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I Introduction

This report summarizes the process and results of the second phase of community outreach that will be incorporated into the updated Mission Valley Community Plan.

I.1 Mission Valley Community Plan Update Purpose and Process

PURPOSE

The current Mission Valley Community Plan provides the detailed framework to guide development in Mission Valley. Originally adopted in 1985, the plan has undergone over 20 amendments in the intervening years. Additionally, in 2008 the City of San Diego adopted a new General Plan that incorporates the “City of Villages” strategy, which focuses growth into pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use activity centers linked to an improved regional transit system. The General Plan identifies Mission Valley as a Subregional Employment Area; this indicates that Mission Valley will play an important role in the City’s economic prosperity strategy, in part by providing the appropriately designated land and infrastructure needed to support business development and employment opportunities.

PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

The City began a process for a comprehensive update of the Community Plan in mid-2015, to better align it with Mission Valley’s current context, and to implement the overall General Plan policy direction. As part of this effort, the City is reaching out to a broad spectrum of community members and stakeholders to identify common visions, issues, and priorities.

The Mission Valley Community Plan Update (CPU) seeks to bring the plan up-to-date by:

- Analyzing current land use, development, and environmental characteristics;
- Evaluating changes in demographics that may affect land use needs;
- Understanding demand for housing and commercial development;
- Working with community members and stakeholders to determine key issues of concern, desires, and preferences to establish a vision and objectives for the Plan Update;
- Evaluating the “fit” of current Community Plan policies to achieve community goals and regulatory requirements;

Ensuring that policies and recommendations remain in harmony with the General Plan and citywide policies, as well as regional policies.

APPROACH TO COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Community outreach activities are an integral part of the CPU process (Figure 1). Community workshops, Subcommittee meetings, and other outreach activities are present in each phase of the CPU process. In Phase 1, a subcommittee of the Mission Valley Community Planning Group was established to help guide the CPU process. A membership list of the subcommittee can be found in Appendix A.

Phase 2 of the outreach process was completed in the spring of 2016, with Phase 3 on the horizon. In-depth community participation in the beginning phases is key to generating a vision for the creation of a Plan which represents the ideas and concerns of Mission Valley residents, business owners, and other local stakeholders.

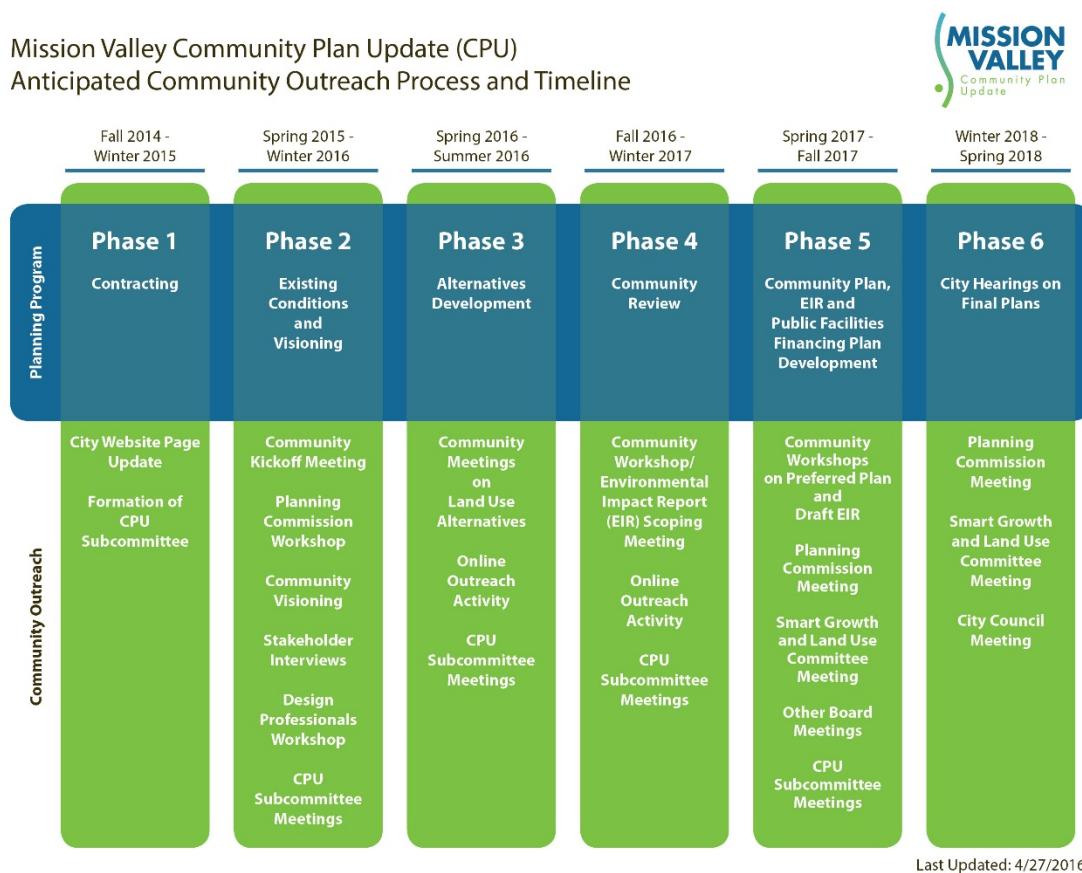


Figure 1. Mission Valley Community Plan Update (CPU) anticipated community outreach process and timeline

COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE PHASE 2

Phase 2 of the update process focused on identifying existing conditions in Mission Valley, and developing a vision for the community for the next 20 to 30 years in the future. This was

accomplished through the development of two (2) technical studies and several community outreach efforts. The technical studies in Phase 2 included the following:

Existing Conditions Map Atlas: The Map Atlas provides baseline spatial information on existing conditions, opportunities, and challenges in the Mission Valley community planning area and outlines future prospects for the community. The focus of the atlas is on mappable resources, trends, and critical concerns that will frame the choices for the long-term physical development of Mission Valley. The atlas maps information about land uses, natural resources, urban form, and transportation infrastructure.

Issues and Options Analysis: The report examines issues affecting long-term physical development in the Mission Valley community, and presents potential options for addressing those issues through the update to the Community Plan. The issues reflect particular *constraints* that affect the valley, and the opportunities to make the area a more liveable, economically vibrant, and ecologically healthy place. Fifteen issues with options are addressed in the report including:

1. Fostering Coherent, Interconnected Neighborhoods
2. Promoting Connections across Physical and Natural Barriers
3. Need for a “Main Street” and the Appropriateness of Camino de la Reina
4. Opportunities for an Interconnected Park and Open Space System
5. Maintaining the Vitality of Retail in Mission Valley
6. Prospects for Future Office Development
7. Opportunities on Large Sites
8. Appropriate Land Uses South of I-8
9. Enhancing Access to the Trolley
10. Improving Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure
11. Prospects for Aerial Tram Connections
12. Mission Valley Community Circulator on Camino de la Reina
13. Strategies to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions
14. Opportunities for Urban Agriculture
15. Opportunities to Grow the Tree Canopy

These reports are available for review on the Mission Valley Community Plan Update [webpage](#).

Community outreach efforts included, engaging residents, business owners, property owners, community members, developers, and other stakeholders to gather information on existing conditions, opportunities, connectivity, neighborhoods, strategies for moving forward, and a vision for the future. Outreach efforts in Phase 2 included:

- Communitywide Workshop (October 29, 2015) and the December 2015 Mission Valley Community Plan Update Subcommittee Meeting
- Stakeholder Interviews (September 2015)

- Design Professionals Workshop (February 12, 2016)

The results of these meetings and workshops will be discussed in depth in this document.

1.2 Generalized Issue Areas Identified in Phase 2

Through community engagement efforts, nine (9) distinct themes were identified that reflect the body of input collected from community members (Figure 2).

	Improve the pedestrian and bicycle experience
	Address and manage traffic
	Make it easier to take transit



**Reinforce the vision of a
river-focused community**



**Develop more parks and
open spaces**



**Create more active
recreation facilities**



**Provide a diverse mix of
land uses, while
reinforcing regional
commercial**



Figure 2. Themes established by the community for Mission Valley

These themes offer a generalized representation of the input collected from program participants. The following sections of this report contain a more nuanced discussion of each outreach event, and the input collected.

2 Communitywide Workshop (October 2015) and Mission Valley Community Plan Update Subcommittee Meeting (December 2015)

This section summarizes the contents and outcomes of the second community workshop for the Mission Valley Community Plan Update (CPU) process and the December 2015 Mission Valley Community Plan Update Subcommittee (MV CPUS) meeting. Both workshops covered the same content and format. Some members of the Subcommittee were not able to attend the October workshop, so the activities of the workshop were repeated with the Subcommittee. Feedback from participants has been combined into a single section in this document because it covers the same content.

The focus of these workshops was to understand the community's vision and priorities for Mission Valley through individual and group activities, as well as presentations by planning department staff and Dyett & Bhatia staff. By designing the workshops around visioning activities, the broad spectrum of community members present were given a chance to provide feedback and engage in meaningful discussions with fellow community members as well as City staff and consultants. Input from these workshops will be used to inform the development of vision for a future Mission Valley as well as opportunity areas within the community to implement that vision.

2.1 October Workshop Details

The workshop was held on Thursday, October 29, 2015 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. PM at the Mission Valley Public Library. Almost 30 members of the public attended the meeting, with the majority participating in the visioning activities. Attendees included residents, business owners, employees, and other stakeholders.

WORKSHOP PUBLICITY

The workshop was publicized on the project website, through email blasts, and at community planning group meetings, which included residents from the surrounding community of Linda Vista. There were also advertisements in the Mission Valley News and the Council District 7 newsletter. Stakeholders that were interviewed in October, including business owners and a variety of interest groups, were invited to attend the workshop as well. The flyer used for advertisements and the workshop agenda are located in Appendix B.

OBJECTIVES

This community workshop was an integral part of Phase 2 of the CPU process. Understanding the public's long-term vision and priorities for the community is important in building the different pieces of the CPU over the next few years. The workshop provided

valuable feedback from interested parties regarding guiding visions for the plan, definitions of neighborhood areas throughout Mission Valley, existing physical barriers and options for improvements, and identification of defining characteristics and further opportunities to create complete neighborhoods. This feedback will help guide the plan towards issues and options that are important to the community.

