



STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS SUMMARY

March 20, 2019

Overview

The Monterey Park 2040 General Plan Update stakeholder interviews were conducted between March 6 and March 20, 2019. The purpose of the interviews was twofold: 1) to inform community members about the Monterey Park 2040 General Plan Update and 2) to hear input regarding key topic areas to address in the update plan. Participants were asked to share their opinions about Monterey Park today and a vision for Monterey Park's future. This report summarizes stakeholder input gathered in the stakeholder interviews.

Ensuring the Monterey Park 2040 General Plan Update reflects the diverse needs and priorities of the community, representatives from 12 local organizations and all five City Council members participate in the stakeholder interviews. (The City extended invitations to 26 community groups, but not all responded.) Each interview was facilitated by MIG staff members without City staff present to provide interviewees the opportunity and space to share their opinions. The participants were assured that their comments would be summarized in a format that would not attribute individual comments to a specific participant.

And They Said...

All comments and ideas were documented, analyzed, and grouped into three general categories: Monterey Park's strengths, challenges, and opportunities.

Strengths

Character

- Strong sense of community
- Beautiful scenery
- Views from hills
- Quiet residential neighborhoods
- Strong entrepreneurial spirit
- Involved and collaborative community
- Many places to meet friends and neighbors
- Community support for the youth
- Cultural mix of different ethnicities and age groups

- Educated and well-trained youth in their 20's and 30's returning to the City
- Mix of first generation and multiple generation families
- Chinese immigrants
- Strong network of volunteers
- Locally owned businesses that give back to the community
- Community has money
- Strong Historical Society
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Land Uses

Residential

- Affordable housing for new homeowners and newlyweds
- Median housing prices remain reasonable in relation to the region
- Million-dollar views from residential hillsides
- Most residential neighborhoods have big lots

Commercial

- Strong food culture and abundance of restaurants (“foodie paradise”)
- Marketplace Shopping Center: Strong source of tax revenue despite sharing with City of Montebello
- Many pedestrians along Garvey Avenue support Downtown businesses
- Diversity of shops and restaurants
- Recent Costco “win” for the City which provides tax revenues
- Convenient to have auto repair places close on Monterey Pass Road
- Recent five to six-million-dollar investment in the golf course

Parks and Open Space

- Adequate number and maintenance of parks
- Garvey Park Ranch Observatory: One of two observatories owned by a municipality in Los Angeles County
- Barnes Park
- Great programming at City parks
- Parks are an asset to City

Schools and Public Facilities

- High-quality K-12 education provided by Alhambra Unified School District, including Brightwood Elementary School
- Provision of higher education through East Los Angeles Community College (ELAC) and nearby California State University, Los Angeles
- Responsive fire department

Access

Circulation

- Proximity to the 10, 60, and 710 freeways
- Proximity to regional destinations, particularly Downtown Los Angeles and the San Gabriel Valley
- Traffic congestion along major arterials benefits shops and restaurants

Parking

- Improvements to parking lots near City parks and the Observatory

Challenges

Character

- Cultural divide between Asian, Latino, and white residents
- Political divide between camps
- Trees obstructing views of Downtown Los Angeles and surrounding scenic beauty
- Downtown along Garvey Avenue is not visually appealing
- Garvey Avenue needs reinvestment and revitalization
- Individual neighborhoods lack strong identities
- Younger population moving out
- Older population moving back
- Failing to attract visitors and be a regional destination
- Landlocked and built-out
- Keeping the City clean
- Allow Monterey Park to continue to grow
- Homeless

Land Uses

Residential

- Expensive single-family homes forcing newlyweds to move elsewhere
- Lack of housing options for all income levels and ages
- Demise of existing single-family residential development due to recent and future multi-family residential development
- Loss of green space as multi-family residential development builds up to the curb

Commercial

- Strong food culture and abundance of restaurants; however, only for Asian cuisine
- Downtown shops and restaurants only appeal to the Asian population
- Many repeated uses such as nail salons, hair salons, spas, and massage parlors
- Lack of name brand shops
- Many dated and underutilized commercial areas, particularly Atlantic Square and Downtown along Garvey Avenue
- Small and shallow parcels along commercial corridors with many individual owners makes development and consolidation difficult
- Brokers sharing inflated property values with property owners

- Poorly designed parking lots for shops and restaurants
- Difficulty contacting absentee property owners to enforce storefront regulations
- Nearby cities such as Pasadena and Alhambra provide far better retail options
- Internet sales/Amazon hurting retail sales and mom-and-pop shops
- Unapproachable and uninviting storefronts
- Lack of new employment opportunities and high-paying/tech jobs
- New employment opportunities only provided by shops and restaurants
- Lack of visibility on Monterey Pass Road limits viability of outlets
- Lack of hotels on Atlantic Boulevard

