aut-O-Rama Drive In	Entertainment, movies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination attraction
J. (3)	Soccer Complex	Public park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A place for youth
K. (3)	Bistro 83	Restaurant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering place • Nice, sit-down restaurant

Opportunities



Location (# dots)	Name	Existing Use(s) & Conditions	Opportunities
A. (27)	Center Ridge & 83	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand alone commercial, fast-food, auto • Vacant gas station • Underutilized lots • “Center of city” • Open land • Eye sore properties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual improvements • Prime development area • Welcome sign • Businesses, retail, dining
B. (13)	Lorain Corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motels • Crime • Fast-food • “Front door of city” • Close to the interstate • Abandoned and unkept properties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business growth • Easily accessible from interstate • Hotels • Beautify entry • Art installation
C. (10)	Cypress Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open land • Eyesore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry and businesses • Mix of uses
D. (10)	Taylor Industrial Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial site • Commercial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow businesses and start-ups • Add or expand industrial business



Location (# dots)	Name	Existing Use(s) & Conditions	Opportunities
E. (8)	Western Gateway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unappealing entrance Blight properties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual improvements Room to add businesses and industry
F. (5)	Marc's Plaza	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial and retail Eyesore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add other businesses and retail
G. (3)	Chestnut Ridge/Alt State Route 83	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open land Hwy access Close to airport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drive tax revenue up with business and retail

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anchor business (i.e. IT) Gives other communities access
H. (3)	Southern Gateway/83	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicular access Open areas (adjacent stable and residential) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smaller businesses
I. (3)	Lear Nagle/Center Ridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open land (dirt pile) Gas station Stand-alone commercial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Room for other businesses and development
J. (3)	480 access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicular hwy access Eyesore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easy access into city Visually improve entry

6. Participation Satisfaction

The Ready to Listen workshops engaged almost 200 participants and 851 pieces of input – 445 ideas from the big picture questions, 362 map assets and opportunities and 44 comment cards. All participants were asked to complete an optional exit questionnaire about their workshop experience and themselves.

The following summarizes information collected from the exit questionnaires:

- 27% of people heard about the Ready to Listen Workshops through word of mouth. 16% heard about it through other sources (Pioneer Ridge website and newsletter, Nextdoor, school newsletter). Emails accounted for 13% and the project website, RidgevilleReady.com, accounted for 12% of outreach methods.
- The majority of participants were White/Caucasian, 98% which is overrepresented of the community compared to US Census (89%). Participation from the Asian, Black/African American, two or more races and the Latinx populations were below the US census data. There was no participation from Other race population.
- 49% of participants were in the 65 years and over category. Participation from the younger adults, 35-54 and adults 55-64 align closely with US Census. Less than 18- to 24-year-olds were underrepresented.
- The majority of participants were comprised of people with a Bachelor's degree and an average household income of \$75,000-\$149,999.
- Most people felt comfortable sharing their thoughts. People appreciated being able to hear other ideas and perspectives and were thankful for the opportunity to share.

For the next round of engagement, specific strategies and methods will be discussed to engage groups who were not captured in round one per the US census data.

7. Next Steps

Following this public input opportunity, analysis in key technical areas will be undertaken to further the planning team's understanding of certain relevant topics to the plan. That work will be considered in combination with community insight to inform the plan's recommendations.

8. Appendix

Attached is a copy database containing all raw comments by the participants.