

Community Council Meeting Summary:

Round 3 (Fall 2022)



Introduction

In September 2022, the General Plan Team attended virtual meetings with each of the six Community Councils in Ventura. The General Plan Team also held two meetings focused on the Downtown – one for residents and one for businesses. The objectives of these meetings were to:

- Summarize progress made to-date on the General Plan Update
- Provide an overview of the land use alternatives, including the process of developing the alternatives
- Discuss land use alternatives for the geographic areas represented by the Community Councils in more detail
- Provide an opportunity for attendees to ask questions and provide feedback on the land use alternatives in a more informal setting

The meetings were held on the following dates:

1. Westside – September 7, 2022
2. Midtown – September 8, 2022
3. Montalvo – September 14, 2022
4. East Ventura – September 15, 2022
5. Pierpont Bay – September 28, 2022
6. College Area – September 28, 2022
7. Downtown Businesses – October 11, 2022
8. Downtown Residents – October 11, 2022

Attendance and participation at each meeting varied between approximately a dozen people and 50 people. With the exception of the Westside Community Council, all meetings were held in English; the Westside Community Council meeting included simultaneous Spanish interpretation.

At each meeting, the General Plan Team gave a brief presentation on the proposed new land use designations and an overview of the land use alternatives, including the alternatives for specific subareas of interest to each group. Following the presentation, the Team answered questions from attendees and received feedback on the alternatives, including concerns and suggestions for specific land use designation changes. This document summarizes the high-level comments and feedback received from each of the meetings and includes a summary of some of the cross-cutting themes, concerns, and ideas that were heard. It is not a comprehensive summary, and questions from attendees are not recorded.

Cross-Cutting Themes

The following are some of the cross-cutting themes that were heard from the meetings.

- Concern over height in some areas, particularly places adjacent to single family neighborhoods; desire to maintain the scale of buildings in many areas.
- Concern about the impact of the State density bonus on building heights, what residents can expect to see in new development, and how much discretion the City has over development projects.
- Concern about changes in neighborhood character and rapid influx of new development.

- Desire to preserve agricultural lands (SOAR).
- Need for design standards that create diverse buildings that are not too “boxy.”
- Support for more housing and a diversity of housing that serve the local population, not people from out of town (conflicting views on how to accomplish this while preserving the scale of buildings and the identity of the city).
- Questions about parks and open space, traffic impacts, parking, water supply, sea level rise, and emergency evacuation and when/how they will be addressed in the General Plan.
- Suggestions of new land uses ideas that were not included in the alternatives.
- Questions about growth anticipated through the General Plan time horizon and why the City needs to plan for more than 8 years.
- Questions about the process of getting to a preferred land use direction.
- Many ideas for goals, policies and outcomes that are not specifically related to land use designations, such as access to healthy food, environmental justice, and historic preservation.

Westside (September 7, 2022)

Approximately 25 people were in attendance

- Evacuation routes and emergency response on the Westside are an issue given the bottlenecks that occurred during the Thomas fire.
- Concern about traffic, parking, construction, and impacts to water from adding more residents to the Westside.
- Environmental pollution concerns from development.
- Maintain the Vons grocery store since it is a valuable source of food for local residents; change the designation to lower the density on the site to discourage redevelopment.
- Concern about the potential loss of SOAR lands for development.
- Explore annexation of North Avenue.
- Maintain a ‘School’ designation at the local E.P. Foster Elementary School.
- Redesignate the Plaza Shopping Center as “Neighborhood Center” to preserve the supermarket.
- Keep a maximum of 3 stories on the Westside.
- Develop shopping at the intersection of Stanley and Ventura, not mixed use.
- Ensure that the preferred land use direction reflects discussions with the Community Councils.

Midtown (September 8, 2022)

Approximately 15 people were in attendance

- Maintain low height limits in areas adjacent to single family homes; maintain current regulations.
- Concern about traffic safety and speeding along Thompson, Catalina, and Anacapa.
- Keep height limits low because of the impact of the State density bonus on building heights.
- Concern about changes in neighborhood character and poorly designed buildings; design standards are needed for better designed buildings.

- Need for more affordable and diverse housing options in the city.
- Include a policy in the General Plan about setbacks and step downs for development adjacent to single family neighborhoods.
- Consider keeping the south side of Thompson only residential.
- Convert the old Community Memorial Hospital (CMH) to senior housing or housing for hospital interns, teachers, first responders, etc.