Schools and Public Facilities

- Teachers embrace Asian students more than Latino students and reach out to Asian parents more than Latino parents in the Alhambra Unified School District
- Many ELAC students jaywalk across Atlantic Boulevard to nearby restaurants and northbound Atlantic Boulevard bus stop
- ELAC students park in spaces provided for nearby businesses along Atlantic Boulevard; businesses hired private security guards to prevent students from filling up their spaces; parking on campus is expensive
- High costs for residents to use public facilities unless 501(c)(3) organization

Built Form and Infrastructure

- Aging medical centers
- Aging streetscapes in need of “facelift”
- Over 300 planes fly low over the City each day
- Aging infrastructure struggles to support multi-family development
- AT&T declined to place utilities underground along Monterey Pass Road to allow for the construction of sidewalks
- Lack of financial resources to make infrastructure improvements
- Focus on long-term maintenance for businesses and properties

Access

Circulation

- Commuters cutting through residential streets; Riggin Street used as a cut through to get to the Marketplace
- Widespread traffic congestion during commuting hours, particularly along Garfield Avenue, Garvey Avenue, and Atlantic Boulevard
- More traffic than neighboring cities
- Delivery trucks block traffic on small residential streets, particularly along Newmark Avenue between Atlantic Boulevard and New Avenue
- Commuters of the 10 and 710 freeways use City exits and residential streets to bypass traffic along their route, particularly residential streets around Garvey Avenue
- Large trucks disrupt traffic while serving industrial businesses along Monterey Pass Road
- Traffic on major thoroughfares in the City
- Traffic generated by Costco

Parking

- Insufficient parking near Civic Center
- Insufficient parking near Observatory during youth sports season
- Need for parking structure on or near Garvey Avenue for Downtown visitors
- Dependency on personal automobiles exacerbates the lack of parking throughout the City
- Parking requirements on a per-parcel basis restricts development
- Lack of street parking makes multi-family and affordable housing developments unreasonable

Public and Non-Motorized Transportation

- Poor multimodal transit opportunities
- Transportation options are offered near the 10 and 60 freeways, but not in between
- The City's topography makes travel difficult for pedestrians and cyclists
- Poor connections to and utilization of Gold Line
- No sidewalks or bicycle lanes along Monterey Pass Road

City Government and Regulations

- Residential motels operate illegally throughout the City
- General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) members lack women and youth perspective
- Lack of climate resilient strategies to mitigate the annual increase in number of days above 95 degrees and annual decrease in rainfall totals over the next 30 years
- Police department fails to resolve issues on private property
 - Car shows being held at the Chick-fil-A on Sundays when the business is closed
 - ELAC students filling parking lots around Atlantic Square
- Approved projects fail to meet design and visual expectations once complete
 - Atlantic Times Square and Best Western hotel plans/renderings greatly differ from the actual developments
- Lack of code enforcement to ensure windows and facades along Garvey Avenue are properly maintained
- Zoning Code is "behind the times" and is unable to handle growth or maintain suitable design standards for development
- No tree code or regulations to enforce developers provide trees for aesthetic and shading purposes; developers should be providing and paying for trees on their developments
- Streamlining development process, including multiple languages
- Educate residents
- No growth reform of 1990s due to Measure L

Opportunities

Character

- Maintain strong residential communities
- Welcome all walks of life
- Increase collaboration between community groups, particularly between the Boys and Girls Club and YMCA

- Promote a strong sense of safety within the City to appeal to families
- Take advantage of opportunity to become a dynamic city
- Encourage Asian business owners to host cultural events similar to those in San Francisco or Vancouver
- Improve City image to attract more European travelers

Land Uses

Residential

- Protect R-1 zones from being rezoned to R-2 or R-3
- Encourage affordable housing to capture available funding; hire staff knowledgeable in State affordable housing funding and regulations
- Encourage live/work development and mixed use
- Encourage housing on South Garfield, South Atlantic at Cesar Chavez, and Garvey Avenue if mixed use
- Encourage multi-story residential in Corporate Center

Commercial

- Embrace and protect mom-and-pop shops and restaurants while welcoming more “mainstream” stores and chain restaurants
- Establish more diverse shopping along Garvey Avenue
- Establish more Mexican and Mediterranean food options
- Improve storefront facades along Garvey Avenue
- Focus on attracting cute boutiques
- Opportunity for hotel on site of the Luminaries Restaurant or on golf course area
- Continue to push for retail and commercial
- The proposed conversion of the Best Western on North Atlantic to high rise with retail and condos
- Establish a design center outlet or something else creative on Monterey Pass Road
- Establish a hotel in Corporate Center and include three towers and six to eight floors of condos

