

April 2025 Open House Summary

Introduction

On April 3, 2025, the Lane Events Center (LEC) Master Planning project hosted a Community Open House from 5–7 p.m. to gather input on the Master Planning Project and the future redevelopment of the LEC site.

Approximately 80 community members attended the drop-in event, where they learned about the project’s purpose and timeline; the role of the Visioning Workgroup; the emerging strategic principles and priorities for the LEC; results of a recent community survey; and reviewed several initial design concepts for the site. Attendees explored informational displays and engaged in conversations with the project team. They were invited to provide feedback through a comment form, which asked participants to review the emerging strategic principles and priorities and respond to four key questions about the initial design concepts.

Overall, the Open House reflected optimism about the future improvements at the LEC, and constructive feedback aimed at ensuring the redevelopment balances modernization and economic sustainability with accessibility, neighborhood compatibility, and preservation of local character.

This report summarizes the major themes that emerged from participant input, with representative quotes from participant comment forms. Fifty comment forms were received.

Feedback on Strategic Principles and Priorities

At the Open House, attendees were also invited to respond to the emerging set of strategic principles and priorities that will guide the development of the Lane Events Center Master Plan. These included:

Guiding Principle

- Fiscally Sustainable & Financial Stewardship

Strategic Priorities

- A Thriving Local Economic Engine & Regional Economic Growth
- Conference and Convention Hub
- Year-Round Sports and Recreation Opportunities
- Multi-use Facility: A Future-Ready Venue
- Community Lifeline & Emergency Response Hub
- Collaborative Partnerships
- Neighborhood Integration and Vitality
- Supports Active and Healthy Communities
- Daily Connection and Activity
- Gathering for Community Traditions

How well do the emerging strategic principles and priorities reflect what's important to you for the future of the Lane Events Center?

- **20** participants selected *Very well*
- **20** participants selected *Somewhat well*
- **5** participants selected *Not very well*
- **0** participants selected *Not at all*
- **0** participants selected *I'm not sure*

Overall, the majority of respondents felt the draft principles aligned with their priorities, with many offering comments throughout the evening reinforcing themes of community connection, neighborhood integration, and maintaining a balance between new development and long-standing uses.

Initial Site Concepts Feedback: Overall Summary

Participants reviewed the elements in four initial design concepts and shared feedback. Highlights include:

Community members expressed enthusiasm for creating flexible, multi-use spaces suitable for diverse community events, recreation, emergency services, and local businesses among other uses. There was support for new indoor sports facilities, including an expanded ice arenas and an indoor track, which attendees felt would serve community recreation needs year-round and help attract economic activity through sports tournaments and conventions.

The potential integration of a hotel into the redevelopment plans received varied feedback. Many participants highlighted the economic benefits, noting a hotel could attract more events throughout the year and contribute positively to the site's sustainability. However, others suggested careful consideration of the hotel's scale and impact on neighborhood character and traffic.

Preserving and enhancing green spaces, natural landscaping, and pedestrian connectivity was consistently emphasized. Participants valued the environmental and aesthetic benefits of trees, parks, and green infrastructure, advocating for improved connections to Amazon Creek and accessible walking trails.

Maintaining the presence of the Lane County History Museum was a key concern for many attendees. Participants emphasized the importance of clearly showing the museum in future design concepts and voiced opposition to any plans that would eliminate or relocate it without a clear alternative. The museum was viewed as a valued cultural asset that should remain part of the site's long-term future.

Traffic management and neighborhood impacts were also frequently mentioned. Attendees expressed concerns about increased traffic volumes, site access, and potential impacts to nearby residential streets. Many emphasized the need to maintain safe conditions for people walking and biking and encouraged thoughtful planning to ensure neighborhood compatibility.

The summary of comments by questions is shared below.

Looking at the different elements included in the initial design concepts, what parts do you like?

Attendees expressed enthusiasm for several elements in the preliminary design concepts. Participants frequently highlighted the value of flexible, multi-use spaces that could support a range of events and activities. Many also supported enhancements to green spaces and gathering areas, particularly those that improved walkability and site accessibility. Several comments emphasized preserving specific features, such as the Lane County Fair and existing buildings like the Wheeler Pavilion and the Lane County History Museum.

Participant Comments

Multi-Use and Flexible Spaces

“Multi-use buildings; enhanced gathering areas.”

“I like the flexible space—all buildings and space should prioritize flexibility.”

Sports and Recreation Facilities

“Love the multi-use regional sports facility. If conferences, need hotel, multi-use sports facility with track, multipurpose space and convention center.”

“Regional hub—have hotels to support anchor Convention Center. Bring in indoor track to support year-round activity.”

Hotel Integration

“Most impressed by hotel and Sports Complex—giving us a winter events arena to raise economic impact.”

“If conventions remain a priority, a hotel is important. If developed, it should contribute to meeting space and food and beverage.”

Green Spaces and Improved Walkability

“Improved walkability for neighborhood access.”

“Promote sports/meeting spaces, park-like elements, turning creek area into a natural area.”

Food Plaza and Community Amenities

“I love the Food Plaza from Option 4—balance expansion as well as separation of space.”

“Food Plaza near Expo buildings; distinct outdoor gathering places.”

Preservation of Historic and Valued Structures

“Keeping the iconic Wheeler Pavilion, maintaining the level of green space.”

“I’ll miss some old buildings like Auditorium and Expo halls, but they are long past their times. Updating them will be really good.”

“Preservation of the museum building—lots of trees.”

Parking and Transportation

“Less parking space, promote bicycling, bus station drop-off/pull-out.”

