

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #3 SUMMARY
Land Use and Urban Design

Date/Time: Thursday, September 21, 2023 | 6:00-8:30 pm

Location: Mexican Heritage Plaza, Pavilion Room | 1700 Alum Rock Avenue, San Jose, CA 95116

OVERVIEW

The third community workshop for the Five Wounds Urban Village Plan Update, jointly hosted by the City of San Jose and Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), was held in-person and attended by over 60 people (approximately 35 community members and 32 staff, consultants, and student volunteers). The purpose of the workshop was to hear input from community members on the types of desired residential and open space development and where they should be located within the Plan Area. Simultaneous interpretation was available in two languages: Spanish and Vietnamese.

The workshop also hosted a kids table where several children participated in an urban-planning related children’s activity while their parents participated in the workshop.



“WHERE DO YOU LIVE/WORK?” MAPPING ACTIVITY

As people arrived to the meeting, they were asked to engage in an introductory mapping activity. The purpose of the activity was for the project team to understand where participants live and work within the Plan Area, and whether they rent or own their residence. Approximately 29% of participants (10 people) participated in the activity.



The following are key takeaways from the mapping activity:

- Most participants (80%) live and/or work in the Plan Area
- 88% of the residents live to the west of the 101 Fwy and 12% of the residents live to the east of the 101 Fwy.
- 1 participant indicated that they rent their residence in the Little Portugal Urban Village Plan Area
- 1 participant indicated that they work in the Five Wounds Urban Village Plan Area.

PRESENTATION

The meeting began with a welcome greeting from Councilmember Ortiz from District 5 and Councilmember Torres from District 3. Following the greeting, City staff, VTA staff, and consultants showed a two-part presentation that covered the following topics:

- Land acknowledgement of Santa Clara County's indigenous tribes (VTA)
- Commitment to equity and inclusion for the project (VTA)
- Project overview of the Five Wounds Urban Village Pan Update (City)
- Workshop #1 and #2 Community Input Summary
- Urban Village Survey Results
- Proposed land uses, building heights, and open space opportunities
- Overview of potential development types (mixed-use, medium-density residential, and new residential) at various sites in the project area
- Concept visions of VTA's Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) and Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) programs and the Design Development Framework (DDF) for the future 28th Street/Little Portugal BART station (VTA)



Q&A

Each presentation was followed by a time of Q&A. Some questions included those about the issue of abandoned commercial and residential buildings in the Plan Area, and efforts for future revitalization according to the proposed Urban Village Plan. There were also questions about potential financial assistance for existing property owners to build or upgrade existing buildings according to the proposed Urban Village Plan.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

After Q&A, attendees broke out into 6 groups to engage in approximately 45 minutes of small group discussions and a mapping exercise. Each group had approximately 8 community participants, 1 project team facilitator, and 1 project team note taker. One group consisted of Spanish-speaking community members and was facilitated in Spanish. Within the groups, participants were asked the following questions:

- What “gains” (or benefits) do you see these land uses/heights bringing to the neighborhood? (Also considering the new transit and trail access that will be here.)
- What pains (or challenges) may they raise? (How can those be addressed?)
- Look at the images of residential buildings shown for the neighborhoods. Which of these do you think would be good in your neighborhood? How can they be improved to fit in well here?
- Look at the list of types of Open Space. Of these types, which open space improvement is most important to you:
 1. Develop the Five Wounds Trail
 2. Reinvest in Existing Parks
 3. Provide Privately Owned Public Open Space with New Development
 4. Build New Parks
- There will be new public open spaces at the 28th Street/Little Portugal BART station. What open space activities would you prioritize for this neighborhood, and why?



The goal of the mapping activity was to encourage participants to provide input on the proposed land uses and building heights within the Plan Area (a half-mile radius from the future 28th Street/Little Portugal BART station) and see what benefits and/or challenges they might bring to the neighborhood. Each table had a large map of the Plan Area that showed the proposed maximum building heights and the four Urban Village Plan Areas (Five Wounds, Roosevelt Park, 24th & William, and Little Portugal). In addition, the table map showed example images of residential buildings with varying height from single-story ADU to 15-story high rise. Community participants were tasked to provide input on which residential development type would be compatible in their neighborhood and how they can be improved.

REPORT BACK

Following the small group discussions, a community “spokesperson” from each group reported back to the entire workshop, highlighting key discussion items and themes from their group. A summary of each small group’s discussion/report back are located at the end of this workshop summary.



CONCLUSION

At the end of the meeting, Charla Gomez from the City of San Jose described the project’s next steps, including types of future engagement opportunities, and shared a link to the project website:

www.sanjoseca.gov/FiveWoundsUVP. Future workshops will address other topics at key project milestones, including transportation & parking, and a presentation of the updated Five Wounds Urban Village Plan.

SUMMARY OF SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION AND REPORT BACK

The small group discussions are summarized below. The summary includes notes from table maps and large note pads. In some cases the maps were not marked, so the photo is not included below. The table numbers below follow the numbers given to each table during the workshop, except Table #9 from the workshop is shown as Table #2 below to make the numbering consistent.