Parks and Open Spaces

- Upgrade older parks
- Utilize Garvey Park Ranch Observatory for school and youth group field trips
- Capture storm water and use for recreational components
- Ensure adequate amount of “green” space around City
- Encourage joint uses of parks
- Establish a dog park

Schools and Public Facilities

- Provide better transportation connections between the Gold Line and ELAC campus
- Collaboration between the City, employers, and ELAC to incentivize job clustering
- Realign educational training for the future workforce
- Provide more technical training, and provide teens with more experience and exposure to different careers, particularly careers in hospitality and horticulture
- Retain City-operated police and fire services

- Reduce crime
- Build a performing arts center in Corporate Center
- Keep the library open seven days and open longer time periods each day
- Landscape schools near Garvey Avenue and Garfield Avenue

Built Form and Infrastructure

- Limit tall buildings along Garvey Avenue (four or five story maximum)
- Allow tall buildings along Atlantic Boulevard (like Atlantic Times Square)
- Limit development unless adequate parking is provided
- Create a pedestrian promenade like the 16th Street Mall in Denver, Colorado or 3rd Street Promenade in Santa Monica, California
- Develop streetscape master plans along major arterials
- Beautify corridors to enhance the City's identity, and incorporate climate resilient strategies
- Create walkable and experiential shopping environments
- Implement impact fees to mitigate new development's burden on existing infrastructure
- Create a pedestrian friendly Downtown (Garvey Avenue and Garfield Avenue)
- Improve safety and allow for night time use of Downtown (Garvey Avenue)
- Limit lower building heights next to established residential neighborhoods Downtown (Garvey Avenue and Garfield Avenue)
- Add TV studios for shows with Chinese studios audiences along Corporate Center Drive for tour buses, and include City stops for restaurants
- Create an identity for the Atlantic Boulevard area
- Potential for Atlantic Boulevard to have mixed use and provide entry-level housing
- Potential for Metro funding to fix roads and build parking structures

Access

Parking

- Distribute parking permits to businesses and organizations to ensure their employees find parking
- Build parking structure Downtown on or near Garvey Avenue; utilize City-owned land
- Build parking structure near Garvey Avenue and Atlantic Boulevard and ease parking requirements
- Establish parking districts serving multiple businesses
- Develop a parking management plan
- Revisit parking ratios
- Implement progressive parking standards of one parking space or less per bedroom
- Adjust future parking standards in relation to increased rideshare (Uber, Lyft) usage
- Build parking structure for Costco
- Co-owned parking on Garvey Avenue and North Lincoln

Public and Non-Motorized Transportation

- Increase accessibility to public transportation to help increase housing densities
- Promote Uber and Lyft as transportation solutions

- Provide shuttles along key corridors like those provided at Langley Senior Center
- Recognize cars are primary transportation mode
- Apply for grants for sidewalks on Monterey Pass Road

City Government and Regulations

- More effective enforcement of City regulations, particularly regulation of condos
- Raise sales tax to generate revenue to protect City from significant change
- Encourage fiscal stability to sustain good staffing and safety services
- Establish regulations to stop delivery trucks from blocking traffic
- Reevaluate Community and Economic Development Department processes to assess streamlining and review options
- Revisit the Bicycle Master Plan to increase safety for pedestrians and cyclists
- Implement more flexible zoning regulations
- Incentivize creation of biomedical jobs and larger employers in general
- Promote job centers through appropriate land use regulations
- Encourage multi-benefit projects
- Solicit more feedback from the brokerage community for development regulations
- Initiatives and projects are often started but not finished
- Have developers put more money into quality projects
- Incorporate quality growth with codes that keep the City clean
- Limit massage businesses Downtown (Garvey Avenue and Garfield Avenue)
- Allow greater densities to encourage redevelopment
- Eliminate ordinances that require a vote
- Plant more trees
- Form a tourist commission
- Eliminate policy requiring income generation uses along Atlantic Boulevard south of Garvey Avenue
- Provide incentives for lot consolidation
- Encourage more tax revenues
- Encourage tax-generating uses on Atlantic Boulevard
- Consider a vacant property tax assessment
- Protect long-term businesses
- Revisit increase density
- Update FAR and height limits
- Explore sponsorship to improve streetscapes
- Attract large developers to Garfield with good policies
- Revisit vote reform