

Memorandum

<i>Project</i>	Envision Simi Valley	<i>Project No.</i>	8509
	SB2 & LEAP Grants Programs Implementation		
<i>To</i>	Claudia Pedroso, City of Simi Valley	<i>Memo No.</i>	001
<i>From</i>	Gruen Associates	<i>Date</i>	6/22/22
<i>Subject</i>	Community Engagement Event 1: Summary		

On Thursday June 16, 2022, The Envision Simi Valley SB2 & LEAP Grants Implementation (SVSB2) project held its first Community Engagement Event. The event was located at the Simi Valley Public Library Community Room from 6pm – 8pm, and included an open house gallery showing of existing conditions, potential land uses, and other possible improvements in the specific plan areas. The project team engaged the community in informal discussions for the first hour of the meeting to primarily discuss issues, challenges, and potential opportunities. During the last half of the event, the project team gave a formal presentation on the following agenda items:

- Project Background
- Goals of the Project
- Goals for the first Community Engagement Event
- Overview of the Los Angeles Avenue Corridor Specific Plan Area
- Overview of the Tapo Street Specific Plan Area
- Defining the Role of a Specific Plan
- Overview of the Existing Mixed-Use Zone
- Preview of Potential Opportunities for Tapo Street

The presentation, available on the project website, was followed up by a question and answer session to close out the community meeting. The goals of the meeting were to:

- Introduce the public to the project.
- Present our initial review of existing conditions.
- Get more feedback on what should and shouldn't go in these areas.
- Share some high-level opportunities and constraints.
- Discuss what could be possible for the Specific Plan areas.

The Community Engagement Event 1 was primarily an opportunity for the project team to listen to and note the community's concerns and issues they want addressed as the project vision and policy framework continue to be informed by the community. As described below, the meeting participants provided the project team with the following feedback (*a response/follow-up note is in italics*).

A. Economic Development and Funding

1. The key to revitalizing the corridors is to preserve and enhance existing businesses and attract new economic development. There are many businesses that have been in the Specific Plan areas that have been long established. How will this study allow these businesses to change over time to comply with requirements such as ADA and flood zones? *A Civil Engineer is part of the project team, and will be studying infrastructure impacts of potential future development.*

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2. Will there be funding opportunities for potential future development and improvements proposed in this study? *An Economist is part of the project team, and will be providing the City with an implementation plan that addresses potential funding opportunities.*

B. Street Improvements

1. A participant noted since most properties provide on-site parking at the front between the sidewalk and the building, encroaching on private land to widen the right-of-way could make the parking spaces at the front of the properties unusable. *The project team clarified that the streetscape alternatives shown in that presentation would not encroach on property lines, but any alternative that did so would be examined with care.*
2. The traffic impacts, from both a congestion and parking standpoint, on Tapo Street should be studied due to the high-volume patterns during peak hours. *A Traffic Engineer is part of the project team, and will be studying the technical traffic implications of proposed conditions for both Los Angeles Avenue and Tapo Street within the Specific Plan areas.*
3. A participant stated that on-street parking, as shown in the preliminary street sections, would not be necessary at the moment as much of the street frontage is already underused parking lots. *The project team clarified that providing on-street parking would help replace parking spaces that would be lost if infill development occurs in the surface parking lots.*
4. The preliminary street section alternatives for Tapo Street did not include options that added bike lanes, and multiple participants were interested in the possibility of having bike lanes as opposed to or in addition to street parking. *The project team will explore roadway configurations for both Tapo Street and Los Angeles Avenue that include bike lanes to improve connectivity throughout and address bike safety when interfacing with parking and travel lanes.*

C. Potential New Development

1. Participants generally agreed that opportunities for affordable first-time homeownership is limited and expensive in the City. Some participants expressed the desire for more senior housing.
2. A participant expressed concern for the issues caused by Los Angeles Avenue area being within a flood zone and major liquefaction zone, which make mixed-use difficult in the area costly. The participant did express support for high-density vertical mixed-use in other areas not in flood zones, such as the Tapo Street area, to provide affordable housing opportunities.
3. Participants expressed that any tall (5+ story) development should be studied for impacts on vistas/view corridors. One participant stated he felt a building that was more than four stories would not be visible from a block or more away, and the height may not be such an issue.
4. Participants recommended that taller buildings be placed at the interior or rear of sites so as not to crowd the street.

D. Parking

1. Participants noted that the surface parking lots in both Specific Plan areas are consistently empty and have an overabundance of available parking spaces year-round. There was general support for repurposing underused parking lots for things such as pocket parks or infill mixed-use.
2. A participant noted that current requirements for parking, such as providing 4 stalls/1,000 square feet of commercial space, make multi-story mixed-use projects difficult to build as the current parking requirements would necessitate large on-site

parking structures. *Per suggestions heard from the community, the project team will explore reduced parking ratios to make development more feasible in addition to the potential of shared parking structures on City property and/or parking districts in order to support new high-density mixed-use in a soils-challenged environment.*

3. A participant recommended that the project team should reference the new development on Sycamore Drive, south of Los Angeles Avenue, which may have reduced parking requirements. *The project team should study the pros and cons of having reduced parking requirements.*

E. Pedestrian and Bus Connectivity

1. Pedestrian safety in a multi-modal environment was a high priority for participants.
2. Participants were generally in favor of wide, landscaped sidewalks.
3. Participants suggested this study look at car-sharing opportunities and other emerging technologies, such as electric scooters, as a way to lessen dependence on parking.
4. Participants were in favor of improvements to existing bus services, or the creation of a shuttle service, to reduce headways and provide more frequent service. Improvements to public transportation and other transit systems may also help reduce parking demand and also attract outside visitors from neighboring cities. Concerns that were raised included the existing bus service stops operating before businesses are closed and it can sometimes take approximately 45 minutes to get from the Los Angeles Avenue Specific Plan area to the Metrolink Station. There may also be a disconnect between last bus and the last train in terms of connecting between modes. *The project team will study these connections and assess alignment of all transit systems.*
5. Participants were interested in the possibility of having another Metrolink Station in the Los Angeles Avenue Specific Plan area to bridge the 10 mile gap between the Moorpark station and the existing Simi Valley station. *The decision to add another Metrolink station would be outside the jurisdiction of the City and is beyond the purview of this study; the project team will explore other means of improving transit connectivity.*

Next Outreach Steps: The project team will coordinate with the City to organize the next Pop-up event, which is projected to be at the summertime Music in the Park – to be confirmed. Additionally, the project team will coordinate with the City to set one-on-one interviews with the business community/property owners for the parallel economic development update effort. At the next set of outreach events, the community will be introduced to the proposed potential visionary framework that will shape future land use, policy, and standards for the Specific Plan areas.

