

Mid-City Communities Plan Update

Overview of Key Community Engagement Efforts

OVERVIEW

Between the winter and summer of 2024, engagement with a wide variety of community members in various formats helped gain meaningful input toward the Mid-City Communities Plan Update. Over 1,470 people participated in these activities, including an online survey, pop-up events, workshops, office hours, community interviews, email submissions, and youth engagement.

This draft report provides an initial overview of these engagement activities and summarizes the key feedback heard so far. The final Public Engagement Summary, which will be available in fall 2024, will serve as a valuable reference to guide the formation of concepts for the Mid-City Communities Plan Update.

ATTACHMENTS

Detailed information about the feedback received from the various engagement activities is available in the following attachments.

Attachment 1: Summary of Online Survey, Pop-Ups & Other Activities

Attachment 2: Summary of Public Workshops

Attachment 3: Summary of Office Hours, Community Interviews, & Emails

Attachment 4: Summary of Youth Engagement

Please note that the city's project team is continuing to summarize outputs from recent mini-workshops and pop-ups led by City Heights Community Development Corporation, various outreach activities led by Cal Poly San Luis Obispo (SLO), and results from the second interactive survey, which closed on August 30, 2024. The summary of these activities and additional analysis will be incorporated in the final Public Engagement Summary, which will be available in fall 2024.

ENGAGEMENT DETAILS, FORMAT, AND PARTICIPATION

Online Survey: 641 participants.

This online survey, provided in English and Spanish, asked people to describe their community today and in their ideal future vision. This brief survey took less than 2 minutes to complete.

Pop-Ups: 474 participants.

These fun and engaging pop-up stations at various community locations allowed people of all ages to participate. People were asked to describe their community today and in their ideal future vision. Spanish and Vietnamese speakers were available at several pop-ups.

Interactive Workshops (In-person & virtual): 74 participants.

Two public workshops allowed community members to come together to share ideas and provide input on vision, priorities, and other topics.

Office Hours: 9 participants.

Six in-person office hours allowed community members to come together to share ideas and provide input on vision, priorities, and other topics.

Community Interviews: 11 organizations and 23 participants.

City staff sent invitations to forty-two community-based organizations (CBOs) and heard back from eleven CBOs. Eleven interviews allowed CBOs to share ideas and provide input on vision, priorities, and other topics to help inform the Mid-City Community Plan Update.

Emails: 13 participants.

People submitted comments and suggestions via email.

Youth Engagement (Hoover High School, Crawford High School): 240 participants.

Students at Hoover High School and Crawford High School participated in multiple sessions and activities led by City staff and Imagine planning consultant to learn and think critically about city planning in their community. Students participated in creative writing, community interview, and photography assignments and they also took final survey.

Early Insights from Community Feedback

ONLINE SURVEY AND POP-UPS SUMMARY

From January to July 2024, community members had an opportunity to provide input via online survey and pop-up stations. Major themes were identified using semantic grouping and cluster analyses to summarize how people described their community today and in their ideal future vision.

Table 1 and 2 provides the major themes that the community identified for today and their ideal future vision. Please refer to Attachment 1 for more detailed information.

Table 1. What word(s) would you use to describe Mid-City (your neighborhood) today?

Rank	Major Themes - Today	Comments	Percent
1	Diverse, Multicultural & Inclusive	242	16%
2	Neglected, Underserved & Infrastructure-Deficient	177	12%
3	Amazing, Beautiful, & Charming	144	10%
4	Dangerous, Dirty & Unsafe	128	9%
5	Calm, Peaceful & Quiet	119	8%
6	Community/Family-Oriented, Friendly & Neighborly	115	8%
7	Walkable, Vibrant, & Dynamic	114	8%
8	Busy, Loud, Crowded & Car-Dependent	88	6%
9	Central, Urban, Dense & Transit-Rich	84	6%
10	Evolving, Growing & Developing	57	4%
11	Eclectic, Unique & Colorful	55	4%
12	Unaffordable Housing & Cost of Living & Homelessness	52	4%
13	Clean, Green & Safe	48	3%
14	Historic, Single-Family Community, Suburban	31	2%
15	No Parking	18	1%
		1472	100%

Table 2. What word(s) would you use to describe your ideal future vision for Mid-City (your neighborhood)?

Rank	Major Themes - Future Vision	Comments	Percent
1	Clean, Safe & Thriving Neighborhoods	275	17%
2	Vibrant, Walkable, Mixed-Use Places & Corridors	257	16%
3	Better Infrastructure - Mobility & Public Facilities	256	16%
4	More Green Spaces, Trees, Parks & Recreation	133	8%
5	Build Affordable Homes for All People	129	8%
6	Accessible, Diverse, Equitable & Inclusive Community	121	8%
7	Beautiful, Charming, Dynamic & Innovative Neighborhoods	116	7%
8	Community-Oriented, Friendly & Neighborly	104	7%
9	Preserve Neighborhood Character	79	5%
10	Peaceful, Quiet & Serene	45	3%
11	Crowded, Destroyed & Declining Community	36	2%
12	More Parking	27	2%
		1,578	100%



SUMMARY OF PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

The City held two public workshops as part of the Mid-City Communities Plan Update to allow community members to come together to share ideas and provide input on vision, priorities, and other topics. One workshop was held in-person on Saturday, May 18, 2024, and was followed by one virtual workshop held on May 22, 2024. The following high-level workshop themes represent key ideas and prevalent public comments that were provided during the workshops.

Sustainability, Equity & Climate Resilience

- Blue and green infrastructure strategies:
 - Addressing flooding issues along Chollas Creek is critical.
 - Stormwater treatment, bioswales, greenery in sidewalks, roundabouts, trees and less concrete.
 - Harvest rainwater and consider climate change impacts.
 - Use permeable concrete to prevent runoff.
 - Stormwater capture and green infrastructure (trees, bioswales) are essential.
- Clean energy and transportation:
 - Install public electric vehicle (EV) charging stations to support EV owners who rent.
 - Consider EV charging stations and E-W connections.
 - A microgrid would allow the community to rely on its own local energy sources, promoting energy independence and resilience.
- Urban canopy equity study:
 - Conduct shade equity study assessing the distribution of shade in different neighborhoods.

Land Use and Development:

- Density and development strategies:
 - There was overall support for higher density and 5+ stories along the main corridors if there is thoughtful architectural design, sensibility to context, and mobility considerations.
 - Maintain the character and scale of neighborhoods, with sensitivity towards incremental heights and setbacks in upper stories.
 - Explore public-private partnerships for mixed-use development and affordable housing.
 - Maintain small corner stores in neighborhoods to increase walkability.

- More multi-family housing is needed in neighborhoods that haven't been zoned for it.
- Re-evaluate ADU requirements.
- Redevelop underutilized properties. Reuse/redevelop vacant parking lots, abandoned commercial, malls, and big box retail.
- Development that creates more jobs for residents.
- Housing types:
 - Encourage mixed-use developments with ground-floor retail, especially in cultural hubs and along main streets like El Cajon Boulevard and Adams Street.
 - Support affordable, multi-family housing without displacing residents.
 - Encourage housing opportunities for younger generations and a mix of incomes.
 - Explore municipally built and owned housing.
 - Building housing near public transportation hubs promotes sustainable living.
- Public Realm:
 - Promote community gathering places, placemaking opportunities, program cultural activities and cater to the unique needs of each neighborhood expression.
 - Create pedestrian only plazas (like Little Italy) and gathering spaces with accessible services and local commercial businesses.
 - Consider regular banner rotations for a fresh look in Mid-City.

Mobility

- Connectivity:
 - There is a gap in connectivity for the Mid-City area. Improving transit connectivity inside and outside of Mid-City could enhance accessibility and reduce reliance on other modes of transportation.
 - Consider bridges to connect communities further between big roads and challenging nature (like Teralta Park).
 - North/South linear parks can connect different areas and canyons.
- Transit and bus infrastructure
 - Improve bus stops in Mid-City. Add better shading, seating, planting, and lighting for a safe, welcoming and comfortable transit stop experience for all.
 - Add more transit lines, transit stops, and frequency throughout Mid-City
 - Connect better to adjacent places like Mission Valley.
 - Consider neighborhood hubs (Normal Heights and City Heights) and shuttle routes to enhance community identity and connectivity.

- Explore ride share apps and services to be promoted and accessible in Mid-City.
- Provide transit options for late-night workers.
- Bike infrastructure:
 - Prioritize protected bike lanes.
 - Strengthen bike connections within the community.
 - Address bike safety concerns and dangerous intersections.
- Pedestrian concerns:
 - Enhance connections between bikes and pedestrians to trolley stations.
 - Add and maintain good quality sidewalks. Wide, shaded, safe, and maintained.
 - Implement effective and welcoming wayfinding and signage.
 - Address lack of pedestrian crossings, lack of sidewalk, red lights for cars,
- Parking:
 - Address parking issues affecting visibility at intersections, enforce red zone parking regulations, and address encampments in parking areas.
 - Solve residential parking shortages.
 - Address garage conversions that impact available parking in residential areas.
 - Consider neighborhood lots for parking, parking permits, and metered parking options.
 - Reduce street parking and explore underground parking solutions along corridors to improve pedestrian flow.
 - Suggest requiring two stories of parking for buildings over five stories.

Parks, Public Facilities, and Open Spaces:

- New and Existing Parks
 - More parks! Connected network of small/medium parks.
 - Invest in maintenance of existing parks, cleaner bathrooms, better lighting, seating, and safety.
 - Complete existing open space projects.
 - Expanding parks south of Interstate 8.
 - Kensington-Talmadge needs more parks.
 - More recreation areas like badminton courts.
 - Joint-use agreements with schools need reinforcement to ensure effective utilization of open spaces.
 - Activate Chollas Creek and make it safe for kids and the community.

- General updating and improvement of Colina del Sol Park, which has been neglected.
- Create a variety of parks that can host the diverse population of Mid-City.
- Create a range of parks that are special for young people, dog owners, children, adults, and everyone that lives in Mid-City and has different interests.
- Create more parks, playgrounds, baseball fields, and basketball courts.
- Prioritize recreational centers for youth.
- Focus on open spaces and parks in disadvantaged areas.
- Funding should support the park staff and maintenance to be able to keep parks in good and safe condition.
- New Public Facilities
 - A new library or community anchor (e.g., a pool) could be beneficial.
 - Relocate fire station project that is intended to be in a canyon.
- Canyons
 - Preserve green spaces like canyons and implement trails and pathways.
 - Create urban trails connecting North and South Canyons with signage, sculptures, and cultural meaning.
- Urban greening:
 - Trees along main corridors can enhance aesthetics, improve air quality, and provide shade.
 - Enhance greenery by adding trees and landscaping to reduce heat.

