

Open Space Meeting Highlights

Host: Department of City Planning

Date: October 2, 2017

Location: Westwood Presbyterian Church

Meeting Objective: Listen to community concerns, initiate the visioning process for the future of Open Space by identifying themes, issues, and opportunities.

Meeting Summary

The General Plan update—OurLA2040—is a historic opportunity to foster public participation to help guide policy development that will impact planning and land use decisions, from now into the future, cutting across a variety of social, environmental, and economic issues.

On October 2nd, the Department of City Planning held a Community Conversation event to discuss the future of open space in Los Angeles. Event attendees used the OurLA2040 Open Space Discussion Guide to structure their small group discussions. The following themes, issues, and opportunities emerged during the evening's conversations.

Top Themes

- Community Values
 - Open Space is essential for quality of life because it provides social, health, environmental, aesthetic, and educational benefits to the community.
- Social Equity
 - We need to consider adding open space based on consideration of such factors such as population density, income distribution, and proximity to schools
 - Open spaces should be physically accessible for users with varied needs and abilities (walkability, condition of sidewalks or other access paths, etc.)
- Environmental Benefits
 - Protection and preservation of flora and fauna habitat
 - Open space should include permeable surfaces to increase stormwater capture and reduce runoff.
 - Open space could help mitigate climate changes by providing cooling/shade, protection from floods, and improvement of our air quality.
- Opportunities
 - Find creative ways to expand our open space network, including the use of city-owned parcels, roof gardens on public buildings, and using other underutilized areas such as infrequently used roads or golf courses.

Key Issues

- Balance the preservation of existing parks and investment in new open space opportunities.
- Balance local neighborhood needs with the needs of larger, regional parks and open spaces.
- Balance between public and private investments and activities.
- Ensure that the benefits of open space are balanced and meet needs of people and the environment.
- Address existing issues such as safety, physical access, maintenance and preservation.

- Preserve existing trees, restore trees that have been removed as a result of development, and increase our overall tree canopy.
- Encourage the preservation of other native flora and fauna in our environment.

Opportunities

- Consider future scenarios involving the development of new technologies. For example, evolving car technology could impact how we re-think parking lots by reducing parking space demand and allow for the repurposing of parking spaces as parks.
- Explore uses such as community gardens, edible plants and trees, and expanding programming like farmer's markets, especially in places with little access to healthy food.
- Connect park improvement efforts to workforce development initiatives for the local community. For example, find ways to support initiatives that provide jobs for the homeless population that address park maintenance or operation issues.

Suggestions for Further Research and Discussion

- Add more data to the maps provided, that includes underutilized resources to help make more locally informed decisions about open space priorities. For example, school playgrounds could be part of a joint-use program to expand open space in areas of need.
- Look to other best practices in similar cities, partner with subject matter experts and the local community

Community and Culture Meeting Highlights

Host: Department of City Planning

Date: October 2, 2017

Location: Westwood Presbyterian Church

Meeting Objective: Listen to community concerns, initiate the visioning process for the future of Community and Culture by identifying themes, issues, and opportunities.

Meeting Summary

The General Plan update—OurLA2040—is a historic opportunity to foster public participation to help guide policy development that will impact planning and land use decisions, from now into the future, cutting across a variety of social, environmental, and economic issues.

On October 2nd, the Department of City Planning held a Community Conversation event to discuss the future of community and culture in Los Angeles. Event attendees used the OurLA2040 Community and Culture Discussion Guide to structure their small group discussions. The following themes, issues, and opportunities emerged during the evening's conversations.

Top Themes

- Complete Neighborhoods
 - Complete neighborhoods meet the basic needs and services of their residents. They are walkable, connected, diverse (age, multi-cultural) and encourage civic pride and engagement.
 - Basic needs and amenities in complete neighborhoods include public transportation, commercial activity (grocery stores, banking, shopping, restaurants), health care facilities, educational facilities, recreational facilities and spaces to practice faith.
 - Connectivity in complete neighborhoods includes access to institutions, programming (farmers market, cultural events, concerts, festivals, etc.) and informal gathering opportunities and spaces like block parties.
- Arts and Culture
 - Art and culture should be integrated into our built environment (utility boxes, landscaping, other publicly viewable and accessible spaces).
- Vision for the Future
 - Preserve neighborhood character and existing assets while allowing room for innovations in technology and emerging community needs to shape the future of the community.

Key Issues

- Gentrification, displacement and affordability can impact existing or future residents' access to a complete neighborhood.
- Limited hours of operation for public spaces can be a barrier to their full use.
- Lack of safety in our neighborhoods can hinder community connectedness because it might deter the community from gathering in places they deem unsafe.
- Limited funding for arts and cultural programming hinder community connectedness because it might limit community gatherings geared towards creativity.
- City processes need to be streamlined to incentivize and facilitate community programming.

Opportunities

- Explore joint-use opportunities to expand the use of spaces like schoolyards for community events and activities.
- Leverage the use of technology and online gathering spaces to increase community connectedness.
- Incentivize programming for the arts to increase art and culture programming availability and ensure that it remains affordable for low-income communities.

Suggestions for Further Research and Discussion

- Provide more explanation of the relationship of the General Plan to other planning initiatives, including re:code.