

**West San Gabriel Valley Area Plan (WSGVAP)
2023 Visioning Workshops
Altadena Workshop Notes, 10/14/23**

1. Workshop Location and Attendance:

- Held at Altadena Public Library on Saturday, 10/14/23, 10am-12:30pm
- Approximately 20 members of the public participated, all residents of Altadena

2. Purpose of Workshop:

To share information and gather feedback from residents for the West San Gabriel Valley Area Plan for the communities of Altadena and Kinneloa Mesa in specific.

3. Workshop Structure:

The workshop included a mix of presentations and interactive activities. LA County Planning staff presented an overview of urban planning, an introduction to the WSGVAP, and information about Altadena and Kinneloa Mesa, as well as general preliminary strategies and goals for the plan.

The workshop incorporated three activities seeking resident feedback and experience of their community.

1. The first activity was based around sharing favorite memories and places.
2. The second activity tasked participants with reimagining community change.
3. The third activity involved identifying specific community assets, opportunities, and concerns.

4. Primary Themes from Activity 1 - Community Values:

Below are summaries of feedback on the values shared during the “Favorite Place Memory” activity. The activity specifically asked attendees to recall a favorite place or activity from childhood, or any point in their lives, to share as a basis to learn what attendees value.

- Proximity and easy **access to nature** and natural areas, open space, recreation, and participation in outdoor activities including fishing, horseback riding, hiking, and scenic drives.
- Neighborhoods as places to **informally gather and socialize**. Safety for children to play, hang out on the front stoop, and chat with neighbors, playing ball on a dead-end streets with no cars, or walking around in the community.
- **Preserved natural areas** and features – including mountains, ridges, and dark skies.
- A place for **wildlife**.

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- **Vibrant communities** with **safe walking** areas and walkable commercial district with **locally-owned shops**.
- Appreciating the **beauty** of the local landscape.
- **Friendly, neighborly** community.

5. Primary Themes from Activity 2 – Magic Wand and Envisioning Your Commercial District.

The Magic Wand asked participants to describe one thing they would change about their community. The second part asked them to envision their local commercial area in 20 years and share what they see.

a. Make Altadena Safe for Walking and Riding:

(This desire was expressed in all the activities, and nearly everyone in attendance agreed that Altadena is not safe for walking and biking. There is a strong desire for a walkable community with vibrant commercial areas. Presently there is not the level of supportive land uses and infrastructure that's needed to achieve this.)

- Install multi-use trails made of decomposed granite, or other similar material throughout the neighborhoods, parkways, and sidewalks in developed areas.
- Have tree lined streets to provide comfort and shade for walking, with long-term care for the health of street trees.
- Provide safe pedestrian and protected bike routes for all Altadena residents to access community resources, grocery stores, nature, parks, and community facilities.
- Preserve equestrian district of Altadena.
- Install traffic calming measures on all roads, there's lots of speeding and unsafe driving.
- Need traffic enforcement in West Altadena, especially on Altadena and Lincoln. Not safe for walking.
- Improve east/west walkability of Altadena, more pedestrian and protected bike lanes on east/west streets where there is no incline and can walk more easily from Arroyo Seco to Eaton Canyon.
- Prioritize pedestrian safety over traffic flow.
- Shaded parking lots.
- Intersection at Altadena and Lake is very wide and difficult for pedestrians to cross, unsafe.

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b. Variety of Housing Types:

(There were differing opinions on housing issues. We summarized the variety of perspectives.)

