



TOWN HALL SUMMARY REPORT

DATE: May 6, 2021

TIME: 6:00 p.m. – 7:45 p.m.

TOPIC: Business Development

City Council Attendees: 7 members

(Marsh, Overcash, Fogle, Molloy, Olson, Samson, Wright)

Staff Attendance: 15 members

(S. Adams, J. Bruno, M. Garcia, B. Gudmestad, K. Jones, A. Krcmarik, D. Lapierre, B. Limbaugh, B. McKee, A. Phillips, S. Schorling, R. Wensing, N. Yost)

SUMMARY

To provide a more open and informal environment to discuss topics of interest to the Loveland community, a series of Town Halls will be held in 2021. Town Halls offer a forum that allows City Council to hear from their constituents in an informal setting and engage in two-way dialogue. In April 2021, City staff asked the public for feedback on City-related topics of interest to consider for the next Town Hall and other educational opportunities. This was completed through the City's engagement platform called Let's Talk Loveland. Roughly 12 categories emerged, including high demand for information and a chance to discuss business development.

The May 6, 2021 Town Hall had 36 registrants and a range of 44-48 attendees, including council and staff, with a few registrants coming in later in the session. Similar to the first Town Hall, Harwood's Community Conversations model was used to engage participants. This report summarizes the input received from the roundtable participants, with full notes from each breakout room included in Appendix A.

Four staff members facilitated two roundtable sessions that contained about 22-24 members each. The 90-minute Town Hall was extended an additional 15 minutes to accommodate a 30-minute presentation on the topic, breakout time, and extra time for councilor remarks.

The Town Hall was initiated by summarizing ground rules for meeting participants and introducing attendees. Following the introduction, Economic Development Director Kelly Jones and Development Services Director Brett Limbaugh provided a brief presentation on how business development works in Loveland, including duties of the Economic Development and Development Services staff, and how the two departments work together to recruit, secure and retain Loveland businesses. Following the presentation, participants were randomly assigned a breakout room with three or four City Councilors, two staff facilitators, and additional City staff to encourage conversation and sharing per room.



Participants were invited to respond to three questions:

1. In general, what types of business do you think will assist with Loveland's economic growth?
2. What is the best way the City can support business development, expansion, and retention?
3. What do you want to understand more about business development in Loveland that you haven't learned tonight?

ROUND TABLE THEMES AND REFLECTION

The breakout groups allowed participants to have an active conversation around their opinions and ideas on business development in Loveland. Most topics are related to how the City recruits and retains businesses and fosters a prosperous business climate. The conversation in each breakout group varied – one group focusing more on Loveland as a creative community and the opportunity to drive more innovation and manufacturing companies; the other focused more on business development topics related to small business. Across both conversations, the following themes and comments emerged:

- **Industries Loveland Should Focus On:** Attendees desire higher-paying jobs – specifically in creative, innovative, and manufacturing industries.
- **Small Business:** 1) Small businesses are important to the community of Loveland and need to be a focus, and 2) More downtown development is needed for a lively atmosphere.
- **Businesses That Are Good for Our Community:** 1) Attendees desire companies that want to be here, want to give back to our community, and commit to making Loveland better. Attendees don't want companies that take away from Loveland's quality of life.
- **Incentives:** 1) Attendees want more public knowledge – success stories of how/why incentives are needed, and 2) More equity needed with incentives. If transparency is not offered, why not?
- **Business Friendly – Retention and Attraction:** 1) Do more to support local businesses and create an environment in Loveland that is attractive to all businesses to stay and come here. Everything from making it easy to do business, easy for their employees to live here and want to live here, etc.

REFLECTION

Economic Development topics also addressed in the staff presentation were the focus of many breakout room discussions. This includes:

- How much time City staff spends working with small businesses
- The prospect report with a breakout of prospects by industry



- City projects focused across Loveland, and those with a specific focus on downtown
- The number of incentives awarded by the size of the business, noting that most Loveland incentives are given to companies to companies with 6-20 employees (considered a small business), 21-50 employees, and 51-100 employees where there is the potential for high job growth.

Key Takeaway: There is a disconnect between what the public hears and understands about Business Development and what is already happening. The City's Office of Communication and Engagement plans to use feedback from this Town Hall to strategize and formalize additional education and listening opportunities with the public on this topic.