Please refer to Attachment 2 for more detailed information.



OFFICE HOURS SUMMARY

The City hosted six community office hours in February and March 2024 to provide an opportunity for community members to share ideas and provide input on vision, priorities, and other topics. The following themes represent the high-level summary of key ideas and the prevalent comments that were provided.

History & Place

- Balance historic preservation with new housing development, ensuring that historic neighborhoods retain their character while contributing to housing needs.

Sustainability, Equity & Climate Resilience

- An inclusive and collaborative approach to planning, ensuring equitable attention and resources across all neighborhoods, particularly those feeling neglected.
- Ensure that new developments balance environmental preservation and protect green spaces, trees, and wildlife habitats with sustainable infrastructure and climate resilience.
- Equitable community outreach, inclusive planning processes, and support for local businesses.
- Improvements in pedestrian access, sustainable development practices, and urban green space management while addressing historical inequalities and promoting youth engagement.

Land Use & Development

- Balance increased housing development while preserving community character, diversity, and historic neighborhoods.
- Update land use and zoning to increase density while minimizing displacement and gentrification.
- Provide diverse housing options, including affordable housing and infrastructure improvements.
- Prioritize equitable development, promote homeownership, and maintain neighborhood culture, with careful management of short-term rentals and corporate landlords holding vacant properties.

Urban Design

- Enhance well-being and safety through physical improvements like fixing sidewalks and adding streetlights, which contribute to a stronger and more connected environment.

- Infrastructure upgrades should be carefully planned, considering the area's topography, culture, and character, ensuring that development projects are sustainable and supportive of the community's needs.
- Addressing stormwater management, improving public safety, and ensuring that new housing developments are supported by proper infrastructure.

Mobility

- Improve mobility options and make streets safer for all users.
- More investment in bikeways, transit, and traffic calming measures.
- More roundabouts, better bus services, and careful consideration of development along narrow streets
- Concern over poorly implemented speed limits, the potential bottleneck created by expanded transit networks, and parking difficulties, especially in areas like City Heights and El Cajon Boulevard.

Parks, Public Facilities & Open Space

- Better services, infrastructure, and more green spaces to address both current and future demands.
- Concerns about the lack of parks and amenities, poor infrastructure maintenance, and safety issues.
- Residents are frustrated with slow progress on development projects and inconsistent planning efforts.
- More park development, expanded cultural services, improved green spaces, and infrastructure upgrades to support higher residential density.

Please refer to Attachment 3 for more detailed information.

COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS SUMMARY

The City held eleven community interviews to allow community organizations to share about their organization's mission and community priorities and concerns. The following themes represent their key ideas and the prevalent comments that were provided. Please refer to Attachment 3 for more detailed information.

History & Place

- Some community members are worried about the impact of increased density on older neighborhoods' character, existing and planned infrastructure, and privacy.
- There is a desire for historic preservation, with some community members advocating for protecting certain areas and buildings.

Sustainability, Equity & Climate Resilience

- Various communities expressed a sense of being overlooked by city planning efforts and frustration over unfulfilled promises and a lack of impactful change.
- Develop the local food economy, support small farmers and food businesses, and facilitating access to land for food production and streamlining the process.

Land Use & Development

- Support for greater density and more diverse housing options, with emphasis on density being equally shared amongst all Mid-City Communities.
- Homelessness is a recurring issue, with concerns on the increased visibility, impact on community safety, and need for more supportive services and resources.
- Some community members feel that affordable housing needs are not addressed adequately and that new developments may contribute to gentrification and displacement.
- Several comments focus on the need for a more supportive business environment, including the establishment or expansion of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), revitalizing declining areas, and addressing the displacement and uncertainty faced by small businesses.
- A significant concern is the lack of adequate parking, especially in new developments. Many community members are frustrated that new housing lacks sufficient parking, forcing people to search extensively for spaces or park far from their homes. The lack of parking is seen as a deterrent for both current residents and potential new residents.

Mobility

- Calls for safer streets for cyclists and pedestrians, advocating for a holistic approach to street design that accommodates all ages and abilities. Concerns about the safety of shared bus and bike lanes, with some advocating for dedicated cycling corridors or bike lanes on less busy side streets.
- Strong demand for improved transit connections, particularly to better connect areas like San Diego State University, Mid-City, and Uptown, via dedicated transit only lanes. Comments suggest re-envisioning transit to be more efficient and equitable, making it a viable alternative to car use.
- The community faces ongoing problems with infrastructure maintenance, including unpaved alleys, poor road conditions, outdated facilities, and inconsistent street lighting. There are also concerns about reduced urban canopy and inadequate responses to infrastructure needs.

Parks, Public Facilities & Open Space

- Many areas lack adequate parks and recreational spaces. Existing parks are not always accessible or well-maintained, and there is a call for more green spaces, dog parks and community gardens.
- Significant need for diverse and culturally appropriate services, including health, youth programs, arts, and social services. Additionally, existing facilities like libraries, recreation centers, and schools are seen as inadequate for the community's needs.

EMAILS

The City invited the public to submit comments and suggestion via email to ensure additional community input on the Mid-City Communities Plan Update. A total of 13 community members submitted and the following represent their key ideas and comments that were provided.

- Housing suggestions ranged from a city loan program for building ADUs to offer affordable rentals, improving oversight on short-term rentals, and increasing the development of dense residential areas with businesses underneath.
- Recommendations for land use changes that allow small corner stores in residential zones and prioritize high-density housing and neighborhood-serving businesses on major streets like El Cajon Boulevard.
- Existing needs for more parks and open spaces are needed in densely populated areas, the preservation of existing tree canopies, urban trails that connect Normal

Heights to Chollas Creek, and community gardens with drought-tolerant plants to enhance the environment and support local wildlife.

- To support growth and ensure safety, older communities need updated infrastructure, including wider streets, better parking, improved stormwater management, emergency access, and new fire safety requirements like defensible spaces and additional egress points.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

During the youth engagement activities, students shared feedback related to the Mid-City Communities Plan Update. The following themes represent their key ideas and the prevalent comments that were provided. Please refer to attachment 4 for more detailed information.

History & Place

- Preservation of cultural diversity and the inclusive atmosphere of Mid-City by protecting key cultural sites including community centers, local family-owned businesses, the Little Saigon district, and murals. There was also a desire for more cultural festivals, block parties, and events.

Land Use & Development

- Students would like to see more cafes, diverse restaurants, small local shops, and a nearby mall to enhance their neighborhood's social scene. The commercial streets in North Park were used as a good example.
- Strong support for affordable housing and improved housing conditions. Common concerns include potential cost increases and potential displacement, and the impact on homeless individuals.
- Economic Disparities were highlighted with wealthier areas having better infrastructure and resources compared to poorer neighborhoods.
- Students expressed concern for folks experiencing homelessness.
- Desire for jobs to be created so people can continue to live in Mid-City.

Mobility

- There is a strong call for additional street lighting to improve visibility and safety, alongside better-maintained sidewalks, and roads with fewer potholes.
- Due to safety concerns such as crime, violence, drug use, and homelessness, driving is the preferred mode of transportation for students, who desire safer and cleaner streets where they can feel secure and comfortable.

Parks, Public Facilities & Open Space

- Libraries, parks, and community centers like the YMCA are important places to spend time with family and friends and there is support for additional hang out spots including public spaces, shopping areas, and recreational areas like arcades, a bowling alley, movie theatres, playgrounds, and soccer fields. Skateparks were mentioned numerous times by the students.
- Many students expressed a desire to see more trees in their neighborhoods for improved air quality, beauty and shade.



Summary of Online Survey, Pop-Ups & Other Activities

OVERVIEW

The City asked two questions via online and in-person activities about how people described their community today and in their ideal future vision. There were several ways to provide this feedback to ensure the broadest community participation and representation:

- Online Survey
- Pop-Ups
- Youth Engagement Surveys – Hoover and Crawford High School Students
- Interactive Workshop Activities – In-person and virtual

The primary focus of this activity was to make it simple, short, and meaningful by offering a brief online survey (3 questions that took less than 2 minutes to complete) and setting up fun and engaging pop-up stations at community events and locations where people of all ages gather. Over 3,000 comments were generated from 1,275 community members.

DETAILS AND PARTICIPATION

A total of 1,275 people participated in this activity. There were 641 participants via online survey, 474 participants via pop-up events, 66 student participants from Hoover High School, 57 participants from Crawford High School, and 37 participants from in-person and virtual workshops. Spanish and Vietnamese speakers were available at several pop-ups to facilitate participation.

Online Survey (English)

Participant: 637 people
January to July 2024

Pop-Up: Kensington Park*

Participant: 12 people
January 18th 2024

Pop-Up: City Heights/Weingart Library*

Participant: 20 people
January 19th 2024

Online Survey (Spanish)

Participant: 4 people
January to July 2024

Pop-Up: Copley-Price Family YMCA*

Participant: 28 people
January 19th, 2024

Pop-Up: Normal Heights-Kensington Library*

Participant: 29 people
January 19th, 2024

Pop-Up: Lunar New Year Festival

Participant: 195 people
February 10th & 11th 2024
10 am to 6 pm

Henwood Memorial Park/City Heights Park
San Diego, CA 92105

Pop-Up: Northgate Market*

Participant: 4 people
March 1st, 2024

Pop-Up: Rolando Street Faire

Participant: 110 people
April 14th, 2024
10 am to 6 pm
Rolando Blvd
San Diego, CA 92115

Hoover High School

Participant: 66 people
March 26, 2024
Google Sheet Survey – Q3 & Q4

Pop-Up: Multi-Cultural Love Festival

Participant: 75 people
February 17th, 2024
10 am to 4 pm

Henwood Memorial Park/City Heights Park
San Diego, CA 92105

Pop-Up: Kroc Center*

Participant: 1 people
March 2nd, 2024

Crawford High School

Participant: 57 people
May 22/23, 2024
Google Sheet Survey – Q3 & Q4

Workshops (In-person & virtual)

Participant: 37 people
May 18th and May 22nd (virtual) 2024
Flip Board and Slido Survey

**Activity led by Cal Poly SLO Community Planning Studio*

ACTIVITY FORMAT

Participants were asked three questions:

1. What word(s) would you use to describe Mid-City (your neighborhood) today?
2. What word(s) would you use to describe the ideal future vision for Mid-City (your neighborhood)?
3. What is your ZIP code?