- Develop housing types that are affordable to young families.
- Have smart-growth, high-quality design, infill options for housing.
- Bring in more housing, make it context sensitive in design. No “stucco boxes”.
- More ‘missing middle’ housing types.
- More multifamily housing along Altadena Dr., Lincoln Ave., Allen Ave., New York Dr.
- No high-density housing
- Maintain single-family character

c. Walkable and Vibrant Commercial Districts:

- Lake Avenue as vibrant, gathering place with more green areas and pocket parks, sidewalk cafes, and restaurants.
- Make a “town center” at Mariposa and Lake.
- Revitalize and reuse underutilized and vacant land in commercial areas – there are a lot of underutilized and vacant storefronts.
- Make Lincoln Avenue a vibrant, walkable mixed-use commercial district, with uses that serve local residents as an alternative to Lake Ave for West Altadenans to walk to.
- Need more east/west commercial corridors, most commercial is concentrated on north/south streets; at least 3 east/west intersecting. tree-lined commercial streets.
- Foster a distinct identity for Altadena with vibrant small, local businesses, and especially more grocery stores.
- Allow neighborhood corner commercial uses on major roads in residential areas.
- Provide shuttle along Lake Ave. as it is steep and hilly to walk up.
- Bring more diverse businesses to commercial areas.
- Prepare a street tree plan to guide tree planting and care for all commercial streets.
- Repave Washington Blvd.

d. Ease/Revise Regulatory Requirements for Commercial Areas:

- Remove barriers for businesses to open, will facilitate opening and success of more locally-owned businesses.

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- Remove the CUP requirement for alcohol sales for beer/wine for new businesses.
 - Support innovative architecture integrated into the fabric of the community.
 - Revise standards to support more sustainable development and support solar panels on residential and commercial structures.
 - Have DRP work collaboratively with property owners in a supportive manner.
- e. Protect Open Space:
- Make sure the gate to Chaney Trail and other local trails are consistently closed at night and on holidays to prevent late night driving, parties, and other potential wildfire threats that can cause harm to wildlife and locals. This is not done consistently and needs to be.
 - Complete the gaps in the Altadena Crest Trail.
 - More permanently protected open space, especially consider the old Nucio's Nursery.
 - Don't allow the school Sports Complex on former Nucio's Nursery site.
- f. Equitable Altadena - More resources for West Altadena:
- Invest in local infrastructure for the historically redlined community of West Altadena to make it safe for walking and biking with supportive commercial services and goods.
 - Provide parks and play areas for the young families now moving to the area.
 - Support development of nearby commercial districts with a variety of retail and safe, shaded routes from neighborhoods to commercial areas.
 - Reduce driving speeds on roads, install traffic calming measures.
 - Increase transit access to this area. Metro has removed local bus lines. This is especially important for those who are unable to drive. Make sure there are stops near senior housing and group housing.
- g. Limit Fire Hazard Risks:
- Do not allow the Pasadena Poly Sports Complex to be built in the Very High Fire Hazard Areas, preserve this land as open space on the former Nucio's Nursery site.

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6. Primary Themes from Activity 3 – Stoplight.

This activity asked attendees to identify assets, opportunities, and needs or concerns in the community.

a. Assets:

- Access to Natural Areas and Open Space:
 - Open space and trails in the San Gabriel Mountains that are accessible. Gateway to Angeles Forest.
 - Eaton Canyon, Cobb Estate, trails from Chaney Trail, Gabrielino Trail, Altadena Crest Trail, Farnsworth and Loma Alta park.

- Local Identity:
 - Distinct, locally-owned retail and businesses, ex. Rhythms of the Village on Lake, Happy Days Natural Foods, Unincorporated Coffee, Side Pie, Café Leche...
 - Zorinthian Ranch.
 - Art galleries on Lake and Mariposa
 - Farmer's Market and community garden at Loma Alta Park
 - Altadena Nights events

- Community Facilities:
 - Altadena Library as community center with lots of community events.