2.2 Format and Agenda

An interactive format was used where attendees were active participants in the discussions. This was accomplished with the use of exercises that were designed to solicit a response from participants and encourage interaction with other community members in response development.

PRESENTATION

The workshop opened with a presentation by the City of San Diego Project Manager, Nancy Graham, and staff from Dyett and Bhatia exploring results from the previous community workshop and the existing conditions analysis (Figure 3). Critical issues for Mission Valley were discussed, along with potential options for addressing them. The full PowerPoint presentation is included in Appendix C.

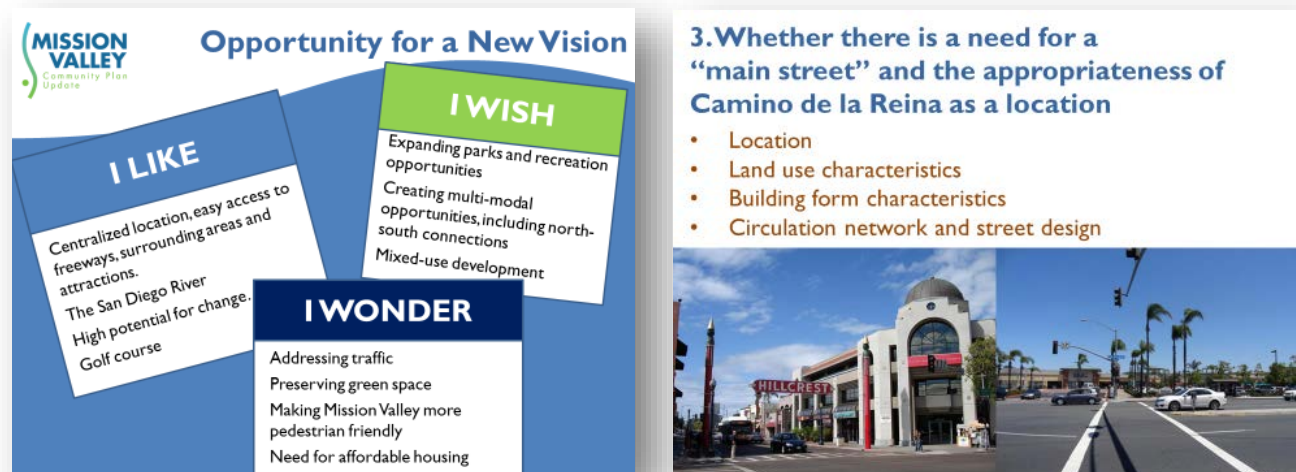


Figure 3. Slides that show some of the results from community visioning and the existing conditions analysis

VISION STATEMENTS

At the kickoff community workshop in June of 2015, community members were asked to identify what they think is special about Mission Valley, along with what challenges and future opportunities they see in the community. The sixteen vision statements were drafted by City staff using key themes generated from that community workshop.

In addition to feedback at the community workshop, the draft vision statements were presented to the MV CPUS at the November meeting. City staff led a discussion by presenting the feedback received at the workshop, with the intention of paring down the list of statements, and editing existing ones, as the Subcommittee saw fit. The discussion went over the meeting time limit, and prompted the scheduling of an additional meeting in December to conclude review of the vision statements and complete the workshop activities.

Figure 4. Image of the posters on which community members rated vision statements



ACTIVITY 1 – NEIGHBORHOOD AREAS

After the presentation, attendees were asked to define what they thought of as neighborhoods within the community by drawing boundaries on small maps of Mission Valley (Figure 6). This exercise was meant to focus the discussion of issues and options within the community to certain neighborhood areas, or districts with defining characteristics. The results of these drawings are discussed in the results section, and included in Appendix E.

ACTIVITY 2 – KEY CONNECTIONS

Attendees then worked in small groups to identify physical barriers throughout Mission Valley, as well as specific locations for improvements to those physical barriers, using markers and stickers with different connection options on a large table map. This activity was designed to gather information regarding specific opportunity areas in which to create safe and accessible connections, according to community members (Figure 7).

ACTIVITY 3 – COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS

Finally, the same small groups worked together to identify several areas in the community where they saw potential for building complete neighborhoods, utilizing stickers with different land use and mobility options (Figure 8). Participants were asked to identify defining characteristics of Mission Valley on which community identity can be built, including landmarks, activity centers, and paths (Figure 9). Based on those defining characteristics, opportunity areas which could be used to create complete neighborhoods were identified, along with areas where the themes of the guiding principles are most needed.

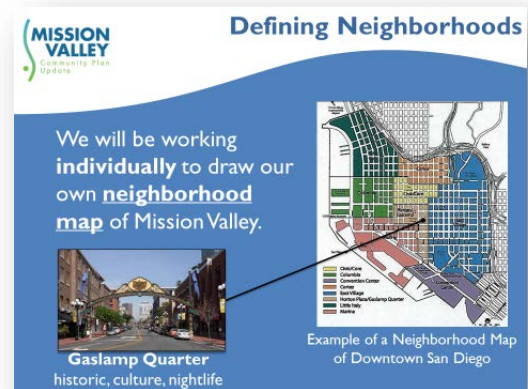


Figure 6. Presentation slide outlining the task for community members to identify neighborhood areas



Figure 7. Presentation slide outlining the task for community members to identify connections



Figure 8. Presentation slide outlining the task for community members to identify ways to make Mission Valley a better place to live, work, and play



Figure 9. Images of community members engaging in defining neighborhoods, making connections and building complete neighborhoods

2.3 Results

There were lively discussions among the break-out groups, which were facilitated by City staff and consultants. Several people joined the workshop for specific reasons, such as concerns about potential development of the Riverwalk Golf Course, or general concerns about over-development and impacted traffic in the Mission Valley area. Those who participated in the group activities seemed willing to discuss new ideas for community improvements, and offered helpful insight into existing issues and concerns in the area.

VISION STATEMENTS EXERCISE – OCTOBER WORKSHOP

Stickers were distributed for participants to demonstrate if they agreed or disagreed with the statements, and to choose their favorite statements (Figure 10 - 15). Post-it notes were also given out for those who wanted to provide specific feedback on the statements. Results of all the rankings are located in Appendix D.

Participants agreed with most of the statements to varying degrees. There were very few stickers placed on the “disagree” side of the posters, with the majority of the stickers landing close to or within the “agree” half. Feedback and general comments were provided on a few posters.

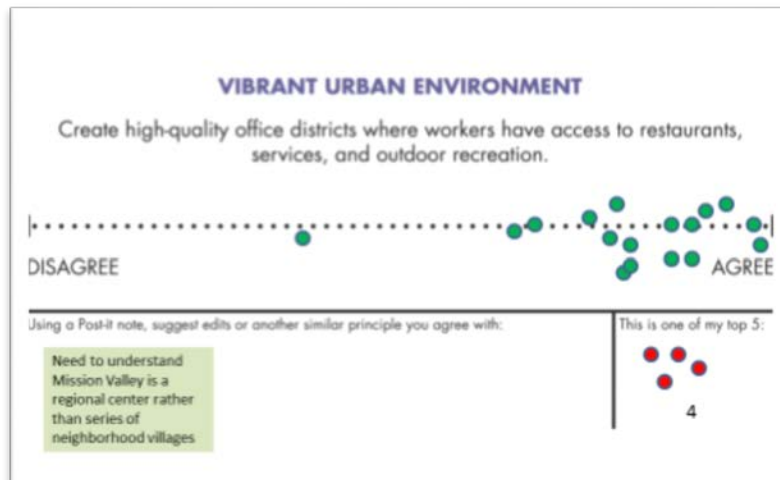


Figure 10. Poster showing levels of agreement with a proposed vision statement

This vision statement had a relatively strong “agree” rating, indicating that most participants were happy with the content of the statement, aside from one outlier vote that landed more on the “disagree” side. Four people indicated that this statement was one of their favorites. The highest ranked statements in each category are as follows:

Balanced Community – Create a vibrant and diverse mixed-use community that provides options for living, working, shopping, recreation, culture, and civic uses for a wide range of incomes and ages (Figure 11).

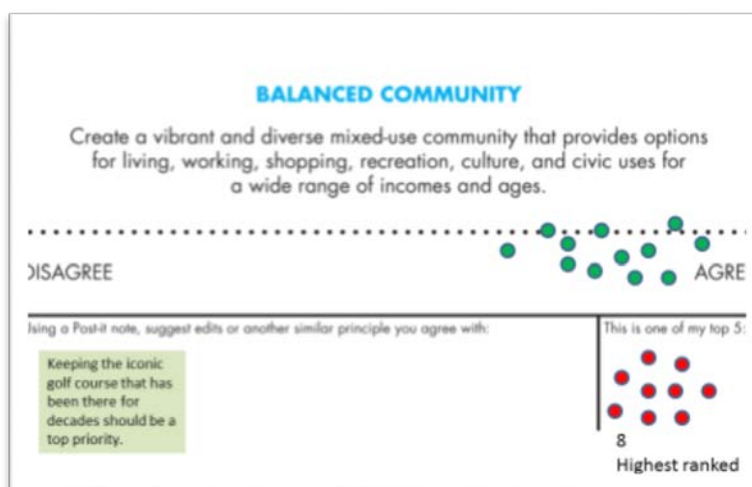


Figure 11. Poster showing levels of agreement with a proposed vision statement for a balanced community

Access and Connections – Proactively manage congestion by reducing vehicle trips, managing parking, and making it easier and more attractive to get around by alternative modes such as transit, walking, and biking (Figure 12).

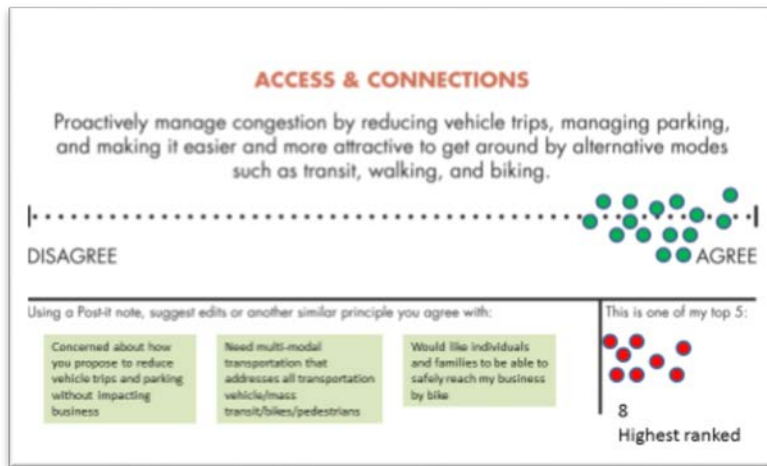


Figure 12. Poster showing levels of agreement with a proposed vision statement for access and connections

Vibrant Urban Environment – Cultivate a vibrant identity that builds on Mission Valley's diverse history through art, culture, food, and entertainment (Figure 13).