What We've Heard So Far:

Major themes were identified using semantic grouping and cluster analyses to summarize how people described their community today and in their ideal future vision. Table 1 and 2 provides the major themes for today and future vision.

Table 1. What word(s) would you use to describe Mid-City (your neighborhood) today?

Rank	Major Themes - Today	Comments	Percent
1	Diverse, Multicultural & Inclusive	242	16%
2	Neglected, Underserved & Infrastructure-Deficient	177	12%
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14	Historic, Single-Family Community, Suburban	31	2%
15	No Parking	18	1%
		1472	100%

5. Calm, Peaceful, & Quiet – People describe their neighborhood as calm, peaceful, and quiet, with a chill, and relaxed atmosphere. The neighborhood is comfortable, cozy, and livable, offering a quaint and pleasant environment.



6. Community and Family-Oriented, Friendly, and Neighborly – People describe their neighborhood as friendly, community-oriented, and neighborly, with a supportive environment that is welcoming to families.



7. Walkable, Vibrant, & Dynamic - People describe their neighborhood as vibrant, walkable, and lively. With easy access to shops, restaurants, and parks, there is always something to do with an active and dynamic mix of people.



8. Busy, Loud, Crowded, & Car-Dependent – People describe their neighborhood as crowded, loud, and busy, with heavy reliance on cars to get around, which creates congestion and a noisy environment.



<p>13. Clean, Green, & Safe – People describe their neighborhood as affordable, clean, green, and safe with a lot of nature and trees.</p>	
<p>14. Historic Character, Single-Family Community, & Suburban – People describe their neighborhood as historic, single-family community, and suburban.</p>	
<p>15. No Parking – People describe their neighborhood as having inadequate parking options.</p>	

8. Community-Oriented, Friendly, and Neighborly – People envision a strong, connected community through community events that support social interactions and mutual support while continuing to foster a family-friendly and neighborly environment.



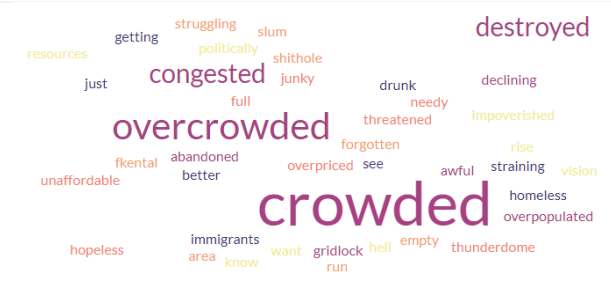
9. Preserve Neighborhood Character - People envision preserving their neighborhoods' current character and historic charm by minimizing changes and avoiding gentrification. The emphasis is on maintaining historic elements, preventing displacement, and ensuring stability while avoiding excessive construction and large-scale developments.



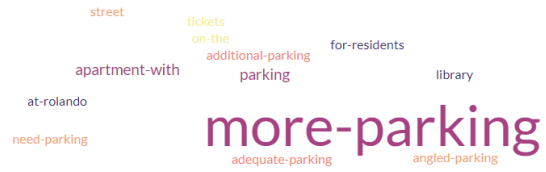
10. Peaceful, Quiet, & Serene – People envision maintaining and enhancing a peaceful and serene environment with minimal noise and disturbances to foster a calm, relaxing atmosphere that provides a comfortable and calming place to live.



11. Crowded, Destroyed, & Declining - People envision a community facing overcrowding, congestion, decline and economic hardship due to neglect, lack of resources and support, and degradation in the community.

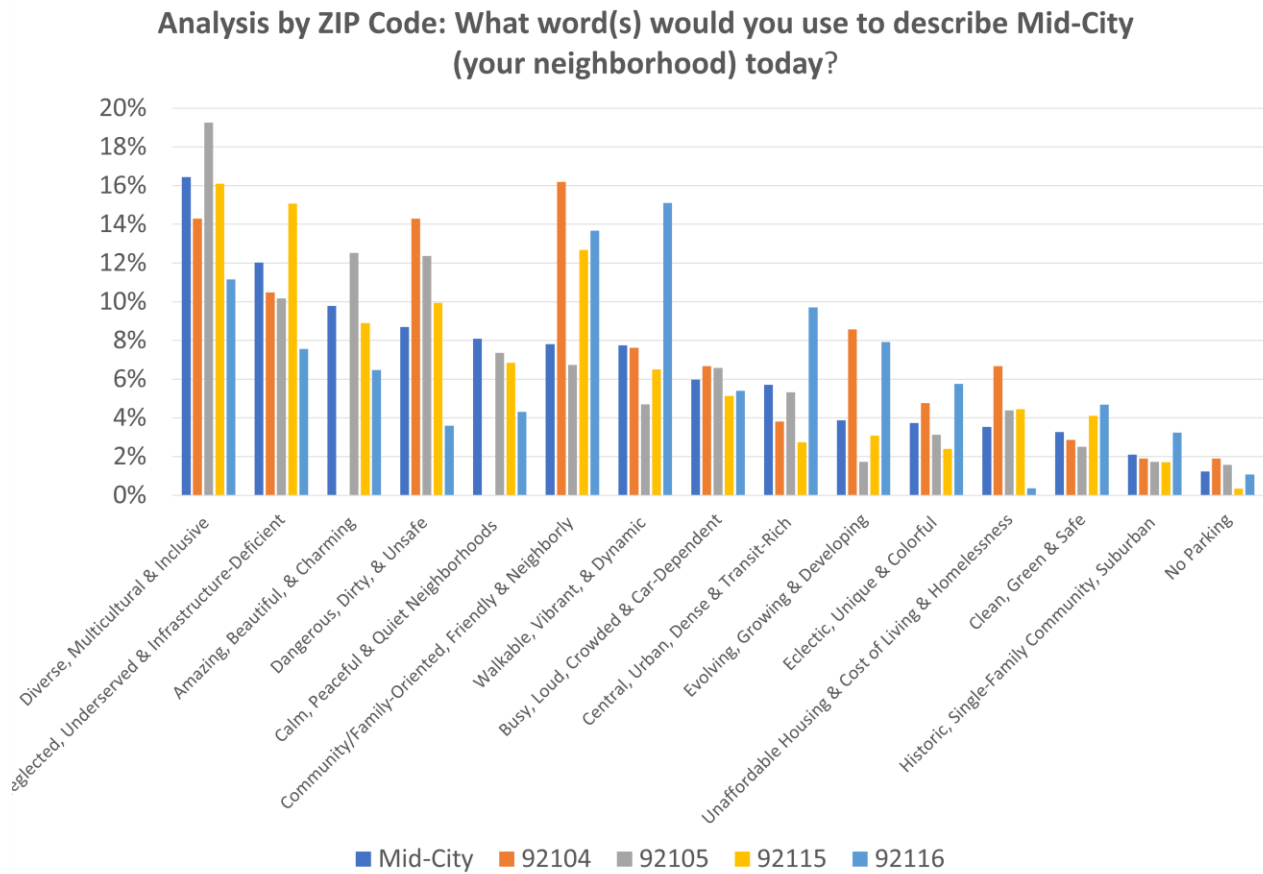


12. More Parking – People envision more parking availability, both on the street and in residential areas, such as near Rolando Library.

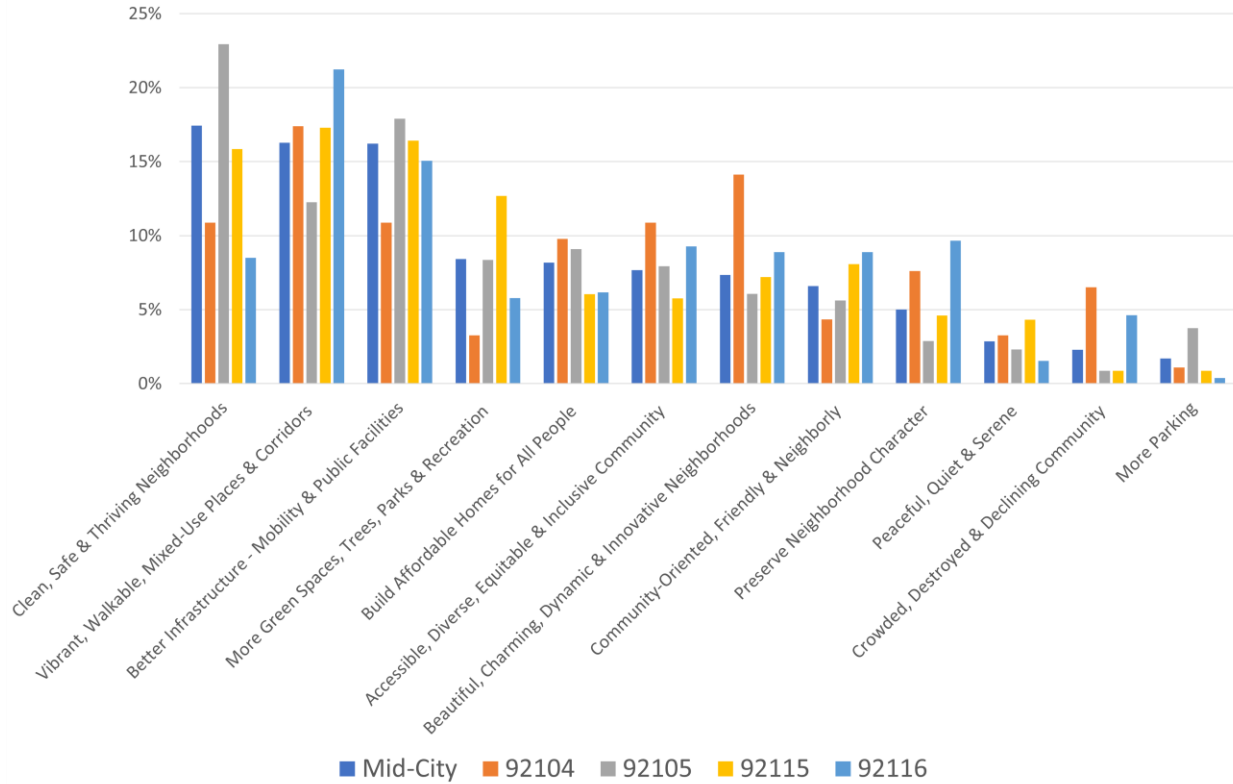


DRAFT

Analysis by ZIP Code



Analysis by ZIP Code: What word(s) would you use to describe your ideal future vision for Mid-City (your neighborhood)?