Table #1 (Spanish-speaking table)

Project team staff

Lorena Bernal-Vidal (VTA) and Jennifer Vazconcelo (Kearns and West)

Question 1: What “gains” (or benefits) do you see these land uses/heights bringing to the neighborhood? (Also considering the new transit and trail access that will be here.)

- Better job opportunities and more accessible workplaces

Question 2: What pains (or challenges) may they raise? (How can those be addressed?)

- Concerns on lack of parking
- Suggest widening E. Santa Clara St. for additional traffic volume capacity

Question 3: Look at the images of residential buildings shown for the neighborhoods. Which of these do you think would be good in your neighborhood? How can they be improved to fit in well here?

- Proposed density levels are appropriate
 - Important to address lack of parking with inflow of density to what is currently lower-density neighborhoods



Question 4: Look at the list of types of Open Space. Of these types, which open space improvement is most important to you?

- Desire for maintaining/upgrading existing open space
- Support for development of Five Wounds Trail
 - Top priority but concerned about maintenance once completed
 - Potential location right across from Five Wounds Church; trees, picnic tables, create a vibrant area

Question 5: There will be new public open spaces at the 28th Street/Little Portugal BART station. What open space activities would you prioritize for this neighborhood, and why?

- Add picnic tables close to the Five Wounds Church
- Support for exercise stations, marketplaces, and lawn areas for flexible uses

Table #2 (Workshop Table #9)

Project team staff

Rina Shah (City), Marlys Jeane (Kearns and West), Pete Rice (City)

Question 1: What “gains” (or benefits) do you see these land uses/heights bringing to the neighborhood? (Also considering the new transit and trail access that will be here.)

- N/A

Question 2: What pains (or challenges) may they raise? (How can those be addressed?)

- N/A



Question 3: Look at the images of residential buildings shown for the neighborhoods. Which of these do you think would be good in your neighborhood? How can they be improved to fit in well here?

- There should be a better transition in density levels from 85' to 35'
- Increase in density will lead to an increase in affordability, which makes projects viable; hope that viability means community benefits via developer fees, etc.

Question 4: Look at the list of types of Open Space. Of these types, which open space improvement is most important to you?

- N/A

Question 5: There will be new public open spaces at the 28th Street/Little Portugal BART station. What open space activities would you prioritize for this neighborhood, and why?

- N/A

Table #3

Project team staff

Andrea Wong (SOM), Lauren Wong (SITELAB), and Daniel Cortez-Flores (VTA)

Question 1: What "gains" (or benefits) do you see these land uses/heights bringing to the neighborhood? (Also considering the new transit and trail access that will be here.)

- Desire to increase life and traffic on Santa Clara; want a vibrant place – more safety in numbers
- Generally agree with the land use map



Question 2: What pains (or challenges) may they raise? (How can those be addressed?)

- Like the mixed-use building type but there's already a lot of empty storefronts – businesses will need support
- Buildings along E. Santa Clara should be less than 85' near the creek
- There should be some residences on ground floors with stoops, not just all commercial

Question 3: Look at the images of residential buildings shown for the neighborhoods. Which of these do you think would be good in your neighborhood? How can they be improved to fit in well here?

- Strong desire for buildings to reflect the architectural style of the Five Wounds Church and Mexican Heritage Plaza along Alum Rock to integrate into the neighborhood
- ADUs, duplexes and townhomes reflect the character of the neighborhood already
- Mixed-use/mid-high rise are too generic in style for this neighborhood
- Balconies can be lovely, although they can look blighted sometimes, HOA regulations and rules can be enforced
 - In taller buildings, it is important to provide an accessible private outdoor space

Question 4: Look at the list of types of Open Space. Of these types, which open space improvement is most important to you?

- Prioritize the development of the Five Wounds Trail
 - It has been a dream in the heart of the community for 25 years
 - VTA has stored some historic railroad tracks to incorporate in the future
 - It will provide a direct connection to the BART station
 - Concern that if the trail is not secured, it will allow homeless encampments and people will feel unsafe to use it

Question 5: There will be new public open spaces at the 28th Street/Little Portugal BART station. What open space activities would you prioritize for this neighborhood, and why?

- Prefer options with flexibility to use for a variety of events, such as a lawn
- Plaza de Cesar Chavez was wildly popular but had issues when unused
- A splashpad can be multipurpose when unused
- Farmer's market is a popular preferred option
- Desire for flexibility for performing arts to reflect the culture and history of the area, especially with the Portuguese cultural organizations; impressive that young members of the community are carrying the tradition, history, and music

Table #4

Project team staff

Lindsey Kiner (VTA), Alisar Aoun (City), Lola Torney (VTA)

Question 1: What "gains" (or benefits) do you see these land uses/heights bringing to the neighborhood? (Also considering the new transit and trail access that will be here.)

- Proposed density is properly located

Question 2: What pains (or challenges) may they raise? (How can those be addressed?)

- The 101 is a barrier and it should be improved to support other modes of transportation
 - Rejoin the two cultural districts being split by the 101
- Distrust from what happened with the BRT development on Alum Rock
- Well lit areas are important for pedestrians to feel safe

Question 3: Look at the images of residential buildings shown for the neighborhoods. Which of these do you think would be good in your neighborhood? How can they be improved to fit in well here?