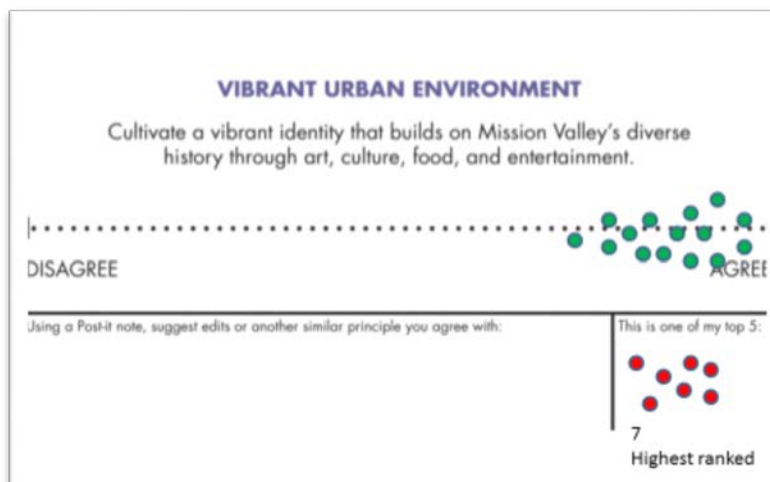


Figure 13. Poster showing levels of agreement with a proposed vision statement for a vibrant urban environment

Natural Systems and Restoration – Create a network of shaded sidewalks, paths, usable open spaces, and parks with strong and safe connection to the San Diego River (Figure 14).

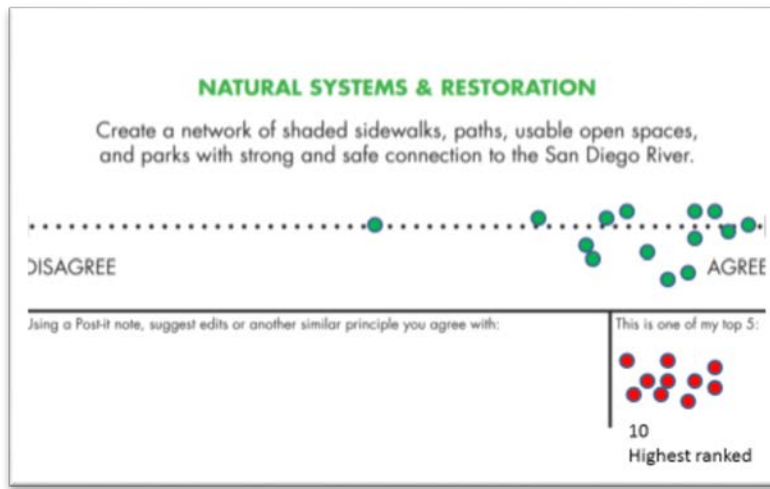


Figure 14. Poster showing levels of agreement with a proposed vision statement for natural systems and restoration

Sustainability – Establish Mission Valley as a model of environmental sustainability by promoting green building, encouraging energy and water conservation, preserving and restoring habitat, and protecting waterways to reduce its environmental footprint (Figure 15).

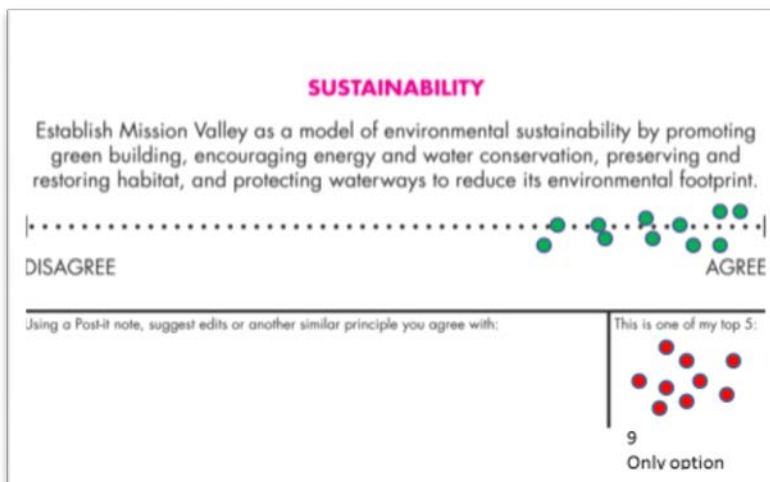


Figure 15. Poster showing levels of agreement with a proposed vision statement for sustainability

ACTIVITY 1 - NEIGHBORHOOD AREAS - OCTOBER WORKSHOP

There were 12 maps turned in at the end of the workshop, and the neighborhood boundaries drawn on them are relatively similar in shape and area, with some variations. Most people identified the Riverwalk Golf Course area on the west side as a neighborhood. The central district, which includes Fashion Valley and Mission Valley shopping centers, was roughly defined as a neighborhood, with some people breaking the central area up into several different neighborhoods based on the various shopping centers (Figure 16).

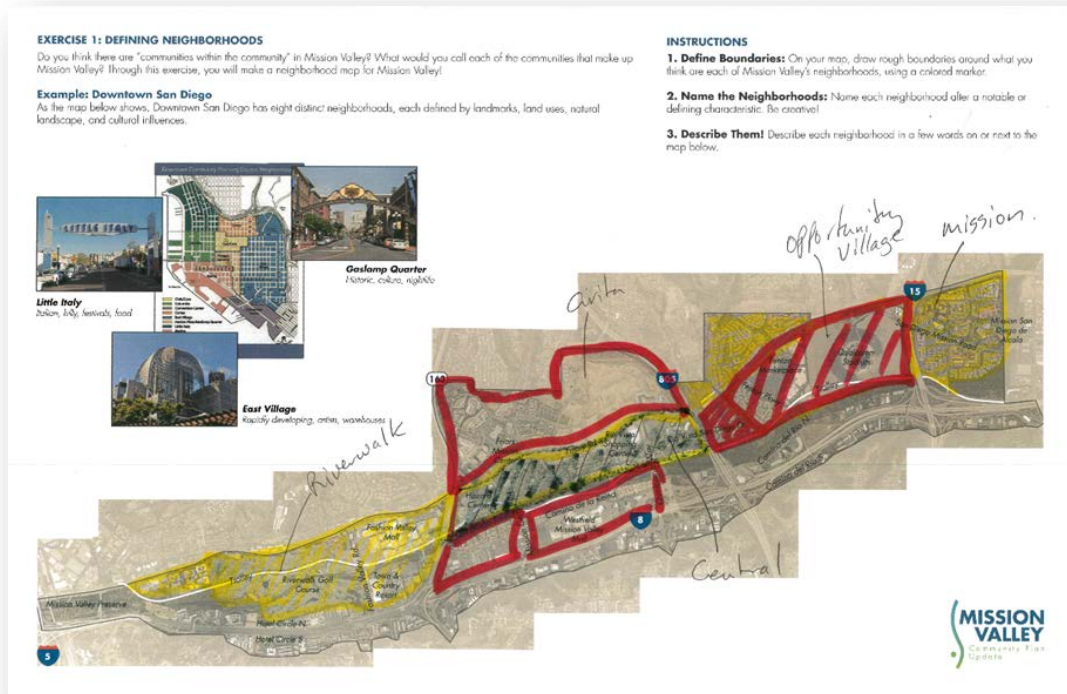


Figure 16. Activity showing a community member's conception of neighborhoods in Mission Valley

As far as the area south of the I-8, participants either did not circle it at all, separated the long stretch into two (2) or three (3) portions, or circled the whole stretch as one long neighborhood (Figure 17).

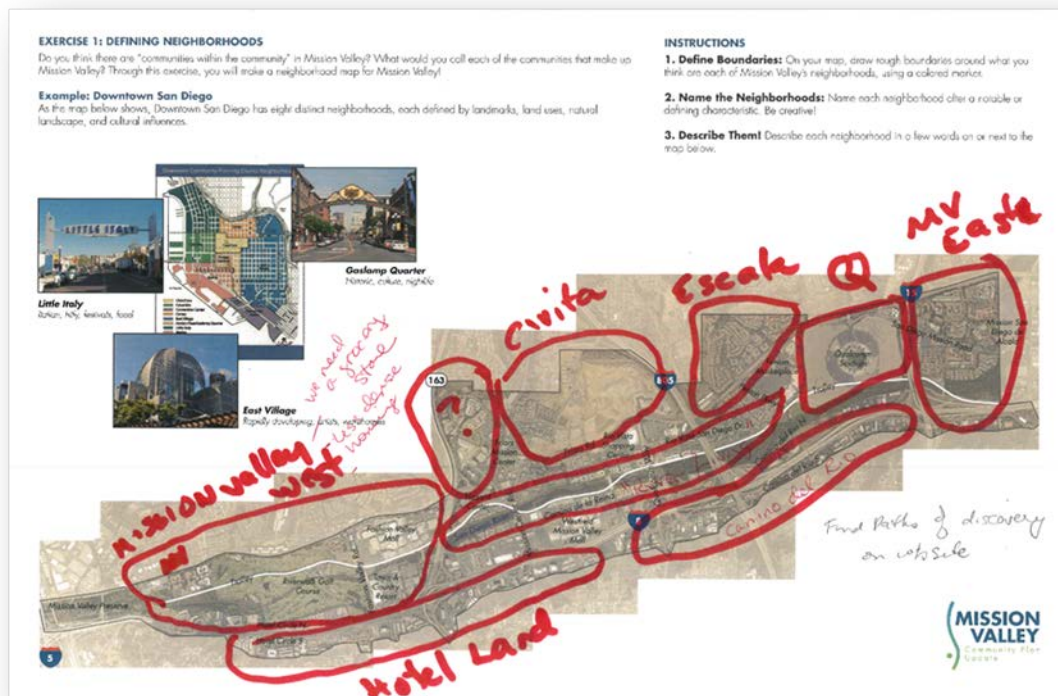


Figure 17. Activity showing a community member's conception of neighborhoods south of I-8 in Mission Valley

The new Civita development was largely seen as a neighborhood in and of itself. Further east, the Escala residential development and Fenton Marketplace area were often circled together into one neighborhood. Qualcomm Stadium, just east of Fenton Marketplace, was either left out of neighborhood areas, or was circled as its own district. Finally, the easternmost portion of Mission Valley, just east of I-15 near the Mission San Diego de Alcala, was defined as a neighborhood. All 12 variations of these neighborhood maps are included in Appendix E.