DRAFT

Summary of Public Workshops

OVERVIEW

The City held two public workshops as part of the Mid-City Communities Plan Update to allow community members to come together to share ideas and provide input on vision, priorities, and other topics. One workshop was held in-person on Saturday, May 18, 2024 and was followed by one virtual workshop held on May 22, 2024.

WORKSHOP DETAILS AND ATTENDANCE

A total of 74 people participated in the workshops. *Appendix A -Record of Attendance for In-Person and Virtual Workshops* is also included to provide more detailed records attendance for in-person and virtual workshops.

In-Person Workshop

Attendance: 27 people
Saturday, May 18th
11 am to 3 pm
Hoover High School - Library
4474 El Cajon Blvd
San Diego, CA 92115

Virtual Workshop

Attendance: 47 people
Wednesday, May 22nd
6 pm to 8 pm
Zoom

WORKSHOP THEMES

The following workshop themes represent key ideas and prevalent public comments that were provided during the in-person and public workshops. A summary of workshop input is also provided in a separate section, as well as records of individual comments that were provided that have been compiled in appendices.

- Provide more opportunities for homes for a variety of incomes and household types.
- Need for safe streets and mobility options for all.
- Maintain and enhance existing parks and create a new network of open spaces and trails.
- Expand tree canopy, improving landscaping, and adding other types of shade.
- Create new and improved social hearts and commercial hubs that provide new opportunities for community.

WORKSHOP FORMAT AND ACTIVITIES

The in-person public workshop for the Mid-City Communities Plan Update was organized as an open house meeting that occurred throughout the day, with facilitated breakout discussion groups scheduled at two different times during the open house. The virtual workshop adapted the format of the in-person workshop to an online setting, and included a presentation with interactive polls and breakout discussion groups using Zoom.

Open House Format for In-Person Workshop

An open house meeting is an informal meeting with multiple presentation boards and engagement activities. Participants were given an opportunity to rotate through different “stations”, to view materials, and discuss specific topics with project staff one-on-one and in small groups. After registering, people that attended could choose which of the stations were of interest to them throughout the open house and engage in different activities. The in-person public workshop was organized around six stations, including:

1. **Welcome & Registration:** Included sign-in, welcome, and orientation to the workshop. Attendees were given a fact sheet and a comment card.
2. **About the Mid-City Communities Plan Update:** Display boards with background information on the Mid-City Communities Plan, including the plan area and a preview of Mid-City Atlas: Existing Conditions report. People provided feedback on these boards using sticky notes and other notes provided directly on the board.
3. **What We’ve Heard So Far:** Display boards sharing the results from the online survey, and an overview of youth engagement conducted as part of the update. People provided feedback on these boards using sticky notes.
4. **Our Mid-City:** Opportunity to provide feedback about Mid-City through a map-based engagement activity. People provided feedback on these boards using sticky notes and using colored dots, where: red was used to show where people lived; blue was used to show where people work; green to show where people’s favorite place or places that are special to them; and yellow for places that people hung out with friends.
5. **My Community:** Four open house stations for each of the Community Plan Areas (City Heights, Eastern Areas, Kensington-Talmadge, and Normal Heights) that allow people to provide feedback on priorities, opportunities, and challenges. The primary prompt was “What would make your community better?” Secondary prompts

related to land use and development, mobility, and sustainability were also included. People provided feedback on these boards using sticky notes for detailed comments and sticky dots to indicate support for different ideas.

6. **Provide Input and Next Steps:** Included a place to turn in comment cards, to receive a sticker, enter a raffle, and provided information about the project schedule and ways to get involved.

Public input provided on the open house boards as part of the stations are included in *Appendix B – Comments on Open House Boards*. In addition, *Appendix C – Comment Cards Received* includes a record of all the comment cards that were submitted during the in-person public workshop.

Presentation and Interactive Survey for Virtual Workshop

For the virtual workshop, the open house portion of the workshop adapted the materials used for the in-person workshop into a presentation to share content from the display boards. In addition, interactive Slido polls were used during the virtual workshop to allow interaction with virtual participants to mirror the engagement activities of the in-person workshop. All of the responses that were provided during the interactive survey as part of the virtual workshop are included in *Appendix D – Slido Poll Results*. In addition, other comments were provided through the Zoom chat, and are included in *Appendix E – Zoom Chat from Virtual Workshop*.

Discussion Groups for Virtual and In-Person Workshops

The in-person and virtual workshops both included small group discussions that were facilitated by staff. During the in-person workshop four discussion groups were held and six were held as part of the virtual workshop. Each group was asked a series of questions and people were given a chance to discuss, with notetakers recording key ideas on large notepads for all to see. *Appendix F – Discussion Group Notes from In-Person Public Workshop* and *Appendix G – Discussion Group Notes from Virtual Public Workshop* include a record of all notes from the discussion groups. Each discussion group was asked the following questions related to the Mid-City Communities Plan Update:

- A. **Land Use and Development:** What type of new housing would you like to see in the future?
- B. **Mobility:** Where is the most challenging place to get to and why?
- C. **Parks, Public Facilities, and Open Space:** How can we make the best use of the parks and open spaces in Mid-City?

- D. **Urban Design:** Are there areas that you would like to see improved with new development, facade improvements, or infill? If so, where?
- E. **Sustainability and Climate Resilience:** What would make Mid-City more resilient? What actions can be included in the Community Plan to improve sustainability efforts?

Refreshments and Snacks

Light refreshments and snacks were served throughout the day as part of the in-person workshops.

Interpretation

Interpreters were available for Spanish and Vietnamese speakers to work with people, one-on-one or as a small group, for both in-person and virtual workshops. Interpreters were there to provide bidirectional interpretation so that non-English speakers could understand what is being discussed and could provide feedback in their native language.

SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP INPUT

During the in-person and virtual workshops, people provided comments and shared feedback related to the Mid-City Communities Plan Update. The responses received by the community were organized into the following categories:

- Sustainability, Equity & Climate Resilience
- Land Use and Development
- Mobility
- Parks, Public Facilities and Open Spaces

The list below includes an overall summary of comments and input provided by the public during different activities as part of the in-person and virtual workshop.

Sustainability, Equity & Climate Resilience

- Blue and green infrastructure strategies:
 - Addressing flooding issues along Chollas Creek is critical.
 - Stormwater treatment, bioswales, greenery in sidewalks, roundabouts, trees and less concrete.
 - Harvest rainwater and consider climate change impacts.
 - Use permeable concrete to prevent runoff.
 - Stormwater capture and green infrastructure (trees, bioswales) are essential.
- Clean energy and transportation:
 - Install public electric vehicle (EV) charging stations to support EV owners who rent.

- Consider EV charging stations and E-W connections.
- A microgrid would allow the community to rely on its own local energy sources, promoting energy independence and resilience.
- Urban canopy equity study:
 - Conduct shade equity study assessing the distribution of shade in different neighborhoods.

Land Use and Development:

- Density and development strategies:
 - There was overall support for higher density and 5+ stories along the main corridors if there is thoughtful architectural design, sensibility to context, and mobility considerations.
 - Maintain the character and scale of neighborhoods, with sensitivity towards incremental heights and setbacks in upper stories.
 - Explore public-private partnerships for mixed-use development and affordable housing.
 - Maintain small corner stores in neighborhoods to increase walkability.
 - More multi-family housing is needed in neighborhoods that haven't been zoned for it.
 - Re-evaluate ADU requirements.
 - Redevelop underutilized properties. Reuse/redevelop vacant parking lots, abandoned commercial, malls, and big box retail.
 - Development that creates more jobs for residents.
- Housing types:
 - Encourage mixed-use developments with ground-floor retail, especially in cultural hubs and along main streets like El Cajon Boulevard and Adams Street.
 - Support affordable, multi-family housing without displacing residents.
 - Encourage housing opportunities for younger generations and a mix of incomes.
 - Explore municipally built and owned housing.
 - Building housing near public transportation hubs promotes sustainable living.
- Public Realm:
 - Promote community gathering places, placemaking opportunities, program cultural activities and cater to the unique needs of each neighborhood expression.

- Create pedestrian only plazas (like Little Italy) and gathering spaces with accessible services and local commercial businesses.
- Consider regular banner rotations for a fresh look in Mid-City.

Mobility

- Connectivity:
 - There is a gap in connectivity for the Mid-City area. Improving transit connectivity inside and outside of Mid-City could enhance accessibility and reduce reliance on other modes of transportation.
 - Consider bridges to connect communities further between big roads and challenging nature (like Teralta Park).
 - North/South linear parks can connect different areas and canyons.
- Transit and bus infrastructure
 - Improve bus stops in Mid-City. Add better shading, seating, planting, and lighting for a safe, welcoming and comfortable transit stop experience for all.
 - Add more transit lines, transit stops, and frequency throughout Mid-City
 - Connect better to adjacent places like Mission Valley.
 - Consider neighborhood hubs (Normal Heights and City Heights) and shuttle routes to enhance community identity and connectivity.
 - Explore ride share apps and services to be promoted and accessible in Mid-City.
 - Provide transit options for late-night workers.
- Bike infrastructure:
 - Prioritize protected bike lanes.
 - Strengthen bike connections within the community.
 - Address bike safety concerns and dangerous intersections.
- Pedestrian concerns:
 - Enhance connections between bikes and pedestrians to trolley stations.
 - Add and maintain good quality sidewalks. Wide, shaded, safe, and maintained.
 - Implement effective and welcoming wayfinding and signage.
 - Address lack of pedestrian crossings, lack of sidewalk, red lights for cars,
- Parking:
 - Address parking issues affecting visibility at intersections, enforce red zone parking regulations, and address encampments in parking areas.
 - Solve residential parking shortages.
 - Address garage conversions that impact available parking in residential areas.