APPENDIX A: Notes from 5/6/2021 Town Hall (two breakout groups)

Participants in the conversations were presented with a short list of “Ground Rules” to help keep the conversations productive, focused and respectful:

- **HERE TO HAVE A “KITCHEN TABLE” CONVERSATION**
Everyone can participate; no one dominates.
- **THERE ARE NO “RIGHT ANSWERS”**
Draw on your own experiences, views and beliefs. You do not need to be an expert.
- **KEEP AN OPEN MIND**
Listen carefully and try to hear and understand the views of others, especially those you may disagree with.
- **HELP KEEP THE CONVERSATION ON TRACK**
Stick to the questions. Try not to ramble and note if your point has been made already.
- **IT’S OKAY TO DISAGREE, BUT DON’T BE DISAGREEABLE**
Respond to others how you want them to respond to you.
- **RAISE YOUR HAND TO SPEAK**
Press the ‘raise your hand’ button and wait to be called on before speaking. Please mute yourself if you are not speaking.
 - If you are dialing in from your phone, press *9 to raise your hand and *6 to unmute
 - When speaking for the first time, please introduce yourself and if you are a Loveland resident.
- **TIMING & FOLLOW-UP**
Each breakout group will have 30-minutes to respond to three questions. If your group finishes early, please rejoin the main room. If you did not get the opportunity to relay your thoughts or have further questions, please visit Let’s Talk Loveland to share your thoughts.



Breakout Room 1

Town Hall Discussion Topics:

QUESTION 1: In general, what type of business do you think will assist with Loveland's economic growth?

- Loveland is a place where people make things with the ability to get things locally.
- Small town atmospheres (arts, restaurants, etc.) is vital but restaurant industry has taken a huge hit. Restaurants and entertainment that go hand-in-hand are currently sitting empty around the Foundry plaza and would like to see more development there.
- Large international and national companies have been the focus and are getting incentives but they do not need them, and should be more focus on the smaller companies.
- Small communities need less box stores as they tend to come and go, while smaller businesses that can be sustained by the local population is more important to communities.
- Economic Development needs to ensure they are environmentally friendly, citing the waterpark example and its consumption of Colorado's limited water. The location is also important to consider.
- The 10 to 100 employee range is where the stable growth will occur.
- Manufacturing job wages (\$12-15 per hour) in Loveland are too low for the lack of affordable housing in the area.

QUESTION 2: What is the best way the City can support business development, expansion, and retention?

- The city should be more neutral and use less public funding to achieve goals.
- The question was asked about a small business association. The city is actively engaged with several platforms (Chamber, DDA, etc.) to help redevelopment and development properties. Resources are available online for businesses that are seeking assistance.
- Incentivizing makes sense, but not at the expense of someone else. There should be a balance between those that will be bringing jobs to the community and the incentive.
- Flavored topic has been debated for two years which has affected some small businesses, and the city should not be micro-managing those issues when they are being handled at the state level. The city should focus on roads and more relevant issues.

QUESTION 3: What do you want to understand more about business development in Loveland that you haven't learned tonight?

- More public knowledge about business development and showing success stories/why incentives are being given out would help the community better understand the process. Social media is one platform that could be used.
- In & Out Burger traffic is a concern due to that area being very busy as it is currently. A transportation group will require a transportation study to ensure that the proposal will work and to see what recommendations/requirements will be needed. A comment was made that a different location would be helpful.



- How are incentives decided? Is there a standard or a sliding scale? Understanding how incentives are determined would be beneficial.
- How is what is happening on I-25 going to affect what is happening in downtown?

Breakout Room 2

QUESTION 1: In general, what type of business do you think will assist with Loveland's economic growth?

- Manufacturing and technology – aligning Loveland with those industries – aerospace, defense – Why? IT would allow for these companies to find additional state funding – the State is focused on those industries – As the State brings these companies in, Loveland should work with these companies
These are great paying jobs. Employees would get involved in our community. A win for the community. Ups our ability to train our kids and provide good opportunities for them
- Build on our Art Community – Sculptors – getting old – make sure Loveland remains a draw for artist – sculptors.
A great part of our history.
How can we continually build and grow that industry?
- Difference between primary jobs and not? Primary jobs are those firms that import in wealth and export out product.
- Great to bring in companies that are starting out. Good to have supplementary businesses. Engagement in the community. Passionate professionals to give back to the community. Career paths for our youth. Hope that whatever businesses we bring in, that they will see the need to give back!

QUESTION 2: What is the best way the City can support business development, expansion, and retention?

- We received some incentives that brought us into the downtown area.
- Loveland is friendly towards businesses. How would that look?
The planning commission has got to work closely with developers, not overly regulate businesses, speak positively about local businesses.
- Affordable housing and utility services for our employees – the fewer obstacles the better – eases doing business
- Support our local businesses that are in town – Great town!
- Examples of communities that aren't supportive of businesses? What are obstacles that other towns or communities have? Infrastructure – high speed internet is important; development limitations – permits; The Berthoud community – we don't want anyone new coming in – outward no GROWTH from citizens – I'm here and I don't want anyone new coming in.



QUESTION 3: What do you want to understand more about business development in Loveland that you haven't learned tonight?

- As a newcomer, I'm happy with everything!
- Communities that aren't supportive of local businesses? More info!
- Innovation centers that Biden is talking about? Can we get one of those in N. Colorado?
- How do we invest in private equities? How can more private individuals invest in our businesses?
- Get more capital coming into Loveland? How can we increase our investment pool?
- What happens after a business gets established in town? What do we do for them after they are established? Does the city have incentives for coaching?
- Primary employers in Loveland communicating more – Do we see that happening in Loveland?
- Networking between businesses