ACTIVITY 1 - NEIGHBORHOOD AREAS - SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

The neighborhood maps from the Subcommittee meeting looked very similar to the maps from the workshop participants. There were ten (10) neighborhood maps turned in at the end of the meeting, all with similar districts drawn and labelled, and approximately seven (7) districts on each map. Most defined Riverwalk Golf Course and the western presidio area as either one (1) or two (2) neighborhoods, which is similar to workshop participants. Moving east, most people in this group defined Fashion Valley, Mission Valley, and Hazard Center/Civita as three (3) separate neighborhoods with differing amenities and needs (Figure 18).

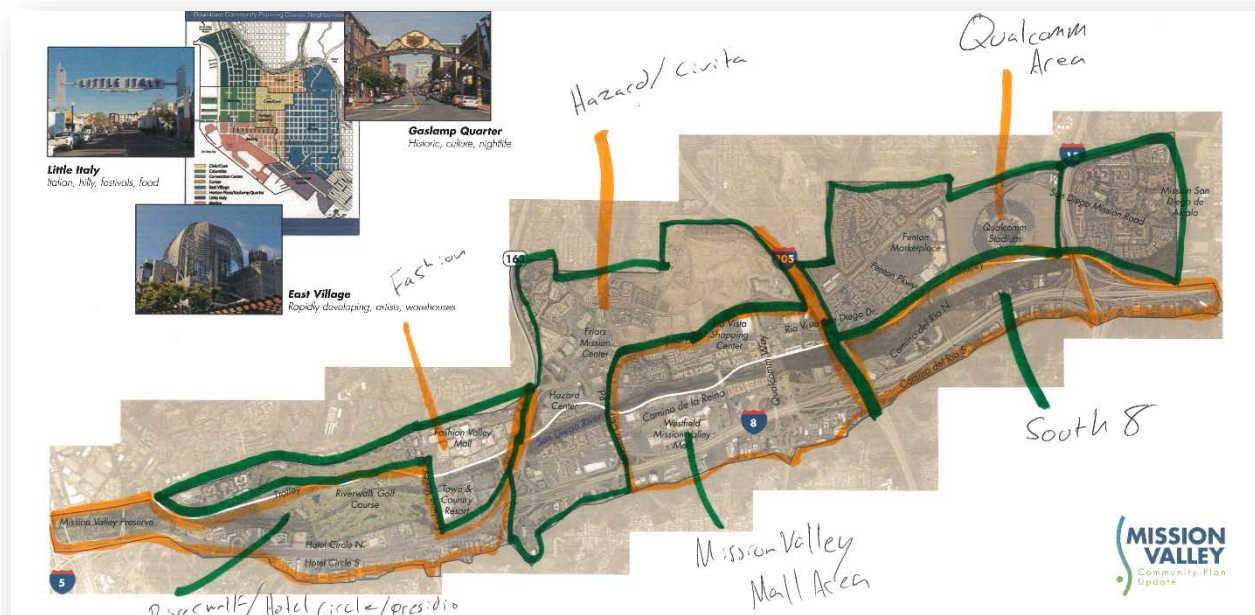


Figure 18. Activity showing a Subcommittee member's conception of neighborhoods in Mission Valley

The area south of the I-8 was either defined as one district, separated into one or two districts, or ignored altogether (Figure 19). East of the I-805, most participants identified the Fenton Marketplace and Escala area as one neighborhood. The Qualcomm Stadium site was either included in Fenton/Escala district, or defined as its own district. There were a few notes on the maps identifying possible uses for the Qualcomm site, including education and housing. The easternmost portion, near the Mission San Diego de Alcala, was largely defined as one neighborhood. All ten (10) neighborhood maps are included in Appendix D.

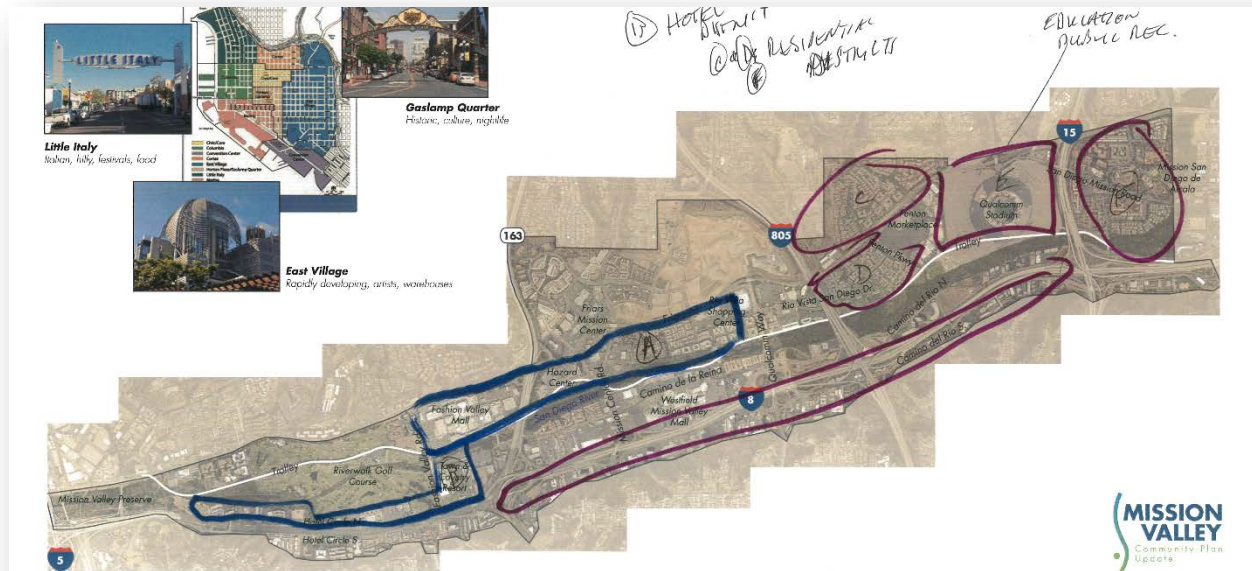


Figure 19. Activity showing a Subcommittee member's conception of neighborhoods south of I-8 in Mission Valley

ACTIVITY 2 – KEY CONNECTIONS – OCTOBER WORKSHOP

Understanding community members' experiences with physical barriers in Mission Valley is integral in helping concentrate the discussion around troubled areas and areas with potential for improvement. By working in small groups, participants marked up large maps of Mission Valley, indicating where they believe physical barriers exist. Photos of the final maps are located in Appendix F. One group marked all of Friars Road between 163 and I-5 by the Riverwalk Golf Course, as a physical barrier, because they felt that it does not promote a safe environment for pedestrians and bicyclists (Figure 20).



Figure 20. Community input showing that Friars Road between 163 and I-5 is a physical barrier to pedestrians and bicyclists

Another group identified the route between the River, Camino de la Reina, and the I-8, as a physical barrier with potential to be improved for better connectivity (Figure 21). They chose to put a “bridge and crossings” sticker along the River, which would connect the MTS Trolley station with the north side of the River. They also expressed a desire for a multi-use trail to connect the north and south sides of the River through to the I-8.

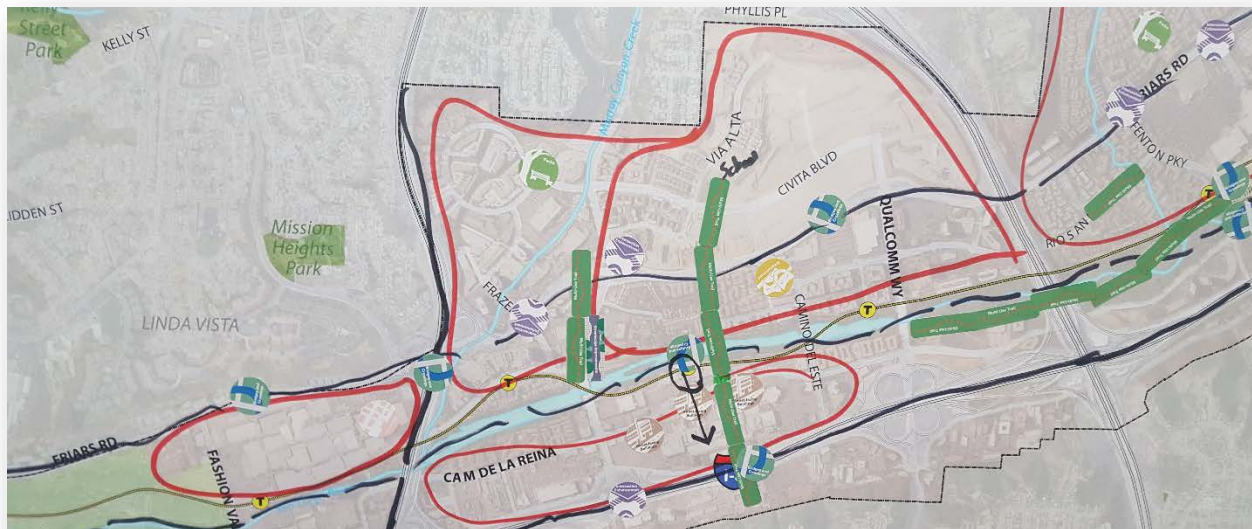


Figure 21. Input showing that more connections are needed across the River and that the River, Camino de la Reina and the I-8 serve as barriers

Additionally, the river was identified as a physical barrier, as it lacks north-south connectivity, and pedestrian and bicycle paths are not fully connected along the entire span of the river through Mission Valley. “Multi-use trail” stickers were used liberally on the maps, indicating the community’s desire for more pedestrian and bicycle friendly connections along the river. In other parts of Mission Valley, participants largely indicated that streetscape improvements are needed along Friars Road, Camino de la Reina and Qualcomm Way, to ensure safer connectivity (Figure 22).