- Consider neighborhood lots for parking, parking permits, and metered parking options.
- Reduce street parking and explore underground parking solutions along corridors to improve pedestrian flow.
- Suggest requiring two stories of parking for buildings over five stories.

Parks, Public Facilities, and Open Spaces:

- New and Existing Parks
 - More parks! Connected network of small/medium parks.
 - Invest in maintenance of existing parks, cleaner bathrooms, better lighting, seating, and safety.
 - Complete existing open space projects.
 - Expanding parks south of Interstate 8.
 - Kensington-Talmadge needs more parks.
 - More recreation areas like badminton courts.
 - Joint-use agreements with schools need reinforcement to ensure effective utilization of open spaces.
 - Activate Chollas Creek and make it safe for kids and the community.
 - General updating and improvement of Colina del Sol Park, which has been neglected.
 - Create a variety of parks that can host the diverse population of Mid-City.
 - Create a range of parks that are special for young people, dog owners, children, adults, and everyone that lives in Mid-City and has different interests.
 - Create more parks, playgrounds, baseball fields, and basketball courts.
 - Prioritize recreational centers for youth.
 - Focus on open spaces and parks in disadvantaged areas.
 - Funding should support the park staff and maintenance to be able to keep parks in good and safe condition.
- New Public Facilities
 - A new library or community anchor (e.g., a pool) could be beneficial.
 - Relocate fire station project that is intended to be in a canyon.
- Canyons
 - Preserve green spaces like canyons and implement trails and pathways.
 - Create urban trails connecting North and South Canyons with signage, sculptures, and cultural meaning.
- Urban greening:

- Trees along main corridors can enhance aesthetics, improve air quality, and provide shade.
- Enhance greenery by adding trees and landscaping to reduce heat.

DRAFT

Mid-City Communities Plan Update Summary of Office Hours, Community Interviews & Emails

OVERVIEW

Office Hours

The City held six public in-person office hours as part of the Mid-City Communities Plan Update to allow community members to come together to share ideas and provide input on vision, priorities, and other topics. It was held at the Adams Recreation Center, City Heights Library, and the College Rolando Library.

Community Interviews

City staff sent invitations to forty-two community-based organizations (CBOs) and heard back from eleven CBOs. The City held eleven community interviews as part of the Mid-City Communities Plan Update to allow community organizations to share their mission and community priorities and to inform them with an overview of the plan update.

Emails

The City invited the public to submit comments and suggestions via email as part of the Mid-City Communities Plan Update to ensure additional community input.

DETAILS AND ATTENDANCE

Office Hours

A total of 9 people participated for the office hour engagement.

Adams Recreation Centre

Attendance: 2 people
February 13th, 2024, and March 12th 2024
12pm-2pm and 3pm-5pm
3491 Adams Ave
San Diego, CA 92116

City Heights Library

Attendance: 4 people
February 20th, 2024, and March 18th 2024
12pm-2pm and 3pm-5pm
3795 Fairmount Ave
San Diego, CA 92105

College Rolando Library

Attendance: 3 people
February 23rd 2024 and March 25th 2024



City Planning Department

4pm-6pm and 12pm-2pm
6600 Montezuma Rd
San Diego, CA 92115



Community Interviews

A total of 11 community organizations and 23 people participated in the community interviews.

Community Organization	Date	Virtual/ In-Person	Attendees
Price Philanthropies	04/04/2024	In-Person	1
Friends of Ward Canyon	04/09/2024	Virtual	1
Azalea Park Neighborhood Association	04/22/2024	Virtual	1
Rolando Park Community Council	04/26/2024	Virtual	2
Bikes del Pueblo	04/26/2024	Virtual	1
Fern Street Circus	04/26/2024	Virtual	2
Normal Heights for Smart Growth	05/02/2024	Virtual	3
Bike SD	05/02/2024	Virtual	1
Reality Changers	05/02/2024	Virtual	2
San Diego Food System Alliance	05/10/2024	Virtual	2
El Cerrito Community Council	06/06/2024	Virtual	7

Emails

A total of 13 community members submitted comments via the project email:
PlanMidCity@SanDiego.gov.

ENGAGEMENT FORMAT

Office Hours

The in-person office hours for the Mid-City Communities Plan Update were organized as an open house meeting that occurred for two hours at different times in February and March 2024.

Online Registration: Participants were notified about the office hour via an email blast and encouraged to register for 20-minute one-on-one sessions with project staff to learn about the Community Plan Update, discuss specific topics and share their questions.

Format: Feedback provided by participants was tracked and logged. They were also given index cards, previous Mid-City plans, and a fact sheet to refer to.

Community Interviews

The community interviews for the Mid-City Communities Plan Update were organized as virtual 30-minute sessions that could be scheduled for four dates in April and May 2024.

Online Registration: Participants were notified about the opportunity to engage in conversation via an email by the project manager and were encouraged to register for 30-minute sessions with project staff to learn about the Community Plan Update and share about their organization's mission and community priorities.

Format: Feedback provided by organization members were tracked during the interviews and later logged into a comment tracking document.

Emails

Community members were invited to provide comments, suggestions, and questions on the Mid-City Communities Plan Update during community events and city presentations, and through email blast.

ENGAGEMENT THEMES

Office Hours

The City hosted six community office hours in February and March 2024 to provide an opportunity for community members to share ideas and provide input on vision, priorities, and other topics. The following themes represent the high-level summary of key ideas and the prevalent comments that were provided.

History & Place

- Balance historic preservation with new housing development, ensuring that historic neighborhoods retain their character while contributing to housing needs.

Sustainability, Equity & Climate Resilience

- An inclusive and collaborative approach to planning, ensuring equitable attention and resources across all neighborhoods, particularly those feeling neglected.
- Ensure that new developments balance environmental preservation and protect green spaces, trees, and wildlife habitats with sustainable infrastructure and climate resilience.
- Equitable community outreach, inclusive planning processes, and support for local businesses.

- Improvements in pedestrian access, sustainable development practices, and urban green space management while addressing historical inequalities and promoting youth engagement.

Land Use & Development

- Balance increased housing development while preserving community character, diversity, and historic neighborhoods.
- Update land use and zoning to increase density while minimizing displacement and gentrification.
- Provide diverse housing options, including affordable housing and infrastructure improvements.
- Prioritize equitable development, promote homeownership, and maintain neighborhood culture, with careful management of short-term rentals and corporate landlords holding vacant properties.

Urban Design

- Enhance well-being and safety through physical improvements like fixing sidewalks and adding streetlights, which contribute to a stronger and more connected environment.
- Infrastructure upgrades should be carefully planned, considering the area's topography, culture, and character, ensuring that development projects are sustainable and supportive of the community's needs.
- Addressing stormwater management, improving public safety, and ensuring that new housing developments are supported by proper infrastructure.

Mobility

- Improve mobility options and make streets safer for all users.
- More investment in bikeways, transit, and traffic calming measures.
- More roundabouts, better bus services, and careful consideration of development along narrow streets
- Concern over poorly implemented speed limits, the potential bottleneck created by expanded transit networks, and parking difficulties, especially in areas like City Heights and El Cajon Boulevard.

Parks, Public Facilities & Open Space

- Better services, infrastructure, and more green spaces to address both current and future demands.

- Concerns about the lack of parks and amenities, poor infrastructure maintenance, and safety issues.
- Residents are frustrated with slow progress on development projects and inconsistent planning efforts.
- More park development, expanded cultural services, improved green spaces, and infrastructure upgrades to support higher residential density.

Community Interviews

The City held eleven community interviews to allow community organizations to share about their organization's mission and community priorities and concerns. The following themes represent their key ideas and the prevalent comments that were provided.

History & Place

- Some community members are worried about the impact of increased density on older neighborhoods' character, existing and planned infrastructure, and privacy.
- There is a desire for historic preservation, with some community members advocating for protecting certain areas and buildings.

Sustainability, Equity & Climate Resilience

- Various communities expressed a sense of being overlooked by city planning efforts and frustration over unfulfilled promises and a lack of impactful change.
- Develop the local food economy, support small farmers and food businesses, and facilitating access to land for food production and streamlining the process.

Land Use & Development

- Support for greater density and more diverse housing options, with emphasis on density being equally shared amongst all Mid-City Communities.
- Homelessness is a recurring issue, with concerns on the increased visibility, impact on community safety, and need for more supportive services and resources.
- Some community members feel that affordable housing needs are not addressed adequately and that new developments may contribute to gentrification and displacement.
- Several comments focus on the need for a more supportive business environment, including the establishment or expansion of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), revitalizing declining areas, and addressing the displacement and uncertainty faced by small businesses.

- A significant concern is the lack of adequate parking, especially in new developments. Many community members are frustrated that new housing lacks sufficient parking, forcing people to search extensively for spaces or park far from their homes. The lack of parking is seen as a deterrent for both current residents and potential new residents.

Mobility

- Calls for safer streets for cyclists and pedestrians, advocating for a holistic approach to street design that accommodates all ages and abilities. Concerns about the safety of shared bus and bike lanes, with some advocating for dedicated cycling corridors or bike lanes on less busy side streets.
- Strong demand for improved transit connections, particularly to better connect areas like San Diego State University, Mid-City, and Uptown, via dedicated transit only lanes. Comments suggest re-envisioning transit to be more efficient and equitable, making it a viable alternative to car use.
- The community faces ongoing problems with infrastructure maintenance, including unpaved alleys, poor road conditions, outdated facilities, and inconsistent street lighting. There are also concerns about reduced urban canopy and inadequate responses to infrastructure needs.

Parks, Public Facilities & Open Space

- Many areas lack adequate parks and recreational spaces. Existing parks are not always accessible or well-maintained, and there is a call for more green spaces, dog parks and community gardens.
- Significant need for diverse and culturally appropriate services, including health, youth programs, arts, and social services. Additionally, existing facilities like libraries, recreation centers, and schools are seen as inadequate for the community's needs.

Emails

The City invited the public to submit comments and suggestion via email to ensure additional community input on the Mid-City Communities Plan Update. A total of 13 community members submitted and the following represent their key ideas and comments that were provided.

