

8.3 Avocado Heights

A. INTRODUCTION

Avocado Heights is an unincorporated community located in the southwestern part of the Planning Area. The community spans 2.5 square miles, and has a population of 14,064, or approximately 5,652 people per square mile. It shares boundaries with the cities of Baldwin Park and Industry to the north and east, the unincorporated community of Hacienda Heights to the south, and Interstate (I-) 605 and the San Gabriel River to the west. The Walnut Creek Channel flows along part of the northwestern boundary, and San Jose Creek runs south of Avocado Heights to generally form its southern boundary.

Since the early 20th century, Avocado Heights was known for agriculture and ranching. The community continues to be a center of residential equestrian uses, trails, and activity with a designated equestrian district. The community primarily consists of single-family homes, with industrial and commercial uses along its major corridors. The industrial parcels are largely concentrated along Valley Blvd., which forms the northern boundary of the community.

B. COMMUNITY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The following presents a summary of challenges and opportunities learned from community feedback and an analysis of existing conditions in the community (see **Table AH-1, Avocado Heights Challenges and Opportunities**). These challenges and opportunities serve to inform the preparation of community-specific land use, zoning, policies, and programs for Avocado Heights.

TABLE AH-1 Avocado Heights Challenges and Opportunities

1. Housing

Housing Needs. Additional housing is needed in Avocado Heights to maintain affordability for residents and provide needed housing for sensitive groups, including families and older adults. Land use changes to provide new housing should be located near parks and other existing community amenities.

Current residents prefer new housing to have a more granular density and character that is like the existing housing stock. Community members expressed interest in standards that allow for additional housing on existing properties, including prefabricated homes, tiny homes, accessory dwelling units, and garage conversions.

TABLE AH-1 Avocado Heights Challenges and Opportunities

2. Land Use and Community Design

Community Amenities. Community members expressed interest in beautifying their community and access to additional amenities, including additional street trees, community gardens, and better-quality streets. Other amenities include space for older adults to congregate, more educational opportunities, and more markets, local shops, and small stores in a walkable vicinity.

Gathering Spaces. Community members want additional community gathering spaces. While there are several parks in the Avocado Heights, there is a need for a greater variety of gathering spaces, including spaces adjacent to community-serving commercial development.

Park Needs. Based on the 2016 Parks Needs Assessment, about 1.4 acres of parkland is provided per 1,000 residents, below County averages of 3.3 acres/1,000. About 43% of residents have moderate park needs, primarily concentrated in the northwest neighborhoods.

Commercial Areas. Commercial areas in the Avocado Heights community need revitalization and enhancements that improve their accessibility and match the community's character. Areas in need of revitalization include the commercial and industrial properties along Valley Boulevard and the commercial properties at the intersection of Don Julian Road and Workman Mill Road. Residents have stated a desire for well-designed commercial properties, along with standards to help buffer existing industrial uses from residential uses.

Don Julian Road and Workman Mill Road Intersection. Commercial development at the intersection of Don Julian Road and Workman Mill Road should be oriented to the intersection to improve the pedestrian experience, and enhanced to provide community gathering spaces. Amenities should be collocated in these community gathering spaces, including services for older adults, families, and young people. Wayfinding signage and other pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure can support this intersection as a primary community gathering space.

The southeast parcel of the intersection currently contains a grocery store and other neighborhood uses, along with a large parking lot. This parking lot could be enhanced to provide community amenities, including a square/plaza and park space.

Multi-benefit Uses. Schools and other uses (including churches) are scattered throughout the community and can serve as multi-benefit and community gathering spaces.

Equestrian Presence. Avocado Heights contains equestrian properties, and the equestrian history is important to the community and should be highlighted where possible.

TABLE AH-1 Avocado Heights Challenges and Opportunities

3. Mobility

Active Transportation. Existing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in the community needs expansion to improve the walking and biking environment for pedestrians. Wider sidewalks, street trees, wayfinding signage, and new bike lanes, especially along routes connecting to San Jose Creek, will improve the quality of life for residents that walk and bike in Avocado Heights.

Frontage Roads. Frontage roads along Workman Mill Road provide good opportunities for design interventions to improve the pedestrian experience and provide pocket parks. The frontage roads run parallel to Workman Mill Road and provide spaces to activate for community gathering.

San Jose Creek. San Jose Creek serves as an important conduit for pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians to access nearby communities, amenities, and a larger network of trails and pathways. New infrastructure that supports walking, biking, and horseback riding should be connective to San Jose Creek. Additional infrastructure along the San Jose Creek path is needed to improve user experiences, including wayfinding signage, pedestrian-scale lighting, seating, and call boxes.

Community Transit. Avocado Heights residents require better access to transit to meet the community's needs and to decrease reliance on single-occupancy vehicles. Transit connectivity should be improved along the major streets in the community, including Don Julian Road, Workman Mill Road, and Valley Boulevard. A community circulator or micro-transit could provide connections to a nearby transit hub and other community amenities like parks and trails. Transit in Avocado Heights should be easily accessible for young people, families, and older adults.

Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety. The perception of safety in Avocado Heights is low, especially at night. Infrastructure and design interventions are needed to create a safe environment for residents at all times of the day. These design interventions could include additional street lighting and pedestrian-scale lighting, as well as call boxes or buttons along community trails, pathways, and parks. Areas where residents walk and bike in their community should receive regular upkeep, including the abatement of any graffiti. Residents have identified speeding as a major issue, especially along Don Julian Road and Workman Mill Road. Design interventions on those streets are needed to improve the safety of pedestrians.