Figure 22. Input showing need for multi-use trails and streetscape improvements

There was a strong consensus that several locations throughout Mission Valley can be enhanced with streetscape improvements, bike lanes, bridges, and trails, to make the community a more accessible and safe place.

ACTIVITY 2 - KEY CONNECTIONS - SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Three small groups at the MV CPUS meeting on December 4th worked on identifying barriers in Mission Valley, with similar results. I-8 was identified as a major barrier to safe north-south pedestrian, bicycle, and automobile travel as there are very few road connections available. Intersection enhancement and streetscape improvement stickers were used at certain points along the I-8 identifying specific opportunity areas (Figure 23) .



Figure 23. Input showing I-8 as a barrier and the need for interstate and streetscape improvements

One group included the stretch of Friars Road that runs under the I-805 as a major barrier, which they explained lacks safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities (Figure 24). At some point along the stretch of Friars Road between the Civita and Escala developments the sidewalk disappears, making it impossible to safely walk along the road. This group used streetscape improvement stickers along Friars Road to indicate the need for improved pedestrian and bicycle connections.



Figure 24. MV CPUS input that shows Friars Road under I-805 as a barrier to pedestrians and bicycles

Additionally, this group pointed out the lack of connection of Camino Del Rio S. near the SR 163/I-8 junction as problematic because it isolates the area west of the SR 163, which is home to several busy hotels. This group identified the need for intersection enhancements to help alleviate congestion and barriers in that area (Figure 25).



Figure 25. MV CPUS input that shows a need for intersection enhancements on Camino Del Rio South near the SR 163-I-8 junction

Another area of interest for improved connections was the Riverwalk Golf Course, specifically along the River. One group identified that, along with a multi-use trail, a bridge or crossing over the River would vastly improve the area for pedestrians and bicyclists (Figure 26).



Figure 26. MV CPUS input that shows a need for crossings and trails over and near the River

ACTIVITY 3 - COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS - COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

Based on feedback from the kickoff community workshop, it is clear that Mission Valley is in need of more complete communities, as opposed to separate neighborhoods lacking in services and amenities. Participants in this activity were challenged to build complete neighborhoods, indicating on the map where they see opportunities to enhance the options available in Mission Valley's neighborhoods (Figure 27).

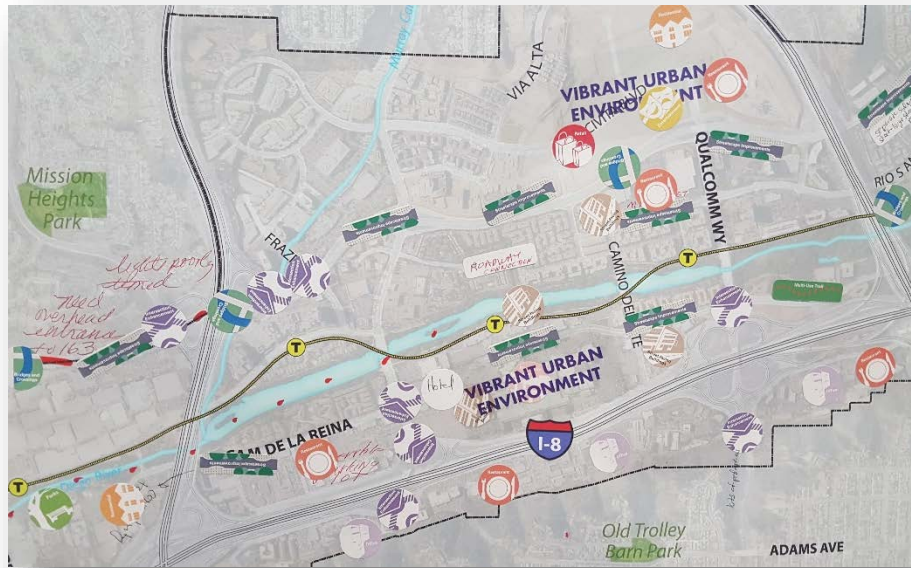


Figure 27. Sample map of items community members think are needed to make complete neighborhoods

The Camino de la Reina area south of the river was frequently identified as an opportunity area for a vibrant urban environment, with street-facing buildings, restaurants, entertainment, retail, and office uses. Additionally, the new Civita development was recognized as a possible new complete neighborhood, with retail, entertainment, and restaurants, along with streetscape improvements and connections to the adjacent shopping center (Figure 27).

The Qualcomm Stadium site was also marked as a potential area to build a vibrant urban environment and a balanced community, with retail, entertainment, mixed-use development, and parks (Figure 28).

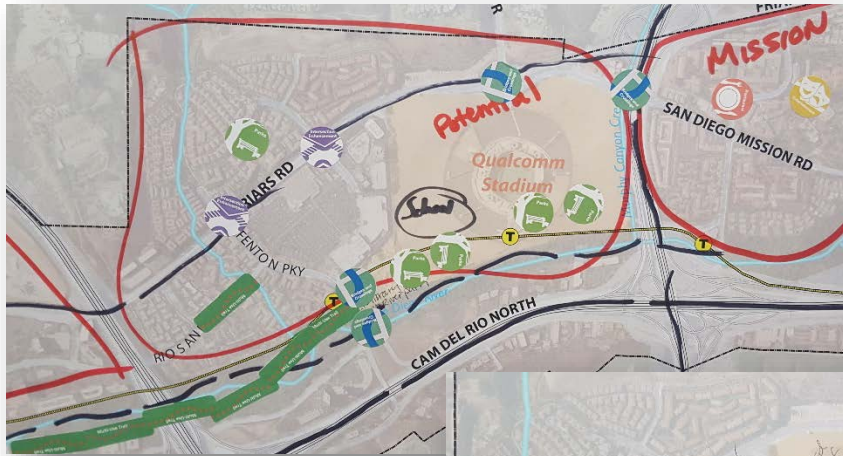


Figure 27. Images showing community input on the potential for the Qualcomm Stadium site



ACTIVITY 3 - COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS - SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

The Qualcomm Stadium site was similarly identified as an area of opportunity for the development of a complete neighborhood, with parks, entertainment, residential, office space, and retail and grocery stores. One group wrote that they would like to see the stadium site used by San Diego State University (SDSU) (Figure 28).

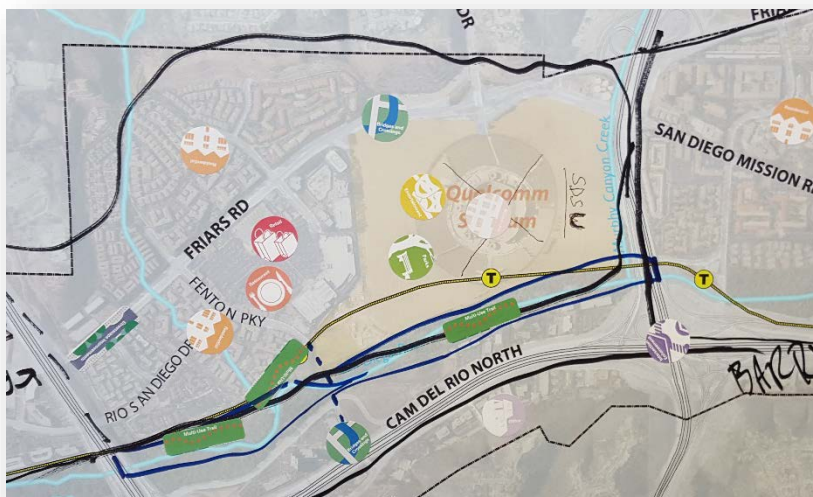


Figure 28. Image showing the desire to use the Qualcomm Stadium site for SDSU

The area surrounding Camino de la Reina was recognized as a good location for creating a vibrant urban environment, with retail, mixed-use, restaurants, grocery stores, and entertainment. With the help of intersection enhancements and streetscape improvements, Camino De La Reina has the potential to be a thriving “main street” environment, and a central area to the community (Figure 29).



Figure 29. Input showing potential for a “main street” environment near Camino de la Reina

The Riverwalk Golf Course was identified as being an opportunity area for creating a balanced community, and promoting natural systems and restoration (Figure 30). With the river running through, there is a great opportunity for multi-use trails and parks, possibly with a bridge or other crossing along the river to alleviate barriers. One group drew in a trolley stop on the golf course, and added a mix of uses around the trolley stop, hoping to create a vibrant urban environment in west Mission Valley where amenities are currently lacking.



Figure 30. Input showing the Riverwalk Golf Course as an opportunity area for creating a balanced community

The identification of these key areas in Mission Valley will help direct the CPU goals and policies towards the creation of balanced communities and vibrant urban areas where residents would like to see them. Photos of all table maps are located in Appendix F.

2.4 Reflections

This workshop helped hone in on the direction and vision the community wants to see in the updated Community Plan. Several residents expressed their concerns about the potential for over-development in the community, and the need for improved traffic management and more open space areas. The need for a balanced approach between land use and infrastructure was identified as a critical component of accommodating future growth.

3 Stakeholder Interviews

City Staff and consultants for the Community Plan Update interviewed representative land-owners, developers, agencies, and community organizations and businesses with a role in the Mission Valley community. The purpose of the meetings was to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to identify major issues, ideas, and concerns facing Mission Valley. Interviews were conducted on October 15, 21, and 22, 2015. A total of 40 individuals participated in 16 interview sessions. A list of interviewee names and organizations can be found in Appendix G.

Although all residents, employees, and visitors are “stakeholders” in the community’s long-term future, these initial meetings targeted individuals representing a diversity of interests and organizations to explore a range of issues and needs. The individual/small-group nature of these discussions enabled participants to be more candid and in-depth than they otherwise might be in a larger community forum. Moreover, discussions could be focused on the topics important to each individual.

The stakeholder meetings are one component of the larger community visioning process, which also includes regular meetings with MV CPUS, which was formed for the update process; workshops; a project website; and online engagement activities.

3.1 Vision

Strong and interrelated themes emerged when stakeholders were asked to describe their big-picture vision for Mission Valley. These themes are summarized below.

