

City looks to the future

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By Mindy Honey Society Editor |

Hundreds of people gathered at Branson Convention Center on Thursday in an effort to guide Branson's future for the next 20 years.

The city held an informational open house, asking area residents to weigh in on everything from community growth to economics.

"I'm here for a purpose," said Jean Cantwell, as she noted on a board that she would like to see the city grow north. "I'm encouraging the city to continue landscaping with flowering shrubbery so we are attractive to our guests and residents.

"I'm so happy Branson is such a vibrant, growing community and I hope it continues that way."

She said in the future, she'd like to see family-friendly growth.

"If it doesn't grow, it goes backwards," she said.

Branson resident Elda Jones also stopped by the open house to weigh in on Branson's future.

"I think this is one of the biggest things we can do for our community is planning," she said. "We need attainable housing and jobs so we can afford attainable housing."

The city has hired Design Workshop out of Denver, Colo., to help complete a comprehensive plan, which could be done as early as March of next year.

"This night is where we are gathering input from the community on things that are important to them," said Becky Zimmermann, of Design Workshop.

She said Thursday was a time to hear from residents about what is near and dear to their hearts, their visions and thoughts on economic sustainability.

Residents have several more chances to share thoughts and ideas, and get involved.

Oct. 7, the city will hold a visioning workshop and Oct. 28, an "alternative futures" workshop is slated.

Throughout the evening, guests were able to visit several booths and take part in a 30-minute presentation where they were able to share information and thoughts.

"This is really to engage the community and make sure we've heard from them," Zimmermann said.

The comprehensive plan will guide the city's development and growth through the next 20 years, addressing future needs of residents and businesses.

People may visit bransoncomplan.com or a link is provided at the top of the city's homepage, bransonmo.gov in order to stay informed about the plan.