Land Use

The **Avocado Heights Land Use Map**, found in the **Appendix E, Land Use Maps**, presents land designations and establishes the general location and diversity of each land use in Avocado Heights.

C. COMMUNITY-SPECIFIC POLICIES

The following provides the policies for Avocado Heights, organized to implement each of the six elements of the Area Plan and address the community-specific issues and opportunities presented above. Each policy is linked to a relevant vision statement (referenced as “VS”), as presented in Chapter 1, *Introduction*, of this Area Plan.

VS 1 – Sustainable Growth Patterns

Policy AH-1: Preservation Areas. Preserve and support the equestrian traditions in Avocado Heights, particularly in the Equestrian District Areas.

Policy AH-2: Complete Communities. Enhance community access, connectivity, services, and amenities within walking distance of residential neighborhoods. Focus amenities and services along primary roads leading to the community center at Workman Mill Road, with connective roads and paths to residential neighborhoods.

See Land Use Policy LU-1.2.

Policy AH-2

VS 2 – Diverse, Walkable Communities

RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING DIVERSITY

Policy AH-3: Underutilized Sites. Study the viability of redeveloping the Evergreen Baptist Church property to provide for housing opportunities and community amenities.

Policy AH-4: Residential Neighborhoods. Protect Avocado Heights’ established residential neighborhoods and equestrian districts. Ensure any new development contributes to preserving and enhancing the character of Avocado Heights.

COMMERCIAL CENTERS AND CORRIDORS

Policy AH-5: Existing Commercial Centers. Strengthen and enhance existing commercial centers on Workman Mill Road and Valley Boulevard to the north, and on Valley Boulevard near San Fidel Avenue to the northwest.

MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT AND VILLAGE CENTERS

Policy AH-6: Village Center. Create a village center at the center of the community along Workman Mill Road near Don Julian Road, where access to existing amenities and services is high. Revitalize the existing commercial storefronts at the intersection of Workman Mill Road and Don Julian Road.

Policy AH-7: Social Gathering Area. Create additional social gatherings areas near the two existing schools, Wallen L. Andrews Elementary School to the west and Don Julian Elementary School to the east, through enhanced public park amenities.

PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC FACILITIES

See Land Use Policy LU-3.18.

Policy AH-8

Policy AH-8: Joint-Use Facilities. Explore partnerships with schools in the community, Wallen L. Andrews Elementary School to the west and Don Julian Elementary School to the east, to jointly use their facilities and resources, including parks, playgrounds, libraries, community centers, daycare facilities, and other resources, to increase access to recreational and other amenities for nearby residents.

INDUSTRIAL AND EMPLOYMENT USES

Policy AH-9: Employment Corridor. Enhance Valley Boulevard along the northern/northeastern boundary of the community as a pedestrian-oriented employment and commercial corridor.

Policy AH-10: Industrial Land Preservation. Preserve existing industrial land uses and employment districts along Valley Boulevard to maintain high-quality jobs within the community.

PARKS, OPEN SPACES, AND TRAILS

Policy AH-11: Open Space Needs. Create two new park and open space areas at the southern boundary of the community along the existing waterway from Workman Mill Road to Country Club Way, and at Don Julian Road to the northwest, east of I-605.

VS 3 – Connected and Active Communities

Policy AH-12: Pedestrian Plan. Explore the opportunity for an Avocado Heights Pedestrian Plan that would provide recommendations for specific improvements to pedestrian infrastructure.

Policy AH-13: Complete Streets. Create complete streets from neighborhoods leading to the Workman Mill Road downtown corridor, village center, and commercial centers. See the Mobility Action Plan for additional policies related to complete streets.

VS 4 – Shared Community Identity and Character

Policy AH-14: Equestrian Character. Protect Avocado Heights’ pride for its historical equestrian character by fostering this theme in public design treatments.

Policy AH-15: Street Beautification. Beautify and reinforce Avocado Heights’ identity and character through added street trees, lighting, community signage, bike lanes, public art, and other strategies. Prioritize beautification of the downtown corridor along Workman Mill Road and the industrial/commercial corridor along Valley Boulevard to enhance the environment and experience for users and attract more patrons to the village/commercial centers.

Policy AH-16: Community Gateways. Mark prominent community entrance points with special design and architectural enhancements. Prioritize the entrances to the west and east of Workman Mill Road, and east of Don Julian Road.

Policy AH-17: Waterway Protection. Maintain, protect, restore, and enhance San Jose Creek in the south of the community, which provides a unique environmental feature in Avocado Heights.

Policy AH-18: Waterway Access. Incorporate San Jose Creek into the community’s identity and character with signage, wayfinding, entrance points, and connective paths to other areas of the community.

See Community Character and Design Policy CC-1.2.

Policy AH-14



See Community Character and Design Policy CC-1.8.

Policy AH-16

VS 5 – Thriving Economy and Workforce

Policy AH-19: Business Attraction. Actively market to top industries that match resident skillsets and provide synergies with existing logistics, transportation, and warehousing industries in Avocado Heights.

Policy AH-20: Workforce Readiness. Promote training opportunities for jobs in growing industries, including healthcare and social assistance, that match the skillsets of Avocado Heights residents.

Policy AH-21: Retail Industry. Promote new retail businesses that add to the community's diversity and bring more shops and commerce to Avocado Heights.