INCREASING MIX OF USES, WHILE REINFORCING REGIONAL COMMERCIAL ROLE

Mission Valley is located in the geographic center of San Diego and is San Diego’s premier shopping destination, and retail in Mission Valley remains exceptionally strong. Most major shopping center/mall owners are looking to re-invest in, reposition, and expand existing retail centers to respond to changing market needs. Participants also noted the continuation of hotel and office uses, which enjoy a strong presence in Mission Valley.

A majority of participants saw a need for new housing given the strong presence of jobs and transit. Additionally, stakeholders envision Mission Valley evolving into a community with a greater diversity and mix of uses, both at the community scale and in individual developments. Stakeholders also expressed the need to diversify housing types to attract a broader spectrum of residents, including families, millennials, and baby boomers. Some stakeholders linked the prevalence of retail and hotel jobs in Mission Valley to the opportunity to create a mixed-income community, where people who work could also find and afford a place to live. The nearby universities were also noted, with Mission Valley potentially being a good place for students and young people.

Participants envision additional parks and active recreation playgrounds, recreational paths along the San Diego River, schools, and neighborhood-oriented retail—potentially organized to promote creation of a new “Main Street”—as amenities for attracting new residents and fostering livable neighborhoods.

RIVER-FOCUSED COMMUNITY

The San Diego River is a unique asset in the region, and should serve as a key piece of Mission Valley’s future identity. An ecologically healthy river could be the symbol and the heart of the community. Many participants noted the need to clean the river, improve accessibility to it, build pedestrian and bicycle paths along the entire extent of the river, and orient development to the river. Participants mentioned the need to maintain and enhance biological resources and address flooding issues (see later). While some advocated for active uses, such as cafés and restaurants, fronting the river, the need to protect habitats and create wider buffers between development and the river was emphasized by others.

ORIENTATION TO TRANSIT, AND ENHANCED WALKING AND BIKING OPTIONS

The Green Line of the Trolley began serving Mission Valley only ten years ago, and land uses are currently not designed or planned to take full advantage of transit. Mission Valley’s evolution as a freeway-oriented commercial center, lack of through street connections, topography, major freeways and heavily traveled local roads, the San Diego River, and dispersed land uses all create challenges to traversing the community on foot. Participants recognized a need to link new development occurring on today’s surface parking lots, older commercial sites, and other obsolete uses to foster creation of denser, walkable development, linked to transit. A shuttle system/circulator, and potentially an aerial tramway that can “bridge” the significant east-west infrastructure barriers in the community were seen as complementary enhancements to the Trolley.

Community members also envisioned a strong emphasis on new pedestrian and bikeway connections—to the Trolley and the river, and linking neighborhoods and employment centers—and safe and comfortable pedestrian and bicyclist paths as key components of the future Mission Valley. They also saw connections in the form of bridges across the San Diego River or underpasses along the freeways where feasible to improve north-south connectivity.

FOSTERING IDENTITY AND MAKING A “GREAT PLACE”

Finally, many comments linked the three preceding themes to describe a high-quality environment that fully responds to and capitalizes on its context. Participants saw portions of Mission Valley developing as more “urban” in character rather than the prevailing suburban pattern – with increased densities, mix of uses, walkability, and more frequent streets/gridded development. Key features of the setting include the confluence of freeways; the Trolley line; the hillsides and canyons; the Riverwalk and Qualcomm Stadium sites; and above all, the San Diego River. Stakeholders saw the opportunity for future development to be concentrated around Trolley stations, to be oriented to the river while enhancing its

natural conditions, to maintain view corridors to the hills, and to be linked with a system of streets, trails, and parks, and improved streetscapes that promote identity and provide shade and comfort to pedestrians.

3.2 Challenges

Stakeholders identified several challenges, including circulation, flooding, maintaining a diverse mix of uses, uncertainty about key sites, and homelessness. These challenges were described in terms of both existing conditions (e.g., congestion), and how to fund and achieve improvements. Discussions about how to address these challenges are covered in the Sections 3.3 to 3.7.

CIRCULATION

Mission Valley was described as being congested, particularly on weekends and in the north-south direction, partly because of the limited circulation network and routing options. Traffic conditions in the area around Mission Center Road, I-8 and Camino de la Reina were seen as especially challenging. People discussed the need to widen or improve certain interchanges, encourage better use of the Trolley, establish shuttle systems or other ways of moving around the valley, improve conditions for pedestrians, and create needed transportation links across the river. Some people had safety concerns for pedestrians or noted the poor condition of the roads. Additionally, while Mission Valley is transit rich, it has a huge “last mile” problem. Many Trolley stations are adjacent to the San Diego River, making the station inaccessible to those within a quarter-mile but on the “wrong side” of the river. Connections from residential to transit, such as pedestrian bridges over the river, need to be made.

FLOODING

Flooding was also pointed out as a challenge. While the segment of the river between State Route (SR) 163 and Qualcomm Way has been improved and maintained as part of the First San Diego River Improvement Project (FSDRIP), the reaches above and below are squeezed by existing development and do not have adequate channel capacity to handle flooding. There is a need to identify a strategy to improve the river and floodway in these areas.

GENERATING A DIVERSE MIX OF USES AND AN AUTHENTIC CHARACTER

Owners of vacant sites and several others with surface parking or other infill opportunities are looking to the Community Plan to greenlight residential development on their parcels. Generating a mix of uses on sites, and even more so in individual buildings, is challenging given the current market push for housing. While people desire urban experience, and restaurants, retail environments, and public spaces that feel authentic, achieving design diversity and “authentic” urban character is challenging in an environment with large sites and large-scale commercial property owners, as compared to in a neighborhood with smaller parcels and more incremental development.

UNCERTAINTY ABOUT KEY SITES

Some participants identified the Qualcomm Stadium site and the Riverwalk site as the two linchpins at the east and west ends of the Valley. They noted that it is difficult to develop a clear plan for the community as a whole when the future of those key sites remains uncertain.

HOMELESSNESS

Some stakeholders described homelessness as a big problem in Mission Valley, noting that homeless people are drawn by a combination of being pushed out of downtown by development, access by the Trolley, and the river, which affords isolated and secure places to camp. The homeless population has been a challenge for retail tenants, and has contributed to a perception that it is not safe to walk along the river trail, especially at night. The need to remove overgrowth, clean up trash, and enforce regulations was cited.

3.3 Land Use and Development

While each interview was a distinct conversation focused on areas of greatest interest or expertise, many interviews touched on the same themes. Information related to land use and development are summarized below.

RETAIL AND RESTAURANTS

Stakeholders described the retail market in Mission Valley as strong, and tended to emphasize the need to maintain and evolve the shopping centers with changing consumer tastes and preferences. Retail property owners described the importance of chains in anchoring properties and bringing walking traffic to local stores. While online shopping was recognized as a force, one stakeholder emphasized that the great majority of shopping continues to be done in physical stores, with some segments—“mini major” retailers—especially strong. Other segments were seen as having potential obsolescence, and some property owners anticipated shifting away from retail on their sites over time. The market for restaurants in Mission Valley was described as a “mixed bag” – restaurateurs prefer vibrant neighborhood scenes (Gaslamp, North Park, South Park, Ocean Beach), but there is potential for Mission Valley to accommodate second locations for successful local restaurants. There is also an opportunity to create a distinctive scene in Mission Valley, potentially based on the river as an amenity. Some critical issues with retail design were discussed, as follows.

Site Design

Visibility of and access to sites were described as key factors in the success of retail businesses. Ingress and egress; exposure to traffic; signage; and synergy between users were all mentioned. Predictability was also noted as an important factor: tenants sign leases based on existing conditions, and don’t expect those conditions to change. This needs to be

taken into consideration when we think about adding bike lanes or otherwise changing the profile of roadways. On the other hand, some planning improvements would address existing problems. Stakeholders noted the lack of access from Civita to existing retail on the south side of Friars Road, and the limited connection between Fenton Marketplace and the residential development north of Friars Road.

Parking Alternatives

Stakeholders and the planning team discussed the potential for alternatives for proprietary parking for restaurants, as part of creating a more urban character in Mission Valley, with mixed-use development replacing parking lots. Paid parking was viewed as something young people will accept but older people are not. Time limits in public lots designed to create turnover were viewed favorably. Shared parking between office and restaurants uses was seen as having potential. With public or shared parking, good signage and visibility were seen as critical.

Building on Unique Character

One stakeholder proposed that Mission Valley has great potential from a restaurant standpoint if an active riverfront area can be created. Customers like being next to the water, and seek unique destinations. A restaurant row along the river could be feature a tree canopy, landscaping, outdoor dining, and a promenade. This setting would also favor local restaurants, allowing Mission Valley to broaden beyond its Mall-based chains. The Mission was also noted as a distinctive feature, whose character could support nearby restaurants. San Antonio's Riverwalk and Santa Monica's 3rd Street were pointed to as models.

Restaurants in a Mixed Use Setting

Stakeholders acknowledged that there can be tension between what restaurants want—for example, having a patio open until 10 or 11pm—and what residents in upper story apartments or adjacent buildings would want. These need to be considered both in planning the land use pattern and in bylaws and lease agreements.

AUTO DEALERS

Representatives of four auto dealerships in Mission Valley spoke with the planning team and discussed their current property tenure, long-term vision for their businesses, and concerns about Mission Valley.

Mission Valley Location

Mission Valley provides great exposure to customers, being at the center of the region and along major freeways. However, it has experienced a decline in the number of dealerships, and is no longer seen as “the place to be” for selling or buying cars. This puts it at a competitive disadvantage to Kearny Mesa in particular.

Traffic congestion was pointed to as a significant problem. Dealers were concerned that customers will avoid Mission Valley if congestion becomes worse; conditions around the holidays are already a “nightmare.” Stakeholders brought up specific concerns about cars parking along Camino del Rio South and behind the Westfield Mission Valley Shopping Center, blocking traffic lanes.

Consolidating South of I-8

Auto dealer representatives were asked if they would support planning changes that would help them consolidate along the south side of I-8, where an auto row could be created. In general, the stakeholders preferred to maintain land use flexibility on their sites, pointing out that the market would continue to change. If they were able to purchase land south of I-8 without tax penalties, the concept could work.

Prospects for Sites in Mission Valley

Owners of some retail sites in Mission Valley stated their plans to make improvements to existing commercial buildings. Often, this may be part of a longer-term vision for moving toward higher-intensity mixed-use development. The addition of grocery stores and neighborhood-serving retail to regionally-oriented centers was discussed, as were the addition of hotels, entertainment, and restaurants.

