

West San Gabriel Valley Area Plan  
2023 Visioning Workshops  
La Crescenta-Montrose Workshop Notes (10/7/2023)

The following information is based off of a visioning workshop held in La Crescenta-Montrose on 10/7/2023. The purpose of this workshop was to share information and gather feedback for the West San Gabriel Valley Area Plan.

The workshop included a mix of presentations and interactive activities. The presentations included information about the work of LA County Planning, an overview about the West San Gabriel Valley Area Plan, and information about the community of La Crescenta-Montrose.

In between these presentations were three distinct activities. The first activity was based around sharing favorite memories and places. The second activity tasked participants with prioritizing and reimagining community change. The third activity involved identifying specific community assets, opportunities and concerns.

The raw information collected from the workshop is located at the end of this document. This includes individual, small group, and large group responses at the workshop, collected on maps, large format paper, index cards, and notepaper.

### **Primary Themes**

Based on all of the information collected from the attendees of the workshop, the following section provides summaries of feedback in thematic categories. These summaries are related to the group's stated values from the memory, the second visioning activity, and the main themes of the third activity covering community asset mapping.

#### **Activity 1: Stated Values**

- Natural Areas, Oaks Parks
- Discovery
- Family Gathering
- Freedom to Roam
- Trees/Washes
- Bike Riding/Bike Paths and lanes
- Neighborhood centers/local shops
- Comfort/Safety
- Beauty/Natural Areas/Spring
- Community events/gatherings
- Sense of community
- Roots in community
- Sense of gratitude for La Crescenta/Montrose

#### **Activity 2: "Magic Wand" Visioning**

- Natural & Recreational Spaces
  - Value for parks, tree cover, and natural spaces.
  - Desire for more green and recreational spaces, hiking areas, and expansion of existing preserves.
- Community Connectivity

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- Emphasis on walking paths, biking paths and connections to neighborhood resources.
  - Vision for a neighborhood-scale transit connecting key areas within the area (Honolulu Ave and Foothill Blvd).
- Local Amenities & Businesses
  - Need for additional local-serving businesses on Foothill Blvd.
  - Mention of existing shopping centers and potential for new businesses and amenities on vacant lots.
- Cultural & Social Resources
  - Value for community events, gatherings, and shared memories.
  - Significance of landmarks like St. Luke's Church and appreciation for a strong network of multi-faith institutions
- Safety & Infrastructure
  - Concerns about congestion, parking, pedestrian safety, and consistent street designs.
  - Challenges with school pick-ups and the subsequent traffic.
- Aesthetic Consistency
  - Stated need for street beautification/greening,
  - Affirmed the architectural significance of using local materials (“La Crescenta Rock”).
  - Desire for consistency in business signage and structure design.
- Development & Land Use
  - Stated worries about the impacts of overdevelopment, especially along Foothill Blvd.
  - Several suggestions for sensible development that respects local character and scale.
- Housing
  - Concerns over high-density housing, short-term rentals, and related infrastructure impacts.
  - Stated vision for low-rise, community-centered living spaces with green pockets.
- Environmental Stewardship
  - Stated importance of preserving dark skies, low light pollution, and minimal disturbance to the natural foothill setting.
  - Concerns about adequate water supply with growing development.
- Communication & Outreach
  - Emphasis on advanced notice for community meetings.
  - Continued engagement with the community in decision-making and development processes.

Activity 3: “Stoplight” Asset Mapping

- Red Category: Community Concerns and Risks
  - Residential and Commercial Conflicts. Concerns related to the impacts of apartments and commercial areas that might disrupt the character of adjacent residential areas.

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- Community Safety. Stated distress over the introduction of detox/rehab centers in residential areas.
- Traffic and Infrastructure. Concerns about alterations to road dynamics, potential parking scarcity, and future mobility related to new development.
- Environmental Stewardship. Losing mature trees poses ecological concerns and also alters the perceived community character.
- Yellow Category: Community Opportunities
  - Public Realm Enhancement. The potential transformation of Foothill Blvd with additional greenery, improved medians, and better pedestrian infrastructure.
  - Optimized Commercial Development. Commercial development should be harmonious, avoiding high-rise structures while encouraging community-centric spaces.
  - Open Space Accessibility. Areas such as Rosemont Preserve, if made more accessible, can promote opportunities for recreation and appreciation for the outdoors.
  - Architectural and Design Standards. Support designs that resonate with the community's mountainous backdrop to ensure the retention of the area's identity.
  - Community Sports and Activities. Spaces like the former SCE (SoCal Edison) substation could evolve into hubs for pickleball, sports courts, or even cultural events.
  - Revitalization of Underutilized Spaces. Vacant buildings and lots could serve as an opportunity for innovative community projects including arts centers, parklets, and gathering spaces for youth.
  - Civic Maintenance. Ensuring regular upkeep, especially for areas like Crescenta Commons parklet.
- Green Category: Community Assets
  - Civic Pride in Public Spaces. Libraries, parks, and institutions like St. Lukes Church are spaces that instill community pride and identity.
  - Business Ecosystem. The presence of diverse businesses, from cafes to small shops in the commercial center, allows for local activity without leaving the community.
  - Natural Aesthetics. Native trees are a point of pride and appreciation in the community.
  - Mountainous Beauty. The mountain views and the community's proximity to foothill wildland areas provides a distinctive charm.
  - Unique Community Preferences. Preferences for no sidewalks or streetlights show a desire for balancing suburban and rural aesthetics.
  - Recreational Spaces. Spaces like Two-strike park and surrounding parks in Glendale are widely appreciated and utilized.
  - Holistic Educational Resources. Good schools, paired with the local library, are a point of pride for this community.

