

SPLINTER

LET'S TALK CARRBORO
RESEARCH ANALYSIS

Let's Talk Carrboro was a six-week community engagement campaign to gather ideas and input from residents and visitors and to inform and make the public a part of the branding process.

We used a multi-level approach to gather feedback, including idea stations at local businesses, an online survey, group sessions with town stakeholders, an event survey, and one-on-one interviews. Our goal in each avenue was to engage and solicit opinion and emotion that could be distilled into our brand efforts and future marketing initiatives.

With any survey or research project like this you typically receive the most response from two ends of the spectrum—people who love and live the brand and people who hate or have issues with the brand. This rang true in this campaign. We received many glowing responses with true insight and feeling about the town and what people enjoy about it. We found many repeated words, statements, and feelings as well as common favorite places, people and things. We also received a fair amount of responses that criticized the town, its handling and/or awareness of current issues, expressed a distrust of the process or questioned the need for a brand.

We find all of this insight helpful to the process and believe we are ready to dive into creative directions for your logo, tagline and brand assets. The following report distills community feedback into manageable information that will inform our process.

REPEATED WORDS: Community/Community Feel, open-minded, free, hippies, walk-able, bike-friendly, eclectic, hipsters, weird, open, local, eccentric, funky, diverse, small, green, sustainable, active, artsy, edgy, intimate, fun, colorful, music, spirited, culture, coffee, dancing, energy, environmental, crunchy, gay, artsy, rustic, unique, fresh, crazy, fun, trains, tolerant, trees, cool, granola, food, family, natural, casual, accepting, entitled, vibrant, different, friendly, progressive, loving.

When we break this down, here are common feelings and wordplay:

COZY: relaxed, friendly, welcoming, laid-back, chill, cool, homey, casual, friendly, family oriented, neighborly, supportive, lovable, inviting, southern, quaint, simple, peaceful, bright smiles, kind

UNIQUE: funky, eclectic, artistic, musical, weird, different, fun, eccentric, vibrant, odd, quirky, playful, zippy, granola, distinct, creative, carnival, pleasantly edgy, spirited, diverse, crunchy, scruffy, unpredictable, free

FOOD: fresh, organic, local restaurants, beer, farmer's market, vegetarians, healthy, culinary, tasty, delicious

ACTIVITIES: biking, walking, walking dogs, dancing, hula hooping, running, gardening, happening

OPINIONATED: progressive, elitists, liberal, privileged, left-winged, accepting, tolerant, friendly, entitled, sophisticated, independent, open-minded, intelligent, educated, egoists

HISTORY: rustic, vintage, historic, mill houses

REPEATED STATEMENTS, WHAT APPEALS: independently-owned businesses and restaurants, music and arts, festivals, small town feeling, friendly, healthy, progressive, everything is close by, homegrown, casual, down to earth, mill houses, history, welcoming, creative, liberal, hula hoopers, opinionated

COMMON PLACES PEOPLE LOVE/ASSOCIATE WITH CARRBORO: Weaver Street, Farmers' Market, Cat's Cradle, railroads, trails, Open Eye Café

Here are some quotes pulled from responses to What Makes Carrboro “Carrboro” that show the range of feedback we received:

Community, hippie, organic, healthy, eco-friendly, walk able, bike- friendly, full of music and food trucks. Open Eye Café and Weaver Street, farmer’s markets and small, locally owned businesses. Guys with dreadlocks, sandals and acoustic guitars. Girls with tattoos, cargo shorts, organic cotton, trees and yoga mats. Tech-savvy, drive hybrids. We’re green, clean organic, close-knit and way cooler than Chapel Hill.

Stay funky, my friend. Please do not become Chapel Hill.

Don’t screw it up!

Creativity, energy, innovation, everyone is outside, openness, small business support

People on the street taking time to talk with each other and valuing that. Art, and music everywhere

Live life with no pretentions. Be what you are all and enjoy the fresh food, coffee, music, festivals and the people.

Carrboro has an open and accepting atmosphere. People here are interested in other people.

The fact that Carrboro asked this question is very Carrboro.

We are close together, physically, socially, and culturally. And we share well.

Not only tolerates eccentricity, but celebrates eccentricity

Carrboro is great but it’s already a bit too self-consciously in love with itself. Don’t make it worse with this campaign

It’s the best place, I see happy relaxed people and I want to become one of them.

Lack of planning, branding thought or foresight. Why change that? To become Chapel Hill?!

Open Minds, Open hearts, Open arms!

I love Carrboro because when I walk out my front door I just might run in a street fair where people are doing yoga, making energy with each other or celebrating our town!

It’s the place hippies and hipsters love calling home

It is a BUBBLE of self absorbed hipster bullshit. Please do not draw any more attention to this fact.

I’ve never lived anywhere that was so instantly easy to enjoy living. I moved into an apartment/condo area and instantly made friends with my neighbors, who were friends with their neighbors, who knew the people up the hill, who knew some more friends, and soon a close-knit group of 30 under-35-years old group of awesome friends, all new to the area for various reasons, was created and we’re still friends today even though only 3 of those people still live in Carrboro.

The independently owned businesses are the most important thing about Carrboro.

Business owners and workers support each other and the people who live here help each other and look out for each other. It’s the true definition of “community” and makes living here invaluable.

Here's what we learned and distilled from our research.
We will have these sentiments in mind as we move into our creative phase.

Carrboro is an unconventional place that cannot be neatly wrapped up with a bow.

Carrboro is a non-traditional town that supports and encourages creativity.

Carrboro is genuine. It looks you in the eye.

Carrboro has an independent spirit that is positive and optimistic.

Carrboro's eclectic nature is a by-product of an environment that fosters difference and tolerance.

Carrboro is a feeling. People feel different when they are here.

Carrboro welcomes outsiders because it is one itself.

Carrboro is not static. It is active and in constant flux.

Carrboro is neighborly. We are on a first-name basis.

Carrboro is smart and serious, but it can also laugh at itself.

Carrboro is up-tempo and down to earth.

Carrboro has a rhythm to it. And its own beat.

Carrboro is cool but would never call itself cool.

Carrboro has a rich history, but is not stuck in the past.