HOTEL AND TOURISM BUSINESSES

Representatives of Mission Valley hotel operators reported that Mission Valley has a generally stable hotel market. Supply of hotel rooms is not expected to grow substantially, but rates are expected to increase with a shift toward more corporate and government travelers. Stakeholders discussed opportunities to enhance conditions for tourism-related businesses.

Access to Amenities

Hotel representatives stated that Mission Valley is known for mid-range hotel properties catering to families who want access to the beach and attractions. Mid-price business travelers will be a growing part of the clientele. To support these niches, the Plan should aim to create linkages to the Trolley, the airport, and attractions such as the beach and the zoo. Today, the I-8 freeway and other barriers make it difficult for Mission Valley hotel visitors to get to the Trolley or other nearby amenities. Hotel representatives shared a vision for a central spine of walkable development along the Trolley line and the river, including hotels at a range of price points.

Unique Experiences

Hotel operators noted that “the way people travel today is different.” Younger travelers in particular are looking for “unique experiences” provided by boutique hotels like the Pearl. This is a challenge for Mission Valley, which has a more mainstream character. However, Town and Country is aiming to become more of a destination hotel. There are other

independently-operated motor court hotels in Mission Valley that also have the potential to benefit, though this would be easier for those with 60 to 100 rooms than for those with fewer than 60 rooms.

OFFICE DEVELOPMENT

Representatives of office properties and others characterized Mission Valley's office market as generally static overall. Tenants include real estate brokerages, financial companies, and defense and information technology services. Stakeholders pointed out that Mission Valley may not be competitive for law offices or corporate campuses. However, office buildings in Mission Valley could be well-suited to the evolution toward more flexible leasing arrangements favored by small companies in biotech or other fields, and will continue to be a good location for the types of tenants there now because of proximity to SPAWAR and convenience for employees.

Mixed Use Environment

Stakeholders felt that Mission Valley's office sector would benefit from the development of a vibrant, mixed-use character where people can live, work and play. The Trolley is an important asset. One stakeholder felt that the Qualcomm Stadium site, if it changes use, could become a great hub for the region similar to LA Live or Century Center in Los Angeles. A more attractive Mission Valley environment would help bring businesses in the Midway area in particular, who want to be near SPAWAR but would otherwise prefer another location.

Prospects for Sites in Mission Valley

Representatives of one office cluster reported interest in creating a mix of uses that could include retail, education, and residential. An amendment has been initiated to the Levi-Cushman/Riverwalk Specific Plan that would reduce the amount of office and add more residential. The Union-Tribune building, meanwhile, could be preserved as an office building as residential is added to the site.

MULTIFAMILY DEVELOPMENT

Stakeholders agreed that there is a strong market for housing in Mission Valley. New multifamily housing with high-quality amenities is embraced by young singles and, to an increasing extent, families. Older housing in the community provides a more affordable stock. Mission Valley has larger and less expensive rental units than Downtown. Discussions of building types, parking configurations, and models for creating affordability are discussed below.

Density and Building Types

Stakeholders reported that the current relationship between housing demand and development costs supports wood-frame over two stories of slab-on-grade concrete construction, including parking. In Mission Valley, it is the market and not height limits that

keep buildings at this scale. One person said that larger-scale buildings with 3 or 4 stories of concrete and 5 stories above are beginning to be viable, and that “Texas Wrap” buildings with residential around parking structures was also well-suited to Mission Valley because of the large sites and in some cases flood zone issues. Some stakeholders felt that eventually tower construction will become the model.

Parking for Residential Development

One developer representative reported that Mission Valley residents often come with multiple cars, even if they want to be able to live a more urban lifestyle. This means that this level of parking still needs to be accommodated currently in order to attract tenants or buyers, and in order to get financing. The stakeholder noted that maximum parking allowances could kill projects.

Affordable Housing Strategies

Access to Transit and Jobs

Stakeholders in the affordable housing arena pointed out that Mission Valley’s great advantage in getting funds for affordable housing is the access to transit. Funding is available for projects within one-half mile of transit stations, and projects that promote transportation alternatives and reduce greenhouse gases earn points in the tax credit allocation process. Further, transportation improvements that improve connectivity to affordable housing may be eligible for Housing and Community Development (HCD) funds. Mission Valley is at a disadvantage for State funding in that it is not considered a disadvantaged community. However, there may be an opportunity to make a clear case that the jobs/housing balance in Mission Valley reduces congestion and access to jobs.

Density Bonuses and Parking Reductions

Stakeholders also said that we need to look at how density bonuses can be used more effectively as a tool to create affordable housing. Meanwhile the new SB 744 prohibits local jurisdictions from requiring more than 0.5 parking spaces per bedroom on a development that includes a specified proportion of low-income units and is located within a half-mile of a transit stop. Stakeholders felt that this could help bring more affordable units into the mix in Mission Valley.

Opportunities on Large Sites

Affordable housing stakeholders also proposed that the presence of large sites in Mission Valley provided opportunities to “aggregate” affordable housing. Developing large sites is more economical than developing small, fragmented sites, and developing affordable housing only is easier than developing mixed-income housing given the different financing mechanisms and holding periods typical for these two forms. Stakeholders suggested that the Community Plan could identify specific sites (e.g., sites that are close to transit and services) for affordable housing, helping make them competitive for funding.

Publicly-Owned Land

The Plan could identify publicly-owned sites in Mission Valley which could be disposed of, paired with funding sources, and conveyed at a low cost. Another idea was to identify sites south of I-8, which are best-suited to auto-oriented development, and promote the transfer of auto-oriented public land uses on highly-valued sites outside the community. The DMV in Hillcrest, the Corporation Yard in Golden Hill, the Post Office sorting facility, and the School District building in University Heights were identified as candidates. Stakeholders pointed to AB 2135's requirement that surplus public land be made available for affordable housing.

Prospects for Sites in Mission Valley

Property owners of multiple sites currently occupied by commercial and/or office development reported that they are interested in developing multifamily residential or mixed-use buildings in the future. Property owners talked about moving in phases, first making improvements to existing shopping center buildings, and second, building 3 to 6 stories with podium parking and residential, at 60 to 100 units per acre. In some cases, existing commercial buildings would be demolished to make way for new development; in other cases, new development would be added on. This would help make redevelopment work in the context of existing leases and replacement schedules. Developers were supportive of including pedestrian-oriented amenities and designing sites to promote access to transit and open spaces. Developers would be interested in taller buildings and higher density of the market and construction costs supported that.

3.4 Transportation

The discussion of transportation was a frequent discussion topic among stakeholders. The information below details the common points of view that were shared.

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE ROADWAY NETWORK

Stakeholders identified specific intersections and interchanges in Mission Valley that need improvements for traffic flow and/or safety. These included the I-8/Mission Center Road interchange; the SR 163/Friars Road interchange; and the intersection of Friars and Frazee roads. Other critical potential roadway links were also noted: Milly Way Bridge (Fenton Parkway); a Via las Cumbres connection to I-8 through a future development on the Riverwalk site; the extension of Hazard Center Drive under SR 163; and the proposed connection between the Civita development and Phyllis Place in Serra Mesa. Land owner representatives wanted to make sure they would not be expected to fund improvements beyond those that reflect project needs. Some property owners were also concerned about the impacts of potential roadway widening on their properties.

River Crossings

Stakeholders stated that it will be difficult to get new river crossings permitted for environmental reasons. Some indicated that they supported additional pedestrian crossings

but not additional crossings for vehicles. For vehicles, these stakeholders preferred to focus on improving the existing low-flow “Arizona” crossings that are susceptible to flooding. Additional pedestrian/bike crossings were pointed out as an opportunity to enhance access to the Trolley stations from new high-density development along the community’s central river/Trolley spine.

Connectivity and Accessibility

Several stakeholders made the case that a more connective grid in Mission Valley was a vital component to creating a high-density, walkable urban environment. However, some stakeholders said that requiring new streets would be impractical from a development point of view, and that it would be better to enhance connectivity with pedestrian connections and view corridors. Others focused on the need to make a transportation system that works for everyone, including children and the elderly.

ADDITIONAL TRANSIT IN MISSION VALLEY

Additional transit services such as a streetcar, bus or shuttle in Mission Valley were discussed. Stakeholders were generally supportive of these concepts, and felt that the community’s long, narrow geography made it particularly suited to a “circulator” system. Some felt that the Trolley has a “first and last mile problem,” with limited transit or street connections between Trolley stations and destinations. One voiced concern about how a streetcar would affect traffic operations; another considered ways of giving a transit vehicle priority over other traffic on mixed roadways. A shuttle service is currently being planned for the Civita neighborhood, and various stakeholders said they would be interested in participating in a shared shuttle service if a funding mechanism made sense. One person pointed to the UTC Community Plan, which establishes a policy requiring—as a condition of approval—that developers not oppose and would participate in a communitywide loop shuttle.

AERIAL TRAM

The idea of an aerial tram or trams connecting Mission Valley with destinations and neighborhoods on the rim was also discussed. Stakeholders were generally interested in this idea, recognizing the need for more details before having an opinion. Environmental advocates pointed out that such a system should not have support poles in the river. Land owners pointed out that there are “great demographics” on the mesa that could be good for Mission Valley retail.

CAR AND BIKE SHARING

Some stakeholders discussed the potential of car and bike sharing in Mission Valley, and were supportive, while not seeing this as a critical transportation solution.

3.5 Parks and River Enhancement

Many participants recognize the importance of both the San Diego River and the opportunities within Mission Valley for spaces for both recreation and open space. The following topics encapsulate ideas that were shared by stakeholders.

SAN DIEGO RIVER CORRIDOR

People were in broad agreement that the river is a great potential amenity for Mission Valley. Stakeholders close to the San Diego River Park Master Plan (RPMP) argued that the RPMP's River Corridor is the "minimum necessary" to accommodate the river, a riparian corridor, and a parallel pathway. They felt that the 35-foot buffer along the floodway is what was negotiated in the Plan; 50 feet would be better, and the Community Plan Update should ensure that future development does not further "squeeze" the river corridor. One stakeholder pointed out that while the required setbacks and public parkland along the river had cost parking spaces for his client's project, the resulting park and access to the larger river park corridor will be a valuable amenity. Setbacks beyond the minimum could be ensured by:

- Allowing the river park to count as a "park equivalency," so that developers could get credit;
- Using Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) to allow for greater intensity and height in exchange for backing away from the river; and
- Public-private partnership between developers and the San Diego River Park Foundation, the San Diego River Conservancy or others to make park improvements and resource enhancements.