- Housing suggestions ranged from a city loan program for building ADUs to offer affordable rentals, improving oversight on short-term rentals, and increasing the development of dense residential areas with businesses underneath.

- Recommendations for land use changes that allow small corner stores in residential zones and prioritize high-density housing and neighborhood-serving businesses on major streets like El Cajon Boulevard.
- Existing needs for more parks and open spaces are needed in densely populated areas, the preservation of existing tree canopies, urban trails that connect Normal Heights to Chollas Creek, and community gardens with drought-tolerant plants to enhance the environment and support local wildlife.
- To support growth and ensure safety, older communities need updated infrastructure, including wider streets, better parking, improved stormwater management, emergency access, and new fire safety requirements like defensible spaces and additional egress points.

COMBINED SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY INPUT

The responses received by the community were organized into the following categories:

- History & Place
- Sustainable, Equity & Climate Resilience
- Land Use & Development
- Urban Design
- Mobility
- Parks, Public Facilities & Open Space

The list below includes an overall summary of comments and input provided by the public during as part of the office hours, community interviews, and emails.

1. HISTORY AND PLACE

The debate around historic preservation and housing policy highlights the tension between protecting historic districts and addressing housing needs. While some argue that preservation limits development, others believe density can be added in ways that respect the character of these neighborhoods.

TODAY:

- **Historic Site Preservation:** Participant(s) wanted to see more prioritization of preserving historic sites/districts and nominating individual properties, such as bungalows, for historic preservation to enhance community character, even with housing shortages.
- **Historic Preservation and Housing Policy:** While some argue that historic preservation limits housing development, others see value in maintaining historic districts. It is still possible to add density through Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) or

appropriately scaled developments while protecting the character and facades of historic buildings.

- **Balance Historic Preservation with New Development:** Some feel that the rhetoric framing historic preservation as a threat to housing is misleading. They believe there are ways to add density in these neighborhoods that respect their historical character.

TOMORROW:

- **Historic Preservation and Housing Growth:** Seek a balanced approach that allows historic neighborhoods like Kensington-Talmadge to retain their unique cultural and architectural character while still contributing to housing needs. Explore adaptive reuse, appropriate densification, and maintaining the integrity of historic structures.
- **Collaborative Approach to Preservation and Housing:** Shift the narrative away from framing historic preservation as a barrier to housing and towards collaboration. Identify strategies to introduce density in ways that respect historical context and community character.
- **Address Community Neglect:** Communities like Normal Heights and neighborhoods in Eastern Area feel overlooked and neglected, with unfulfilled promises from past plans. Community members are calling for equitable resources and attention across all neighborhoods.

2. SUSTAINABILITY, EQUITY, & CLIMATE RESILIENCE

The focus on environmental preservation highlights the importance of balancing new developments with the protection of green spaces, and wildlife habits. Concerns about pedestrian access and infrastructure planning emphasize the need for thoughtful, sustainable development that considers the environmental impact.

TODAY:

- **Environmental Preservation:** Concerns are raised about new developments leading to the removal of decades-old trees, which are crucial for wildlife habitat, shade, and soil stability. Issues such as sinkholes in Normal Heights due to clay-rich soil highlight the need for careful environmental consideration.
- **Green Space Preservation:** To prevent environmental degradation, there is a call to balance new development with the preservation of existing green spaces.
- **Infrastructure Planning:** There are concerns about limited pedestrian access at 47th and Fairmont, where a fire station is planned. Risks such as potential toxic

chemical releases into Chollas Creek are discussed, and alternative sites are explored.

TOMORROW:

- **Improved Infrastructure:** Address pedestrian access issues and potential environmental hazards. Integrate climate resilience and sustainable practices into all infrastructure projects.
- **Support CAP Initiatives:** Encourage farming practices and Climate Action Plan (CAP) initiatives that avoid the use of chemicals and promote regenerative agriculture. These efforts can help communities become more self-sufficient and contribute to climate change mitigation.
- **Urban Green Spaces:**
 - Emphasize the importance of planting more trees to replace those removed in the past year, addressing heat island effects, and supporting wildlife.
 - Incorporate green (e.g., parks, urban forests) and blue (e.g., water bodies, sustainable drainage) elements into all infrastructure projects.
 - Manage and increase green spaces, community gardens, and trails to enhance urban living.
- **Climate-Resilient Infrastructure:** Install rainwater catchment systems and solar panels in new developments and increase funding for flood infrastructure.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** Ensure equitable representation in planning processes and address funding and resource disparities. Learn from historical inequalities to promote fair and balanced community development.
- **Community Outreach:** Organize more community outreach events to foster community involvement.
- **Youth Engagement:** Desire for educational programs aimed at inspiring the youth to participate and connect with their communities.
- **Community Events:** Facilitate and support more community events on the east side of the El Cajon Boulevard, replicating successful models from other areas.
- **Engagement Strategies and Participation:**
 - Implement engagement strategies to ensure all community voices are heard in the planning process.
 - Raise awareness about ongoing planning updates and provide clear information for working group applications.
- **Planning Group Representation:** Ensure planning groups like the Ken-Tal Community Planning Group are inclusive of minorities, women, and business owners, not just homeowners, is crucial for fair representation.

- **Support and Growth for Local Businesses:** Foster a supportive environment for local businesses, address redlining issues, and increase support for businesses east of the 15 freeway and along El Cajon Boulevard.

3. LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT

Land use and development discussions center around balancing the need for increased housing with preserving community character and diversity.

TODAY:

- **Property Boundary:** Discrepancies between GPS lines and historic property boundaries in older communities are causing legal issues. There is a push to align GPS records with historical lines.
- **Overdevelopment and Infrastructure:** There is concern about overdevelopment, homelessness, and the need for adequate infrastructure. These issues tie into broader discussions about the types of businesses and developments that should be prioritized on key corridors like El Cajon Boulevard.

TOMORROW:

- **Housing Supply and Affordability:**
 - Some support for adding housing beyond the main corridors, including support for variety of diverse housing options, including ADUs and row homes.
 - Work to meet the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) by offering housing options for all income levels.
 - Consider converting single-family zones to multi-family zones in areas with insufficient housing like Kensington.
 - Ensure affordable housing is integrated with market-rate housing, making neighborhoods inclusive and accessible.
- **Preserve Community Diversity:** Implement strategies to prevent gentrification and maintain neighborhood diversity by protecting local culture and providing affordable housing options.
- **Gentrification and Historic Character:**
 - Develop policies to prevent displacement of long-time community members and protect historic neighborhoods.
 - Address overdevelopment concerns and ensure the availability of necessary services.
- **Housing Policy and Regulation:**

- Discontinue DIF waivers for new developments due to City revenue loss.
- Stronger regulations are needed for housing development, including management of short-term rentals.
- Some frustration over the City's local ADU regulations, rather than following the state's ADU laws.
- Limiting short-term rental licenses could help ease the housing shortage.
- **Upzoning and Redevelopment:** El Cajon Boulevard should be the primary focus for upzoning to maximize its potential. Businesses in this area, especially East of I-15, feel they are largely neglected by the El Cajon Boulevard Business Improvement District, which is crucial as they contribute to the success and vibrancy of communities.
- **Affordable ADU Development:** Community members are calling for a borrowing program that allows regular homeowners to develop ADUs with the promise of renting them to community members at affordable prices. This program could be city-funded, allowing the City to reinvest interest back into the community rather than private banks.
- **Housing Density:** Support for increasing housing density through land use and zoning updates while considering the impact on communities' character and infrastructure.
- **Community and Diversity:** Continued support to maintain diversity in neighborhoods like City Heights, with community emphasis on preventing gentrification, supporting local culture, and preserving unique resources like Foodshed Coop and New Roots farm.
- **Neighborhood Corner Stores:** Existing concern to re-designate small neighborhood corner stores in residential zones where they are not allowed in the code to one of the allowed zones, or at least in residential areas that were developed before 1930. Continued support for corner stores is rooted in their contribution to community building, reducing car trips, and promoting local shopping options within neighborhoods.
- **Access Fruits and Vegetables:** Preserve unique resources like Foodshed Coop and New Roots farm.
- **Displacement:** Explore various measures to prevent the displacement of community members in ethnically diverse areas, ensuring that new development does not come at the cost of displacing long-time community members.
- **Preservation of Single-Family Home:** Explore efforts to preserve single-family homes and historic neighborhoods amidst development pressures, with proposals to maintain historic character while introducing appropriate levels of density.

- **Vacant Units:** Concerns about large corporate landlords holding vacant units are being raised.

4. URBAN DESIGN

Today, there is a need to strengthen community well-being and safety through physical enhancements, such as fixing sidewalks. Looking forward, fostering a more connected and supportive community environment involves not only addressing physical safety concerns but also ensuring that development projects are planned with consideration of the area's character and culture.

TODAY:

- **Community Well-being and Safety:** This theme emphasizes the need for improved street lighting to enhance safety and contribute to a stronger, more connected community. It addresses both physical safety concerns and the social aspects of fostering a supportive and cohesive community environment.

TOMORROW:

- **Infrastructure and Safety Enhancements:** This theme highlights the need for thoughtful consideration of topography in planning and development, along with essential infrastructure improvements. It includes fixing sidewalks, adding more streetlights, and ensuring that building projects are sustainable given the area's specific conditions.

5. MOBILITY

Community feedback highlights that while there is shared awareness of improvements in public transit and bike lanes, issues with safety, practicality, and street conditions remain. Additional concerns include the severe parking shortages made worse by new developments. The community calls for a more unified approach to transportation planning that prioritizes better connectivity, safety, innovative parking solutions, and bikeways and transit improvements.

TODAY:

- **Parking Shortages and Challenges:** Many comments highlight the acute lack of parking, exacerbated by new developments and high demand. This shortage creates difficulties in finding parking spaces and impacts community members' daily lives, particularly in areas with new affordable and high-density housing.
- **Transportation and Transit:** While improvements in the bus system are recognized, concerns persist about the practicality and coverage of transit options. Similarly, there are mixed reactions to bike lanes and shared spaces, with a call for safer and more effective cycling infrastructure.
- **Street Conditions and Safety:** Street design challenges, such as narrow lanes, dangerous intersections, and construction, impact traffic flow and safety, while poor road and alleyway maintenance exacerbates these issues with long-standing problems.
- **Equity Issues:** The impact of parking and transit issues disproportionately affects lower-income community members who may rely on cars for blue-collar jobs or struggle with inadequate transportation options. This includes difficulties related to parking in affordable housing areas and the overall accessibility of jobs and services.
- **Urban Planning Tensions:** There are competing interests in urban planning, such as balancing the need for parking with the push for transit and bike infrastructure improvements. This includes conflicts over the allocation of space for different uses and the challenges of integrating new developments with existing infrastructure.

