

Public Participation Program

The public participation program for “*The Lex-Plan 2013*” was a way of obtaining community information and opinions and engaging the participants in exercises to develop visions for the community. This public input included several elements designed to create a partnership between community leaders, stakeholders, citizens, and the consultant. Public participation, input, and review are critical to the success of this project and support for this comprehensive plan update. Key components of the public participation program include:

Design Charrette

Mindmixer Results

Focus Group Meetings

Town Hall Meetings

The screenshot shows the ThinkBigLex website interface. At the top, there are navigation links for 'See How It Works', 'Connect', 'SIGN IN', and 'JOIN'. The main header features the 'THINK BIG LEX' logo and a brief description of the program. Below the header, there are several sections:

- SIGN UP NOW!**: A call to action to share ideas today.
- WELCOME TO THINKBIGLEX.COM!**: A message encouraging users to sign up and contribute to their community.
- FEATURED TOPIC Idea Submission**: A section titled 'What is your vision for the future of Lexington?' with a 'Submit Your Ideas' button and a timer showing 65 days remaining and 24 ideas submitted.
- FEATURED TOPIC Survey**: A section titled 'Where do you live and work in Lexington?' with a 'Complete Survey' button and a timer showing 64 days remaining and 24 surveys taken.
- CONTRIBUTORS**: A table listing weekly active users and their idea counts.
- TOPICS**: A section with buttons for 'RANDOM', 'NEWEST', and 'POPULAR'.
- Your Satisfaction Level With Parks**: A poll showing 18 votes and 2 today.

Rank	Contributor	Idea Count
1	Kathy M11	114
2	Barry M6	110
3	Barb H	102
4	Steve S22	100

ENVISION

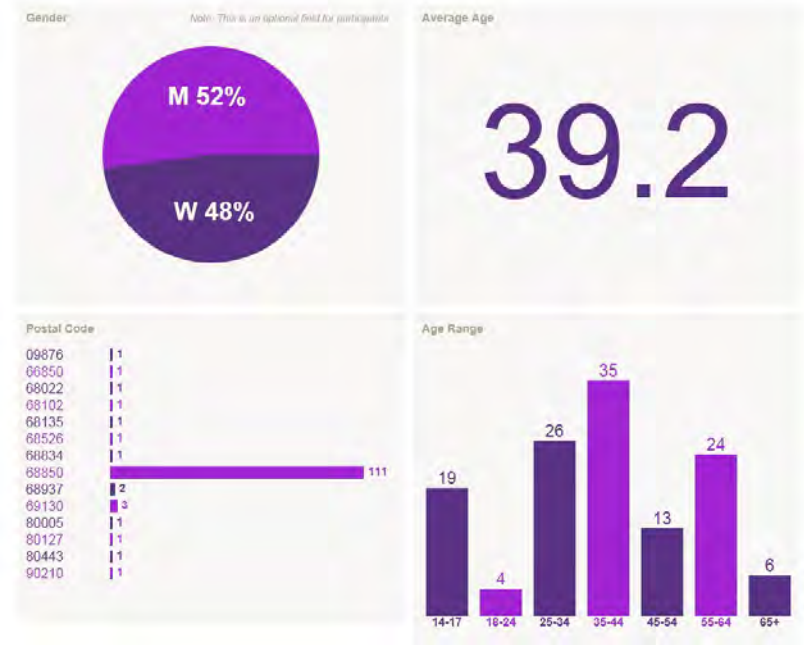
“The Lex-Plan 2013”

Design Charrette (October 24th and 25th)

A two day design charrette in which several planners, architects, and landscape architects present met with the Planning Commission, toured the community, asked questions, worked with the public, took pictures, and created sketches that represent what Lexington could look like in the future depending on how development is carried out. At the end of the charrette, the group came together and presented the various ideas and concepts that came out of the process to the general public at the second Town Hall Meeting and asked for their feedback both in person and via MindMixer site, www.ThinkBigLex.com. The team then modified sketches to reflect the desires for the public input and integrated them results into the goals and objectives for the community.

MindMixer Results (online participation)

The MindMixer site, www.ThinkBigLex.Com, is an online public forum to supplement the traditional planning process by turning over community innovation traditionally performed in conventional public meetings to the multitude of Internet users. The web platform operates as a safe, easy-to-use area where citizens can participate in community projects from the comfort of their home in the language of their choice. The site served as a virtual town hall, whereby users could generate ideas, help others evolve their ideas, and ultimately vote and prioritize the best ideas in the community. The results of the website proved to be a huge success with over 770 unique visitors participating with their comments and a total of 12,317 views, or people that looked at the site but did not register or comment.



**Focus Group Meetings
(September 20th, October 24th and 25th)**

Focus group meetings were used to gather input from specifically identified and invited city staff, stakeholders, and residents. There were six focus group meetings with specifically identified and invited residents or stakeholder groups. Participants were identified because of their ability to provide specific information on a given topic of interest. These meetings were held on September 20, 2012, and October 24-25, 2012. The meetings generally started with a set of specific questions tailored to the particular groups, but were allowed to progress in a more conversational manner. Participants were encouraged to speak freely and answer questions completely in the hope of identify major issues facing Lexington. Since each group had specific areas of knowledge, the information gathered varied between them. The following is a summary of the strengths and issues raised by the participants in the focus group meetings:

Greatest Strengths:

- Proximity to Interstate 80
- The Railroad
- Pro-business policies of the City
- The Opportunity Center
- Quality of Life
- Quality and quantity of the water supply
- Diverse workforce with strong work ethics
- Available land for development
- Caring and generous citizenry
- Public School System
- Regional Hospital

Most Pressing Issues:

- Housing
- More skilled laborers
- Image of Lexington
 - Entryway aesthetics
 - Odors
 - Immigrant populations
- Over 17 different language spoken in Lexington
- Lack of Downtown Shopping
- Need for Residential Parking Downtown
- Public Transportation and/or Taxi Service

**Town Hall Meetings
(September 20th and October 25th)**

Two town hall meetings were held in the evening hours on September 20 and October 25 at in the Opportunity Center for public input. The purpose of the meetings was to gather input on issues (both positive and negative) facing Lexington from the residents’ perspective. At the meetings, the attendees were asked to identify various issues and come up with some strategies to address those issues. Once all responses were recorded, participants were invited to identify the issues on aerial photography/maps, if applicable.

Input was gathered through the use of a modified opportunities analysis. Participants were asked eleven questions about their perceptions of Lexington. The questions were presented in an open-ended style, designed to encourage multiple answers and group discussion. All responses were recorded. It should be noted that individual residents will vary as to their views about Lexington as it exists today and how it should exist in the future. By asking questions in a public format such as this, participants work to form a consensus-based list that identifies and prioritizes the most commonly held views. This process allows all views to be shared with the community, so that no view is left out.