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- Cultural and Spiritual Hubs: Places like St. Lukes of the Mountains church, and other faith-based facilities in the area serve as spiritual and cultural anchors.

**Full Group Discussion and Responses (Notes written for the audience)**

Activity 1 (Memory/Values): *Write down your favorite memory growing up. The memory should be related to a favorite place or activity growing up.*

- Natural Areas, Oaks Parks
- Discovery
- Family Gathering
- Freedom to Roam
- Trees/Washes
- Bike Riding/Bike Paths and lanes
- Neighborhood centers/local shops
- Comfort/Safety
- Beauty/Natural Areas/Spring
- Community events/gatherings
- Sense of community
- “Rooting” in community
- Sense of gratitude for La Crescenta/Montrose

Activity 2 (Magic Wand): *Q1- If you had a magic wand that could change one (and only one) thing in the community, what would that be? Q2- Imagine you are standing on your nearest main/commercial street in your community 20 years from now, and you are looking down the block. In your ideal vision of your community 20 years from now, what do you see?*

- Congestion/Safety concerns with added growth/development; parking increase
- More green space and recreation opportunities (pickleball, facilities, play fields)
- Park space over freeway
- Consistent curb and gutter (example: Rosemont)
- Expand tree cover
- Expand pedestrian safety
- Neighborhood shuttle/ more transit options for all ages
- Central gathering place/public square
- More businesses on Foothill Blvd., local-serving for residents
- More/larger commercially zoned land on Foothill Blvd (“small lots, rules limit commercial opportunity”)
- Street trees and beautification along Foothill Blvd.
- Centralized/consolidated parking for Foothill Blvd.

Activity 3 (Stoplight): *Using 3 color categories, each participant should write down place-specific notes and attach them to the map.*

- *Green. Positive Community Assets. These are places that “charge up” the community in a positive way. It could be a great coffee shop, a town center, a*

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*historic church, a local park. These are things that make you proud to be a part of the community.*

- *Yellow. Community Opportunities. These are places or elements that are okay but could be better. They are not outright concerns but missed opportunities. If these places were improved or reimagined, they could become strong community assets.*
- *Red. Community Concerns. These are places that do not correspond to the community's values, or threaten the safety of residents.*
- Green Category (Community Assets)
  - Mountains, dark skies
  - Library/Community gathering places
  - Crescenta Commons (Pocket Park), Orange and Rosemont
  - Community Involvement/Local efforts for community betterment. Collaborative environment for community betterment.
  - In residential areas: no sidewalks and no streetlights. Appreciation for suburban/foothill rural feel. Minimal light pollution. Appreciation for the seclusion.
  - St. Luke's Church (Historic site)
  - Diverse religious institutions and facilities. Faith-based community gatherings
  - Community and wilderness parks
  - Natural stone architectural treatments ("La Crescenta Rock", "Rock-crescenta")
  - Ralph's Center, only major shopping center
  - Firework show/fun-fair at highschool. CV Firework Society
  - Community-Supported improvements (boosters + coordination. Example: Football field lights
- Yellow Category (Community Opportunities, etc.)
  - Rosemont Preserve (increase access, currently has limited hours)
  - Former Socal Edison Substation on Foothill (opportunity for other use)
  - Foothill and Briggs (Vacant lot, currently planned for development). Consider open space
  - More street trees on Foothill. Otherwise preserve the existing character, make more walkable
  - Design standards (ex/ La Canada standards on Foothill). Lack of consistency of signage, earth-tone colors.
  - Buildings pre-date CSD, aesthetic issues persist.
  - Opportunity for future changes as buildings age.
  - Underutilized properties (between "Cloud and Dire" on Foothill, down the street from the library [west])
- Red Category (Concerns/Risks)
  - Residential Living Facilities/Detox centers in R-1/SFR zones. Concentration of use and proximity to sensitive uses. Used as short-term living
  - Short-term rentals

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- Traffic at school pick-up. Kids go to Ralph Center for pickup. This creates traffic issues.
- Outreach. More advanced notice for community meetings (30 days). Send mailers in advance
- Overdevelopment along Foothill Blvd.
- Ensure infrastructure needs are met with Housing.