

DUARTE TOWN CENTER GREENING AND TRAFFIC CALMING PLAN STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS SUMMARY

On November 15, 2018, Duarte Town Center Greening and Traffic Calming Plan consultant MIG met with key stakeholders to help inform the planning process and to **identify key infrastructure and mobility needs, opportunities, and challenges in the district**. The consultant team conducted interviews with a cross-section of stakeholders, including developers, property owners, representatives from local senior and assisted housing facilities, library staff, school representatives, and the Chamber of Commerce. Interviewees were asked a series of questions regarding broad-based concerns and objectives for getting to and moving through the Town Center, as well as specific topics pertaining to the stakeholders' interest and expertise. Participants were also given the opportunity to discuss issues of significance to them not otherwise raised in response to specific questions.

This summary presents the comments and key themes discussed during the interviews. Some comments may be contradictory where interviewees had differences of opinion.

KEY THEMES

Through the interviews, key themes emerged, as outlined below.

Enhance Connections to Metro Gold Line Duarte Station

The Metro Gold Line Duarte Station opened in 2016 and has significantly increased foot traffic in the vicinity. Many CSArts students use the Metro Gold Line to access school. For students, visitors to the district, and local residents, enhanced connections to the Metro Gold Line were identified as a priority, with particular attention focused on the underpass at Highland Avenue. Participants noted that it was dark and uncomfortable to walk between the station and northern destinations and recommend additional lighting and art installations.

Address Safety

Stakeholders commented about feelings of safety in certain locations, especially after dark. Stakeholders mentioned an increase in homelessness and issues of public safety and indicated that additional pedestrian-level lighting would enhance feelings of safety. Locations recommended for additional lighting include Buena Vista Street (west side) and within the underpasses for the freeway, as well as within local business parking lots.

Welcome People to Walk

Stakeholders recommended considering interventions that increase foot traffic and encourage pedestrians to linger, which will help local businesses. Interventions recommended include encouraging new destinations, better pedestrian environments, and parklets. Participants noted that a uniform, wider sidewalk, with consistent color, no potholes, fewer obstructions, and more pedestrian-scaled streetlights should be a priority.

Facilitate Student Pathways

Participants noted a need for an additional monitored crosswalk on Central, near Duarte High School, with a traffic light that could be activated by walkers pushing a button. Participants also

noted that travel paths include cut-throughs to Brycedale Avenue from the south, as well as the underpass between Highland Avenue and Buena Vista, both of which are used by many students.

Consider Access to Bus Stops

Stakeholders noted the high level of bus use among seniors and library users. Many within the local senior population seek destinations within the district or use the bus to access outside locations. Participants recommended considering bus stop locations and sidewalk conditions/access to the bus stops.

Increase Signage and Wayfinding

Participants noted that there are limited wayfinding signs in the district, and that there was no sign on the 210 freeway that identifies travelers that they are entering Duarte. Participants also noted that additional business signage could help participants find key locations, such as the library. In addition, parking regulation signage should be clear, especially around the schools.

Consider Changing Mobility Patterns

Stakeholders noted an increase in the use of Uber, Lyft, and other ridesharing applications, as well as motorized scooters for seniors. The plan should consider how rideshare drop offs can be accommodated within the right-of-way, as well as the potential use of motorized scooters, which are an expanding mobility tool. Participants mentioned the Monrovia 50 cents Lyft program, where you can travel with another rider anywhere in Monrovia for just 50 cents. Participants also noted that more students use skateboards and scooters, rather than bicycles, and the plan should consider these mobility options as well.

Enhance Bicycle Facilities

Participants noted the Royal Oaks bicycle path as an asset for the community, and good linkages to that path are desired.

Traffic Concerns

Locations where participants noted difficulties and conflicts for motorists and/or pedestrians and bicyclists included Highland Avenue at Huntington Drive (southbound left turn does not have a dedicated lane), pedestrian crossings at Buena Vista and Central (northbound), and southbound left turns from the Big Lots parking lot onto Buena Vista. Participants noted that pedestrians, including seniors, cross Huntington Drive at locations other than crosswalks; however, the new light at Pops Road has helped and a new light proposed at Brycedale Avenue will also be helpful. There are also locations along Highland Avenue where people cross mid-block.

Address Derelict Properties

Participants noted deferred maintenance at certain properties. In addition, participants were interested in proposed developments for properties that are currently vacant. Derelict properties need to be addressed so that people feel safe and places look more inviting.

Green the Corridors

It was noted that additional trees will help to enhance the pedestrian experience, slow traffic, and provide a sense of place. Participants cautioned against thick vegetation and irrigation in certain locations where homeless might congregate.

Allow Flexibility for Parklets

Stakeholders were excited about the idea of parklets as identified in the Specific Plan and looked forward to seeing the first one installed soon with the proposed housing development on Huntington Drive. That project will include two parklets; each of these will be landscaped and provided by the developer. The City will be responsible for ongoing maintenance and watering of the parklet landscaping. The parklets will have the flexibility to be augmented in the future with seating, historic plaques, and/or art. Participants liked the idea that additional seating and tables could be provided in the parklets in the future.

CONCLUSION

The Town Center Specific Plan, adopted by the City in 2016, set the foundation for the Vision for the Duarte Town Center area. Stakeholder interviews reaffirmed that vision and identified current issues and opportunities to explore as part of the Greening and Traffic Calming Plan.