- Active Community-Based Organizations:
 - Altadena has a range of very active and engaged local CBOs – Rotary, Library, Altadena Heritage, Neighbors Building a Better Altadena, Altadena Historical Society, Xmas Tree Lane Association.
 - Altadena Heritage events

- Historic and Distinct Sites:
 - Christmas Tree Lane and 100+ year deodar cedars – landmarked district
 - Owen Brown Gravesite – historic abolitionist site

b. Opportunities for Improvement:

- Improved Access to Parks and Open Space:

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- More parks and playgrounds in south and west Altadena
- More recreational facilities on east/west streets for better walkability as these are flat, more walkable streets, unlike the steep grade incline on the north/south streets.
- Need to consistently close the Cheney Gate trail to cars in the evenings and on weekends for safety of local residents and wildlife.
- Altadena Community Center, run by LA County Parks and Rec needs to be easily reserved and used by the public and CBOs for events and meetings. There are barriers to use, including requiring local CBOs to carry liability insurance for their group meetings to be held there. Needs to be able to be reserved in the evening and be accessible to the community. Should be used as a neighborhood gathering place.
- Improved Infrastructure and Services:
 - Need better infrastructure and investment in south and west Altadena
 - Develop streets, sidewalks, and infrastructure in ways that reduce the urban heat island effect and capture stormwater, with native landscaping and bioswales.
 - The neighborhood demographic of west and south Altadena is changing, more young families are moving in since it's more affordable, but the neighborhood and supportive services are not there.
 - Need the Sheriff to respond appropriately to calls given specific situations, can't answer all calls the same way.
 - Should have neighborhood solar, especially good to install and shade parking lots.
- Retail and Commercial Use Improvements:
 - Underutilized and vacant commercial land and structures that can be revitalized and adapted to house people and provide commercial services, both of which are great local needs.
 - Altadena has many liquor stores, should serve as more neighborhood corner stores with goods for families to be able to walk to.
 - Better enforcement of liquor store sales to minors and others.

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- Opportunity for new mixed-use development on vacant and underutilized parcels along Fair Oaks, between Altadena and Woodbury.
- Reduce parking requirements for commercial zones and have by-right outdoor dining.
- Put parking behind stores.

c. Issues/Concerns:

- Nature Preservation:
 - Safeguard local trees. Don't allow Edison to damage trees when trimming for power line clearance.
 - Preserve night skies. Don't allow Edison to put in bright, unshielded streetlights. Require that all streetlights and exterior lighting are <2500 Kelvins, are shielded or downward directed, and in the warm light spectrum, no cool blues.
- Hazard Safety:
 - Reduce development potential in High Fire Hazard areas.
 - Underground power lines.
 - Don't allow assembly uses in High Fire Hazard areas, don't allow Pasadena Poly to build Sports Complex in high fire hazard area.
- Housing & Equity:
 - Access to affordable housing options.
 - Access to job opportunities for minorities.
 - Access to power sources, community generators, during power outages.
 - Access to "missing middle" housing options for young families moving to Altadena or for younger generations to be able to stay in Altadena and buy a home near their parents.
 - Require green space, community space in multi-family developments.
- Community Engagement:
 - Need more community engagement for projects that have been submitted and are under development review by DRP. Should involve the community early in the process.

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7. Conclusion:

We heard a range of opinions on some issues, particularly housing and affordability. However, there were some issues and concerns that were commonly held – safe walking and riding throughout Altadena; a more commercially vibrant, walkable Altadena; more reuse and revitalization of underutilized and vacant structures in commercial areas, especially Lincoln and Fair Oaks; infrastructure and services investment in the historically disinvested West Altadena and south neighborhoods.

There was a generational divide on the housing affordability and diversity of housing options – the younger attendees are more impacted by housing affordability and feel the pressures of this more urgently than older generations in attendance who already own their homes and who were more concerned about any increase in housing development in the area.

Overall, the concerns about housing development may be addressed through context-sensitive scaling and design, as well as a focus on the ‘missing middle’ housing range. Also, a review of vacant and underutilized properties for opportunities for mixed-use and housing could be helpful to address a community concern with vacant structures and properties. In addition, nearly all attendees wanted to foster and support the distinct local identity that exists in Altadena and make it more apparent and to ease the opening of locally-owned businesses.

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