Montalvo (September 14, 2022)

Approximately 20 people were in attendance

- Improve pedestrian access to the Metrolink station.
- Montalvo is supporting more than its fair share of Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) units.
- Given its adjacency to single family homes, consider changing the base designation on the 7/11 site off Bristol/Peacock from Mixed Use 4 to Mixed Use 1.
- Lower heights along Victoria south of Moon Drive from 6 to 3 stories. This would make more sense since the adjacent homes along Alameda are all single family.
- Given its adjacency to single family homes, consider changing the base designation on the MPD parcel on Ventura/Grand from General/Heavy Industrial to a non-industrial or clean industrial designation.
- Alignment of Johnson around US-101 freeway exit needs to be fixed before new development is put in place.

East Ventura (September 15, 2022)

Approximately 45 people were in attendance

- Need for more affordable housing in the city.
- Saticoy is a food desert; need more grocery stores and neighborhood services.
- Concern about water supply with population growth.
- Make sure the Areas of Discussion map correctly identifies SOAR and agricultural lands within City limits and the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI).
- Provide information about projected growth in the Areas of Discussion throughout the General Plan time horizon.
- Provide information about density bonuses in the background materials.

Pierpont Bay (September 28, 2022)

Approximately 10 people were in attendance

- Improve Seaward for better circulation and to address traffic safety issues.
- New development is changing the "beach town" character and charm of the city.
- Plan for only one RHNA cycle. We should not plan for more than 8 years.

- The City needs to study and plan for tsunami evacuation for existing residents before more housing units are built.
- Create a Specific Plan for the Seaward corridor.
- Consider office/R&D use at the industrial training facility parcel on Alessandro. Given it is off the freeway exit, part of the site could include a parking structure that is open for community use on the weekends. Currently all the alternatives designate the parcel as 4-Story Multifamily.
- Reduce the amount of development allowed between Hwy 101 and the railroad tracks. This is not a good area for housing.
- Create a bike and pedestrian path down Alessandro that connects to Sanjon.

College Area (September 28, 2022)

Approximately 15 people were in attendance

- Concern about increasing height in areas adjacent to single family homes; create design standards to address adjacency issues.
- Need for more affordable housing in the city.
- Need for adequate parking in the city.
- Provide more clarity around how transportation will intersect with the land use alternatives work.
- Consider lowering maximum building heights for the office/R&D designation to match the Light Industrial designation. (Create a new 3-story Office/R&D designation).
- Explore ADUs and multifamily on church properties to increase diverse housing options.
- Include a policy in the General Plan about setbacks and step downs for development adjacent to single family neighborhoods.
- Include a policy in the General Plan about on-site open space requirements for parcels over a certain size.
- Explore potential for housing at underutilized, older, and dilapidated shopping centers (not just Pacific View Mall).

Downtown Businesses (October 11, 2022)

Approximately 5 people were in attendance

- Lower heights and densities in the General Plan to account for the State density bonus.
- Land use designations should specify top floor percentages.
- The Downtown coastal zone is very different from the Pierpont coastal zone because of the 101 freeway. Land use designations in these zones should be specific to coastal area.
- New tsunami maps from the United States Geological Survey (USGS) have recently come out. This information should be considered in the land use alternatives.
- Consider allowing greenhouses and aquaponics on the City-owned parking structure.
- Consider implementing an adaptive reuse ordinance for the Downtown, Westside, and Midtown to incentivize preservation of historic buildings.

- Only plan for one RHNA cycle.
- Concern about the surveys because people who oppose development in the SOAR areas really only have two options: the Core and the Base.

Downtown Residents (October 11, 2022)

Approximately 10 people were in attendance

- Consider a shorter follow-up survey to target people who did not participate in the first survey.
- The results of the surveys will be skewed towards people who are willing to spend the time and effort to take the surveys.
- The survey results should be cross tabbed to show responses by where people live.
- There is a discrepancy between what the public and the General Plan Team think the area of the Historic Downtown is.
- Consider including a policy in the General Plan about adaptive reuse before demolition. The Funk Zone in Santa Barbara is a good case study to look at.
- Consider designating the Mission Plaza area as Neighborhood Center.
- Prefer the expansion alternative for the Downtown but not the SOAR areas.
- Land use designations should specify top floor percentages.
- The visioning phase took 1.5 years. There should also be plenty of time for engagement in the alternatives phase.
- Maintain the City's agricultural identity and limit growth. There is no justification for growing when the State is in a drought.
- The City should only plan for one RHNA cycle.
- Lower-density housing solutions like ADUs would be more palatable to residents.
- Need for more affordable housing in the city.
- The City should incentivize ADUs by subsidizing some of the costs of building them.