“Generally interested in less empty parking lots and more community-facing services beyond usual business hours.”

Economic Sustainability and Revenue Generation

“Maintain generators of TLT and continue revenue to support the facility.”

“The hotel could keep the Event Center in the black. Mixed-use is always good.”

Looking at the different elements included in the initial design concepts, what parts do you not like?

Participants expressed several concerns regarding some elements shown in the initial design concepts. The proposal of an on-site hotel drew mixed reactions, with some community members questioning its necessity, scale, and potential impact on traffic and neighborhood compatibility. Traffic, parking, and congestion related to expanded facilities also raised concerns, with participants worried about the effects on local neighborhoods. Additionally, some attendees felt certain amenities might overshadow the need for community use, potentially reducing local accessibility.

Participant Comments

Concern About Hotel Integration

“Not particularly interested in a hotel. We already have too many.”

“Seems like there are enough nearby lodging facilities to accommodate LEC event users....”

Traffic and Neighborhood Impact

“...this street (Monroe St.) is heavily used by cyclists and walkers.”

“Neighbors do not like the idea of entry via Monroe.”

Parking Concerns and Preferences

“Don’t like parking being broken up into smaller chunks.”

“So much parking space... I’m sure you all have thought how that space could be (used for) multi-use (or) solar.”

Preservation of the Lane County History Museum

“Keep the museum...”

“The possible removal of the Lane County Historic Museum without a clear plan for replacement.”

Concerns with Sports Facility

“I’m not in favor of yet another sports-directed building facility.”

“I worry about the sports multi-use building being close to the housing.”

Loss of Green Space and Natural Areas

“Expanded parking...lack of enhanced green space.”

“I would like to see more developed green space.”

Concerns About Loss of Historic or Valued Buildings

“Would like to keep the beautiful old horse stables.”

“Keeping the pole barn—agriculture events are being minimized.”

General Site Design Concerns

“Don’t overbuild the site. Lane County residents still want adequate parking.”

“I would have liked to see more specifics around disaster preparedness.”

Is there anything missing from the site concepts that participants would like to see included?

Participants shared a wide range of ideas for additions they felt were missing or needed more emphasis in the initial design concepts. Several respondents highlighted the need for more trees, landscaping, and features to improve the appearance of the site and buffer views of parking areas. Others suggested improving pedestrian connectivity around the property and to nearby natural features like Amazon Creek. Some participants proposed new recreational and programmatic spaces, including a swimming pool and facilities suitable for activities such as partner dancing. There were also requests for clearer planning related to emergency response and disaster preparedness, including shelter capacity and site resilience. A few community members suggested dedicated spaces for local businesses or nonprofit organizations, such as shared office or meeting space.

Participant Comments

Expanded Museum Presence

“Again, the history and museum can play a crucial role in developing the area as both a tourist attraction and a vital community asset.”

Emergency Response and Disaster Preparedness

“As a member of an Emergency Preparedness Committee, I would like to see an explanation for how the LEC site might serve as an emergency site.”

Green Space, Trees and Enhanced Landscaping and Environmental Sustainability

“Land, beauty trees, shrubs, buildings to block the view of parking lots.”
“Develop both sides of canal...provide bridges, paths, seating, and large open sloping areas.”
“Sustainability, climate mitigation.”

Pedestrian Connectivity and Walkability

“Improve connectivity to Amazon Creek and clean up creek; pedestrian connectivity around site.”
“Public walking trails...open access for walking exercise.”

Community Hub and Spaces for Local Businesses

“I would like to see more of a central community hub. Adding sports facilities would be good, and creating another space for local businesses with hotel would be good.”
“Include office meeting space for nonprofits.”

Please share any other comments or ideas you have:

In addition to feedback on specific design concepts, participants shared broader ideas and values they hope to see reflected in the Master Plan. Many attendees emphasized the importance of preserving green space, planning for climate resilience, and integrating natural features like Amazon Creek. There was strong support for flexible, multi-use facilities that can accommodate a variety of community needs, from sports and events to emergency response. Participants also encouraged thoughtful traffic planning, support for walking and biking access, and continued public transparency. Some highlighted the importance of maintaining the Lane County History Museum and creating affordable, inclusive spaces for local organizations and community members. These additional comments reflect a desire for a site that remains accessible, sustainable, and responsive to a broad range of users.

Participant Comments

Inclusive, Community-Focused Spaces

“Want to make sure spaces are multi-use so all of the community can enjoy, including low-cost options.”

“Community first, focused on tourism funded by tourism. We can do both.”

Flexible and Multi-Functional Facilities

“If one of the buildings could be flexible enough to have an indoor track on an as-needed basis, that would be a truly Eugene facility.”

“Good to see progress and the inclusion of a multi-use sports facility, multipurpose space and emergency use.”

“Be sure the regional sports building is large enough to incorporate an indoor track.”

“Want to make sure spaces are multi use so all of the community can enjoy...”

Economic Development and Funding

“Like over the last almost 50 years of modern development at the fair site, it’s going to have to be funded in a big way. Serious money needs serious public support.”

“I’m interested in where funding will be coming from.”

“This seems like an amazing opportunity to promote economic development through good and beautiful design.”

Amazon Creek, and Natural Area Activation

“Activating the Creek could create opportunities for revenue and engagement.”

“It might be interesting to try and incorporate Amazon Creek as a natural area.”

Traffic Management and Neighborhood Safety

“Please keep the surrounding streets safe for cyclists and walkers.”

“..... something to improve overall traffic flow access, some as gateway to fairgrounds events.”