

Community and Culture Meeting Highlights

Host: Department of City Planning

Date: October 7, 2017

Location: Van Nuys City Hall

Meeting Objective: Listening to community concerns, initiate the visioning process for the future of Community and Culture by identifying themes, issues and opportunities.

Summary

The General Plan update—OurLA2040—is a historic opportunity to foster public participation to help guide policy development that will impact planning and land use decisions twenty to forty years into the future cutting across a variety of social, environmental, economic issues.

On October 7th, the Department of City Planning held a Community Conversation event to discuss the future of community and culture in Los Angeles. Event attendees used the OurLA2040 Community & Culture Discussion Guide to structure their small group discussions. The following themes, issues, and opportunities emerged throughout the morning's conversations.

Top Themes

- **Access to community services**
 - A complete neighborhood is responsive to the diverse needs of all the communities it represents in order to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to meet basic human needs and to thrive in a growing and thriving Los Angeles. One of the building blocks of complete communities is access to community services and resources such as quality education (including lifelong learning programs), community centers that offer opportunities for cultural enrichment, workforce development and mobility options which empower people to actively engage and thrive in their community.
- **Quality and availability of community resources**
 - Access to community services and resources also entails the equitable distribution of those services, ensuring community amenities are adequately maintained, and striving to provide a variety of programs and activities that reflect the interests and lifestyles of the community members served by these resources.
- **Economic development**
 - Many of the industries that make up Los Angeles' economy are also tied to its cultural identity. A partial list of those industries includes entertainment, fashion, visual and performing arts, architecture and tourism. These 'creative economies' contribute to the overall well-being of the city by providing economic and cultural opportunities. By encouraging policies that support cultural resources, the City will be better positioned to respond to the changing economic landscape in the Valley.

Key Issues

- Ensure that community facilities are prepared to serve a growing senior population.
- The City should continue its efforts to improve the overall transportation infrastructure.
- Prioritize the maintenance and upkeep of existing community facilities.
- High housing costs make it difficult for people to remain in their desired communities. This applies to both residential and commercial spaces.

- Develop strategies to improve the local economy in the Valley, in response to a declining manufacturing sector.

Opportunities

- Community facilities can serve multiple purposes, i.e. libraries can also function as job training centers for adults.
- Re-purpose abandoned properties such as former school sites, to encourage creative interim uses such as health fairs and other types of community events.
- The City should advertise community events widely and on various platforms.
- Encourage apprenticeship programs to bolster small to mid-size businesses.
- Explore ways California State University Northridge and Pierce College can enhance the availability of community services.

Suggestions for Further Research and Discussion

- How to balance increasing the availability of large scale cultural events like festivals and parades with public safety concerns.

Open Space Meeting Highlights

Host: Department of City Planning

Date: October 7, 2017

Location: Van Nuys City Hall

Meeting Objective: Listening to community concerns, initiate the visioning process for the future of Open Space by identifying themes, issues and opportunities.

Summary

The General Plan update—OurLA2040—is a historic opportunity to foster public participation to help guide policy development that will impact planning and land use decisions twenty to forty years into the future cutting across a variety of social, environmental, economic issues.

On October 7th, the Department of City Planning held a Community Conversation event to discuss the future of open space in Los Angeles. Event attendees used the OurLA2040 Open Space Discussion Guide to structure their small group discussions. The following themes, issues, and opportunities emerged throughout the event.

Top Themes

- **Preservation of existing open spaces, wildlife and wildlands**
 - The City of Los Angeles spans across varying terrains including uplands, wetlands and coastal plains, and in turn, it is also home to the variety of wildlife that inhabit these terrains. This diverse environment offers multiple benefits including: the ability to sustain a variety of natural ecosystems, providing a wide array of biodiversity and species habitat, recreational opportunities, supporting groundwater recharge, flood management, and carbon management and sequestration.
- **Threat of development encroaching into open spaces**
 - As the City changes and adapts over time, strategies should be developed to balance the need for development in the urban areas with the need to preserve open spaces for future generations.
 - Strategies that restrict development in sensitive areas like wetlands, ridgelines, coastal areas and LA River-adjacent communities, as well as creating development incentives to preserve open space may help move the city in a more balanced direction.
- **Increasing access to green spaces**
 - Although the City has a higher number of park acreage per capita in comparison to other large cities, the acreage is not distributed equally citywide. Strategies that work to increase the quantity of open spaces – especially parks – across the city, should be prioritized.

Key Issues

- Enhance park amenities to ensure they are responsive to the needs of the community.
- Ensure parks are accessible to users via multiple modes of public transportation.
- Increase youth programming in parks.
- Avoid locating parks near high pollution areas such as freeways.
- Protect and expand the tree canopy everywhere in the City.
- Improve the maintenance and upkeep of open spaces.

Opportunities

- Leverage the opportunity to address climate change via open space element update.
- Outdoor spaces and parks can create new gathering spaces for the community and encourage social interaction
- Expand the definition of open space to include skate parks, esplanades, and edible forests/fruit parks
- Incorporate more green space requirements into new development projects.
- Increase permeable land and decrease hardscapes across the city to encourage better water absorption.
- Support efforts to create an extensive network of wildlife corridors.
- Convert vacant lots into parks and open space
- Localize Quimby fees so they are used in the areas most impacted by new development projects.

Suggestions for Further Research and Discussion

- Prioritize planning for natural disasters and emergency response especially in areas in proximity to fault lines and flood plains.
- Develop policies to make pocket parks useful and accessible to communities in which they are located.