TOMORROW:

- **Connectivity:** Community desire for a unified approach to improving transportation infrastructure, including better connections between key areas (e.g., SDSU to Mid-City), complete streets, and safer street designs that accommodate all ages and abilities.
- **Faster Buses:** Explore options to create a contiguous dedicated bus lane from SDSU to Downtown along El Cajon Boulevard.

- **Bikeways and Transit Improvements:** Support for expanding bikeways, protected lanes, and safer cycling corridors, along with enhancing public transit options. This includes advocating for continuous bus-only lanes, improved bike infrastructure, and better integration of transit and cycling options.
- **Safety and Traffic Management:** Safety and traffic management concerns include improving narrow lanes, dangerous intersections, and high-risk areas by reducing speed limits, enhancing traffic flow, and implementing effective signage and traffic calming measures for cyclists and pedestrians. Specific issues include addressing dangerous points like freeway on- and off-ramps and implementing safety improvements at critical intersections.
- **Parking Solutions:** Community-identified innovative solutions for parking shortages included shared parking arrangements and utilizing public lots for overnight parking. The challenge is balancing parking needs with other aspects of urban planning, such as achieving the City's Climate Action Goals.

6. PARKS, PUBLIC FACILITIES & OPEN SPACE

Both current and future community needs underscore the critical importance of enhancing services, infrastructure, and green spaces. Today, community members are concerned about the lack of parks, poor maintenance, and management of open space, coupled with safety, and planning issues related to new developments. Looking forward, there is a strong call for comprehensive park development, expanded cultural services, improved green spaces, and infrastructure upgrades to support growing residential densities and meet community needs effectively.

TODAY:

- **Lack of Community Services and Amenities:** There is a significant concern about the shortage of parks, recreational facilities, libraries, and essential services like health, and youth services across various neighborhoods.
- **Infrastructure and Maintenance Issues:** Community members express frustration with inadequate infrastructure and maintenance, including poorly maintained streets, inadequate water pressure, and deferred maintenance on public facilities. Problems such as low water pressure, aging infrastructure, and inefficient use of funds are prevalent concerns.
- **Safety and Security Issues:** Safety concerns are raised about various issues, including crime in canyons, homeless encampments posing fire hazards, and inadequate street safety measures. There are calls for improved safety features and better management of public spaces to address these risks.

- **Challenges with New Developments:** Comments point to difficulties with new developments, such as inadequate parking. The negative impact of new developments on existing infrastructure and services are frequently mentioned.
- **Community Engagement and Planning Challenges:** Concerns about slow progress on recreational projects, difficulties with public financing, and the need for better planning and coordination between agencies to address community needs effectively. Some of the projects reported to be progressing slowly include the dog park in Ward Canyon, the pocket park in College Grove, tree planting along the right-of-way through a USDA grant, and the development of a Park and Recreation facility in Normal Heights as part of the remediation for the SR-15 construction.

TOMORROW:

- **Need for Comprehensive Park Development and Safety:** There's a strong emphasis on not just creating new parks but also ensuring their safety and proper management. This includes the integration of park safety measures, adequate maintenance, and thoughtful planning to address security concerns.
- **Cultural and Community Services:** The community expresses a need for services that cater to diverse cultural backgrounds, including arts and social services. Ensuring that different cultural groups are supported and promoting cultural understanding through various community services are key priorities.
- **Expansion and Improvement of Green Spaces:** Community members advocate for more green spaces such as community gardens, dog parks, and trails. There is a focus on utilizing existing spaces effectively such as improving facilities in Colina del Sol Park and improving connectivity to Chollas Creek through urban trails.
- **Infrastructure and Development Needs:** Comments highlight the necessity of aligning infrastructure improvements with increased residential density. This includes addressing issues with stormwater management, street lighting, and public amenities to effectively support higher-density housing.

Mid-City Communities Plan Update

Youth Engagement Summary

OVERVIEW

In Spring 2024, engagement with high school and middle school aged youth helped gain meaningful input toward the Mid-City Communities Plan Update.

Imagine worked with three Hoover High School 10th grade ELA classes, and three Crawford High school groups including two art classes and a Say San Diego youth services program. Seven 90-minute sessions occurred. Students were also encouraged to participate in a student survey.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT DETAILS AND PARTICIPATION

Hoover High School:

Session One: March 14

Session Two: March 16

Session Three: March 20

Session Four: March 22

Number of Students Engaged: approximately 80

Total Number of Community Members Engaged (including students): approximately 150

Crawford High School:

Session One: May 8 and 9

Session Two: May 16

Session Three: May 23

Number Students Engaged: approximately 75

Total Number of Community Members Engaged (including students): approximately 150

Survey Participation:

123 Students

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT FORMAT

High School Students:

- Creative writing assignment
- Community interview
- Photography

- Final Survey

ATTACHMENTS

- Mid-City Crawford 2024 Project Update
- Mid-City Hoover 2024 Project Update
- Crawford and Hoover student poetry/creative writing assignment
- Crawford and Hoover student interview transcriptions of voice recordings
- Crawford and Hoover student neighborhood photos
- Crawford and Hoover student survey results
- Crawford and Hoover student media release forms

MAJOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT THEMES

During the youth engagement activities, students shared feedback related to the Mid-City Communities Plan Update. The following themes represent their key ideas and the prevalent comments that were provided.

History & Place

- Preservation of cultural diversity and the inclusive atmosphere of Mid-City by protecting key cultural sites including community centers, local family-owned businesses, the Little Saigon district, and murals. There was also a desire for more cultural festivals, block parties, and events.

Land Use & Development

- Students would like to see more cafes, diverse restaurants, small local shops, and a nearby mall to enhance their neighborhood's social scene. The commercial streets in North Park were used as a good example.
- Strong support for affordable housing and improved housing conditions. Common concerns include potential cost increases and potential displacement, and the impact on homeless individuals.
- Economic Disparities were highlighted with wealthier areas having better infrastructure and resources compared to poorer neighborhoods.
- Students expressed concern for folks experiencing homelessness.
- Desire for jobs to be created so people can continue to live in Mid-City.

Mobility

- There is a strong call for additional street lighting to improve visibility and safety, alongside better-maintained sidewalks, and roads with fewer potholes.

- Due to safety concerns such as crime, violence, drug use, and homelessness, driving is the preferred mode of transportation for students, who desire safer and cleaner streets where they can feel secure and comfortable.

Parks, Public Facilities & Open Space

- Libraries, parks, and community centers like the YMCA are important places to spend time with family and friends and there is support for additional hang out spots including public spaces, shopping areas, and recreational areas like arcades, a bowling alley, movie theatres, playgrounds, and soccer fields. Skateparks were mentioned numerous times by the students.
- Many students expressed a desire to see more trees in their neighborhoods for improved air quality, beauty and shade.

SUMMARY OF YOUTH ENGAGEMENT INPUT

The responses received by the students were organized into the following six categories:

1. History & Place
2. Sustainability, Equity & Climate Resilience
3. Land Use & Development
4. Urban Design
5. Mobility
6. Parks, Public Facilities & Open Space

Their feedback for each category is further categorized into how they feel about their neighborhood currently, “today”, and what they would like their neighborhood to be like in the future, “tomorrow”.

1. HISTORY AND PLACE

Today, students describe their neighborhoods as peaceful and diverse, with a mix of tranquil spaces and busy, bustling areas, where community connections are strong, and parks, eateries, and recreational spots play important roles in daily life. Looking to the future, students aspire to enhance community cohesion, preserve cultural diversity, and protect key cultural sites and local businesses. There is a strong desire to support cultural events and the development of community centers to foster inclusivity and social interaction.

TODAY:

- **Peaceful and Pleasant:** Many describe their neighborhood as peaceful, calm, and relaxing, with pleasant weather, natural beauty, and blooming flowers. Despite

some issues, they generally find moving around the neighborhood enjoyable, particularly appreciating the peaceful and spacious areas during quieter times.

- **Crowded, Noisy, and Busy:** A few neighborhoods are characterized as crowded and noisy, with bustling streets, sirens, and a lot of foot traffic especially near busy intersections and public transportation routes.
- **Diverse Communities:** Several neighborhoods are noted for their cultural and ethnic diversity, contributing to a vibrant and unique community atmosphere.
- **Friendly and Connected:** There are mentions of friendly and close-knit communities where neighbors look out for each other and engage in social activities.
- **Important places:**
 - **Parks:** Many people mention various parks like Colina Del Sol Park (within Mid-City), and Gompers Park, North Park Community Park, and the fields at SDSU (not within Mid-City), as popular spots to hang out with friends and family.
 - **Restaurants and Cafes:** Local and diverse eateries, including taco shops, boba shops, and fast-food chains like McDonald's and Wingstop, are frequently visited for social gatherings.
 - **Libraries and Community Centers:** Libraries and places like the YMCA provide good venues for meeting up and engaging in different activities.
 - **Malls and Shopping Areas:** Shopping centers, such as Fashion Valley, offer a variety of entertainment and dining options.
 - **Recreational Spots:** Local gyms as well as spots outside of Mid-City like Balboa Park, the beach, the zoo, are mentioned as enjoyable places for spending time with loved ones.

TOMORROW:

- **Community Cohesion:** Students want a more connected, peaceful, and welcoming community with opportunities for social interaction and inclusivity.
- **Prevent Impacts to Culture:** Some are worried about changes affecting community culture and inclusivity.
- **Preserve Diversity:** Celebration of cultural diversity and an inclusive atmosphere. The African, Somali, Muslim, Vietnamese, and Chicano communities were specifically mentioned.
- **Community and Activity Centers:** Suggestions include community centers, youth centers, libraries with recreational areas, and places that host community events like block parties and festivals.