- Existing residential neighborhoods should be preserved

Question 4: Look at the list of types of Open Space. Of these types, which open space improvement is most important to you?

- N/A

Question 5: There will be new public open spaces at the 28th Street/Little Portugal BART station. What open space activities would you prioritize for this neighborhood, and why?

- The plaza near the BART station is desirable; people can explore the neighborhood, shop, etc. without the need to drive
- Encourage developers to include public open spaces in their projects
- Prefer flexible open spaces, such as lawns, stages, art, and farmer's market

Table #5

Project team staff

Aiko Cuenco (VTA), Liz Sewell (City), Brent Pearse (VTA)

Question 1: What “gains” (or benefits) do you see these land uses/heights bringing to the neighborhood? (Also considering the new transit and trail access that will be here.)

- Proposed density is properly located

Question 2: What pains (or challenges) may they raise? (How can those be addressed?)

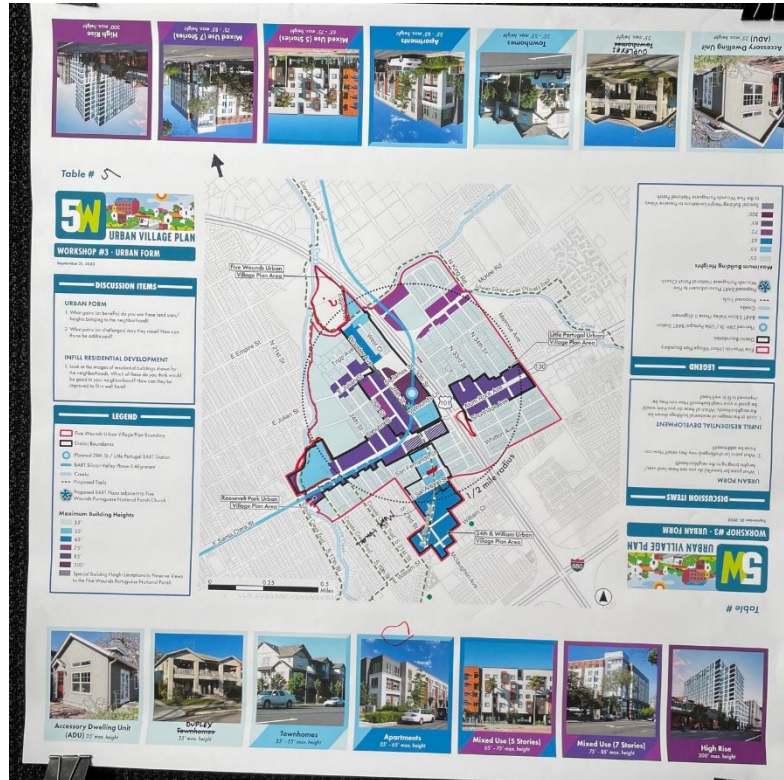
- 24th and William:
 - Maximum allowed building height of 65’ in areas with existing 2-3 story buildings feel out of place, but townhomes and 4-plexes seem more reasonable
 - There are already issues with parking and speeding
 - Concerns about density impacting drivability for people who still need to drive
- Concerns on mobile home communities displacement if redevelopment happens in the neighborhood

Question 3: Look at the images of residential buildings shown for the neighborhoods. Which of these do you think would be good in your neighborhood? How can they be improved to fit in well here?

- N/A

Question 4: Look at the list of types of Open Space. Of these types, which open space improvement is most important to you?

- Desire for both the development of Five Wounds Trail and reinvesting in existing parks
- Existing Coyote Creek Trail is blighted by homeless people
- Concern about how the new trail will be taken care of to maintain safety and provide an attractive place for the community



Question 5: There will be new public open spaces at the 28th Street/Little Portugal BART station. What open space activities would you prioritize for this neighborhood, and why?

- Prefer a combination of amenities, such as athletic field with tracks
- Consider open space amenities beyond VTA land by the station and throughout the station area where businesses are and where the community is located

Table #6

Project team staff

Woody Hanson (SITELAB) and Giselle Beld (City)

Question 1: What “gains” (or benefits) do you see these land uses/heights bringing to the neighborhood? (Also considering the new transit and trail access that will be here.)

- Support for the proposed density because this will bring more homes
- The proposed 800-parking space garage at the BART station is a relief
- Residents living near the BART station will likely bring fewer cars

Question 2: What pains (or challenges) may they raise? (How can those be addressed?)

- Affordable housing should be accessible for families (4-5 bedroom apartments), not just 2-3 bedrooms

Question 3: Look at the images of residential buildings shown for the neighborhoods. Which of these do you think would be good in your neighborhood? How can they be improved to fit in well here?

- N/A

Question 4: Look at the list of types of Open Space. Of these types, which open space improvement is most important to you?

- N/A

Question 5: There will be new public open spaces at the 28th Street/Little Portugal BART station. What open space activities would you prioritize for this neighborhood, and why?

- A lot of support for parks
- Preference for dog parks, farmer’s market, and lawns