- **Preserve These Important Places**
 - **Parks:** Teralta Park, Colina Del Sol Park, Chollas Lake and Park, City Heights Park/Henwood Park. Other Parks not within Mid-City include Balboa Park, Chicano Park, and Torrey Pines.
 - **Cultural Districts and Streets:** Little Saigon, El Cajon Boulevard
 - **Sites:** Rosa Parks Statue
 - **Community Centers and Landmarks:** Various Masjids (Mosques), Colina Del Sol Park Community Facilities, Adams Elementary School, Southern Sudanese Community Center of San Diego, United Women of East African Support, Mid City CAN, and old buildings and warehouse.
 - **Special Places:** Tower Bar, Candy Land Mini Mart, Jack in the Box, authentic cultural food restaurants, Haitian store, and Viendong.
- **Cultural Events:** Support cultural festivals, events, and fairs.
- **Local Businesses:** preserve family-owned businesses and traditional cultural practices.

2. SUSTAINABILITY, EQUITY, & CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Today, sustainability practices in the community are mixed, with some recycling for financial incentives, while others struggle due to a lack of knowledge or facilities. There are significant concerns about racial discrimination, homelessness, immigrant challenges, and economic disparities in the context of equity. Climate resiliency issues include a lack of air conditioning, flooding risks, and safety concerns during heavy rain, particularly in older or low-lying buildings. Looking to the future, residents desire greener, more modern, and eco-friendly communities with more trees, improved infrastructure, and job creation to support a higher quality of life.

TODAY:

- **Sustainability:**
 - **Mixed Practices for Recycling & Composting:** Several responses indicate a mix of recycling but not composting, with reasons related to environmental consciousness, habit, upbringing, and convenience.
 - **Financial Incentive for Recycling:** Some families recycle for the financial incentives of getting paid for recyclables.

- **Reasons for Not Recycling or Composting:** Some families don't recycle or compost due to lack of knowledge, perceived effort, absence of facilities, or lack of a garden nearby.
- **Equity**
 - **Racial Discrimination:** Perceptions of racial discrimination and police harassment, especially against Black and Hispanic communities, are noted.
 - **Homelessness and Support:** Many feel the homeless community is ignored and lacks adequate support and resources. Some suffer from drug addiction that is a concern.
 - **Immigrant Challenges:** Difficulties for immigrants, such as finding housing and avoiding deportation, are significant inequities.
 - **Economic Disparities:** Economic inequalities are highlighted, with wealthier areas having better infrastructure and resources compared to poorer neighborhoods. The disparity between the lower density neighborhoods North of El Cajon Boulevard versus South of El Cajon Boulevard was specifically mentioned.
- **Climate Resiliency**
 - **Lack of Air Conditioning:** Some residents, particularly in older apartments or homes without AC, struggle with high temperatures. This can lead to discomfort and potential health risks such as heatstroke.
 - **Flooding Risk for Residents in Low-Lying Areas:** People living in lower houses, apartments with bottom floors, or near water ways are at risk of flooding, which can damage their homes and belongings.
 - **Heavy Rain General Safety Concerns:** Issues such as slippery roads leading to accidents, clogged drains causing localized flooding, and difficulty for elderly and disabled people to navigate during heavy rain were noted.
 - **Leaks in Buildings from Heavy Rain:** Old or unmaintained buildings suffer from leaks when it rains heavy which causes damage to interiors and belongings.

TOMORROW:

- **Sustainability**
 - **Modernization and Sustainability:** There is interest in modernizing the community with advanced technology, better infrastructure, and sustainable practices to combat climate change.

- **Desire for More Trees:** Many students expressed a desire to see more trees in their neighborhoods, citing benefits such as improved air quality, enhanced beauty, and increased shade.
- **Equity**
 - **Future Aspirations:** Aspirations for the future include living in diverse, eco-friendly communities, achieving financial stability, and having the ability to travel and enjoy a higher quality of life.
 - **Jobs:** Desire for jobs to be created so people can continue to live in Mid City.
- **Climate Resiliency**
 - **Flooding Risk for Residents experiencing homelessness:** Some students highlighted their concern for the safety of the unhoused population during times of heavy rain.

3. LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT

Today, neighborhoods are recognized for their cultural and ethnic diversity, creating a vibrant community atmosphere. Looking ahead, students would like to see affordable housing prioritized, displacement prevented, spacious living conditions, expanded food options and shopping venues, and overcrowding avoided.

TODAY:

- **Diverse Communities:** Several neighborhoods are noted for their cultural and ethnic diversity, contributing to a vibrant and unique community atmosphere.

TOMORROW:

- **Housing and Affordability:** Improving housing conditions and making the community more affordable for families are important goals.
- **Affordability:** Many students expressed the need for affordable housing to ensure they can live comfortably without financial strain, whether in San Diego or other areas. Rental caps was a mentioned solution to avoid displacement.
- **Address Affordability and Displacement:** Common concerns include potential cost increases, affordability issues, potential displacement, and the impact on homeless individuals.
- **Comfort and Space:** There is a strong desire for spacious living conditions, such as large houses with multiple bedrooms and bathrooms, and enough space for family and personal activities.

- **Avoid Neighborhood Overcrowding:** Some mentioned concerns about their neighborhood becoming more crowded.
- **More Food and Shopping Venues:** Students would like to see more cafes, diverse restaurants, small local shops, and a nearby mall to enhance their neighborhood's social scene. The commercial streets in North Park were used as a good example.

4. URBAN DESIGN

Today, there is a need for better street lighting to improve visibility and safety in neighborhoods that are often noisy and busy due to high traffic. In the future, students hope for improved infrastructure, enhanced green spaces, and a stronger sense of community through well-maintained parks, public art, and safer, cleaner environments. They also emphasize the importance of expanding recreational amenities and preserving the neighborhood's cultural vibrancy.

TODAY:

- **Street lighting:** Many feel their neighborhood needs more street lighting for visibility and safety.
- **Noisy and Busy:** A few neighborhoods are characterized noisy with their highly trafficked streets, sirens, and a lot of foot traffic especially near busy intersections and public transportation routes.

TOMORROW:

- **Improved Infrastructure:** Students hope for better-maintained sidewalks and roads, fewer potholes, and enhanced street lighting for increased safety.
- **Public Art and Murals:** Maintain and encourage vibrant public art and murals, and preserve existing murals around City Heights and specifically the "City Heights" Mural
- **Green Spaces:** Expand green spaces by increasing the number of trees, plants, and grassy areas, and ensuring existing trees are healthy and well-maintained.
- **Community and Environment:** Students value a pleasant community environment, with mentions of trees, plants, parks, and community gardens, as well as a sense of belonging and neighborliness.
- **Safety and Cleanliness:** Students frequently mentioned the importance of living in a safe and clean neighborhood where they can feel secure and comfortable. The need for enhanced street lighting was mentioned numerous times.

- **More Parks and Community Amenities:** Many students desire more parks and hangout places like stores and recreational areas like arcades.

5. MOBILITY

Today, students brought up issues with poorly maintained roads and sidewalks. While a variety of transportation modes are used, driving is often preferred for safety reasons. Students with jobs rely on a mix of driving, public transportation, and ride-sharing to get to work. Looking forward, there's a strong desire for improved infrastructure, including better-maintained road and sidewalks.

TODAY:

- **Public Area Upkeep Issues:** Many feel their neighborhood needs better maintenance of roads and sidewalks.
- **Bumpy Roads and Sidewalks:** Many people describe the roads and sidewalks as bumpy, cracked, or uneven, leading to a less smooth experience whether driving, walking, or biking.
- **A Variety of Modes:** Students use a variety of transportation modes including the riding the bus and trolley, walking, driving, and biking.
- **Driving:** Driving is perceived as safer due to harassment that can occur on buses, trolleys, and walking in the streets.
- **Transportation for Students that Work:** A few students who have jobs mentioned using cars to get to work (driving themselves or being driven), using public transportation, or using ride-sharing services like Uber to get to work.
- **Potential Transportation Methods for Work:** For those who do not work but speculate on how they would commute, common suggestions include driving, taking the bus, walking, or being driven by family members.

Tomorrow:

- **Improved Infrastructure:** Students hope for better-maintained sidewalks and roads with fewer potholes.
- **Address Road Conditions:** There is a desire for improvements in road infrastructure, such as less bumpy streets, and the replacement of missing stop signs.

6. PARKS, PUBLIC FACILITIES & OPEN SPACE

Today, many neighborhoods are perceived as dirty and unsafe, with concerns about litter, inadequate lighting, and crime, though safety is seen as better during the day. In the future, students want cleaner and safer communities with more parks, recreational areas, and amenities like gyms, entertainment centers, and places to skate. There's a strong emphasis on creating spaces that support personal well-being, community events, and a balanced lifestyle.

TODAY:

- **Dirty:** Many described their neighborhood as dirty. Issues such as litter and lack of trash cans are common complaints.
- **Mixed Feelings on Safety:** Many described their neighborhood as unsafe with concerns about inadequate street lighting, lack of security, crime, violence, drug use, and people experiencing homelessness. Some consider their neighborhood safe during the day but not at night.
- **Safety Concerns:** There are mixed feelings about safety; some feel safe and secure, while others are cautious due to issues like heavy traffic, dark areas, or undesirable activities.

TOMORROW:

- **Cleanliness and Safety:** Many students want their community to be cleaner and safer, with less trash, fewer homeless people, and more police protection.
- **Personal Well-being and Lifestyle:** A desirable living situation includes personal well-being, space for hobbies like skating, and a work-life balance, with concerns about youth drug involvement and safety.
- **More and Safer Parks:** Many respondents desire more parks, particularly those that are safe, clean, and have varied features like hills, playgrounds, and sports facilities.
- **Amenities and Convenience:** Proximity to amenities such as schools, gyms, hangout spots, and public facilities like soccer fields is considered ideal for a convenient lifestyle.
- **Entertainment and Recreational Centers:** There is a strong interest in having more entertainment options such as arcades, movie theaters, gaming centers, bowling alleys, youth clubhouses, and skate parks.

- **Community and Activity Centers:** Suggestions include community centers, youth centers, libraries with recreational areas, and places that host community events like block parties and festivals.
- **Sports and Fitness Facilities:** Requests for more sports and fitness facilities include gyms, volleyball courts, soccer fields, and places dedicated to activities like skateboarding and badminton.

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