The quality of the river corridor and the relationship between the river and the trail was also discussed. One stakeholder felt that the First San Diego River Improvement Project (FSDRIP) had not taken visibility into consideration and had allowed vegetation to block views from the trail to the river. The Discovery Center was pointed out as a model for how the River Park should engage with the river.

POTENTIAL PARK SITES

Three sites were identified as the key opportunities to create larger-scale parks along the river. First, at the Qualcomm Stadium site, stakeholders pointed out that the EIR calls for a 30-acre community park and an additional 4-acre river park. There were questions about how this meshes with the Facilities Financing Plan's identification of a 20-acre future park, and criticism that the EIR did not adequately account for wetlands and wetland buffers in its park land calculation, noting that 44 acres would be a more appropriate size. Park advocates were hopeful that the EIR would help jump start the process of achieving a "destination" park on the river that would be a great asset for the community.

Second, some stakeholders stated that land south of the river on the Riverwalk site is susceptible to flooding, and that the Community Plan Update was an opportunity to work with property owners to shift development capacity within that site in order to “make the river whole” and create a park.

One stakeholder suggested that a creative solution for a third park site would be to foster collaboration between the owners of the Westfield Mission Valley Mall and the Park Valley Center site such that development rights would be shifted and a park could be created along the river at this location.

Other Park Opportunities

A few other park ideas were also floated by stakeholders. These included:

- A freeway lid connecting Sefton Field with Presidio Park;
- A park/trail corridor adjacent to Mission Valley Preserve made possible by the closure of the western end of Friars Road; and
- A small park in the neighborhood east of I-15 that may otherwise be neglected by the Plan Update.

TRAIL SYSTEM

Stakeholders supported a trail network in Mission Valley that would highlight the river, its tributaries and canyons, and connect Mission Valley with adjacent communities. The River Conservancy’s trail assessment found that there are limited opportunities to do trails down from adjacent mesas due to ownership and grade constraints. A comprehensive trail system along the river corridor, including signage, access points, and public spaces with good visibility, would help to improve safety; a maintenance assessment district was proposed.

INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE AND PUBLIC ART

River Park advocates expressed the potential for interpretive signage and art along the river trails. Art and information displays could be used to educate and tell thematic stories, with themes such as history, ecology, and water treatment. The San Diego River Park Foundation proposed that the Community Plan should have a comprehensive public art strategy, to help create a strong identity and reinforce that along the Trolley and River corridors.

WATER FEATURES AND RECREATION

San Diego River Park representatives are interested in opportunities to enliven the river with features such as duck ponds and fountains. They stated that water recreation is not currently compatible with resource protection, but that it may be possible to accommodate in the future.

3.6 Environmental Resources

Conservation and enhancement of the natural environment was seen as an important component of a future plan for Mission Valley. Ideas that were discussed to protect environmental resources are presented below.

HABITAT PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT

Environmental advocates expressed concern about water quality and the viability of habitat along the river corridor. They emphasized the need for a wider buffer where possible, and the removal of invasive species like crabgrass, arundo, palm, and eucalyptus. Stakeholders also suggested that the new Stormwater Permit would allow for a valley-wide mitigation strategy that developers could buy into, which could result in more coordinated improvements.

WILDLIFE MOVEMENT

Advocates also pointed to the need for wildlife movement corridors between the river and the canyons. Murphy Canyon was identified as a critical link which could be endangered by development and/or lighting from a future Stadium, but could also be enhanced as part of redevelopment of the Stadium site.

FLOOD CONTROL/CHANNEL IMPROVEMENTS

Flooding along the San Diego River was recognized as an important issue in Mission Valley. Stakeholders recommended that the Community Plan Update undertake detailed analysis of prior flooding, and look at potential Sea Level Rise models. Strategies for reducing flooding that stakeholders identified included:

- Ensuring that stormwater from other communities is not “dumped” into the river;
- Ensuring an adequate floodway with no encroaching development;
- Creating retention ponds to slow runoff;
- Opening up the bottleneck in the river between Fashion Valley Road and SR 163;
- Identifying funding for the flood control facility identified in the current Facilities Financing Plan.

SOLAR ENERGY PRODUCTION

One stakeholder suggested that the Community Plan Update could promote “distributed energy” production by requiring or incentivizing rooftop solar. Large developments with roof expanses such as the malls may be able to use the energy on-site.

3.7 Financing Public Improvements

Stakeholders were very aware of the challenge of financing the many public facility needs in Mission Valley, from roads to pedestrian bridges to transit to parks to flood control facilities to affordable housing. Stakeholders agreed that there should be a way to better capture and pool funds to pay for needed infrastructure improvements. Discussions of existing and potential financing strategies are summarized here.

DEVELOPMENT IMPACT FEES (DIF)

Stakeholders wanted to understand how the DIF funds that have been raised by development have been spent. For example, a percentage of the DIF was allocated to parks, but no parks have been created. Others pointed out that developer fees are built into the cost of projects, contributing to developer choices to produce “luxury” housing at higher price points.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES DISTRICT (CFD)

The Mello-Roos Community Facilities Act of 1982 allows for the formation of a special district (a CFD) within which a property tax surcharge may be applied to pay for a defined program of improvements. Two-thirds of property owners within the district must vote in favor of district formation. Stakeholders noted this as a potential funding mechanism for infrastructure, a shared shuttle, tourism marketing, or other purposes. One pointed out that developers should be required to support such a district as a condition of approval so that costs are fairly shared. Another was concerned that the structure would need to fairly distribute funding burdens.

ENHANCED INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCING DISTRICT (EIFD)

The EIFD mechanism was established in California in 2014 as a new way to do tax increment financing in the absence of the Redevelopment program. A city may establish an EIFD district within which the incremental growth of property taxes may be combined with other funding sources and used for a variety of projects. A hearings process is provided, but no local vote is required. School taxes must be excluded. Stakeholders were interested in the idea of establishing an EIFD. Because it is a new mechanism, there was limited input.

GRANTS

One stakeholder pointed to the \$17 million bond for water improvements passed as Proposition 1 as a potential funding source for river crossings. The City could work with the San Diego River Conservancy and other partners to leverage matching funds. Other grant sources may be available for other specific improvements within the community.

4 Design and Planning Professionals Workshop

4.1 Workshop Overview

The Design Professionals Workshop was held on Friday, February 12, 2016 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the San Diego Concourse, Silver Room. Members of the planning and design professional community from both the public and private sector were invited to share their ideas for a future Mission Valley. Attendees included both seasoned and new professionals with varying levels of experience and expertise. To promote the event, City staff reached out to organizational leaders of the following organizations to help promote the details of the workshop to their membership. Contacted organizations and groups included:

- American Institute Architects (AIA)
- American Planning Association (APA)
- American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)
- Citizens Coordinate for Century 3 (C3)
- Urban Land Institute (ULI)
- Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS)
- San Diego State University – Masters of City Planning Program (MCP) Professors
- Mission Valley Planning Group (MV PG) and Community Plan Update Subcommittee (MV CPUS)
- Mission Valley Community Plan Update stakeholders interest email list

Additionally, the workshop was publicized in the MV CPUS meetings. The workshop flier is presented as Appendix H.

OBJECTIVES

Prior and since project initiation, many individual design professionals reached out to city staff expressing a desire to share ideas for Mission Valley in recognition of its value as a regional asset. Phase 2 of the outreach program became a natural fit for this input with the focus on visioning. The purpose of the meeting was to gain insights from design professionals on the core components of the future plan including land use and intensity, mobility and connectivity, and urban design.

AGENDA: PRESENTATION

Project Manager, Nancy Graham, led the workshop, which began with a presentation on the existing conditions and critical issues the community is facing (Figure 31). Also included were options to improve the overall quality of life of Mission Valley. The issues discussed included:

- Fostering coherent, interconnected neighborhoods
- Promoting connections across physical and natural barriers

- Need for a “main street”
- Opportunities for an interconnected park and open space system
- Maintaining the vitality of retail in Mission Valley
- Prospects for future office development
- Opportunities on large sites
- Appropriate land uses south of I-8
- Enhancing access to the trolley
- Improving bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure
- Prospects for aerial tram connections
- Community circulator bus service
- Strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Opportunities for urban agriculture
- Opportunities to grow the tree canopy

The full PowerPoint presentation is included in Appendix I.



Figure 31. Slides from the design and planning professionals workshop presentation

In addition to the presentation, the Mission Valley Existing Conditions Map Atlas Report was made available for participants to review. The map atlas provided a visual guide of the current condition, context, and constraints in Mission Valley. The report covers an overview of Mission Valley including land-use, urban form, transportation, historic context, and archaeology. The full Mission Valley Existing Conditions Map Atlas Report can be found on the [project website](#).

ACTIVITY 1 - LAND USES

In the first activity, attendees were presented with maps of three (3) printed sections of Mission Valley - West, Central, and East. The maps were divided and placed on the front table of the room, allowing people the chance to focus on parts of Mission Valley in a small, intimate group setting. Along with the maps, attendees were given tracing paper; different types of pens, markers and highlighters; and design specific stickers. The stickers focused on

residential, industrial, retail, office, mixed-use, restaurant, parks, and entertainment uses. Collaboration between attendees and city staff was highly encouraged as community members used the tools to share their vision for a future Mission Valley.

ACTIVITY 2 - CONNECTING NEIGHBORHOODS

A large, full printed map of Mission Valley was placed on the back room table to be used as the second activity of neighborhood connectivity (Figure 32). The activity consisted of a tabletop exercise, where community professionals were given stickers that represent potential connectivity options, as well as colored pen/markers. The stickers focused on streetscape improvements, multi-use trails, intersection enhancements, bridges and crossings, and street-facing buildings. Attendees were able to walk around the large table and place their idea(s) directly on the map. The activity was designed to gather information on a larger scope of connectivity within and around the community. A full table of general and site specific comments is included in Section 4.2, Activity 2.



Figure 32. Attendees provide input on neighborhood connectivity

ACTIVITY 3 – POLICY IDEAS

Potential policy ideas for the future Mission Valley were presented to the community professionals for evaluation (Figure 33). For each policy topic, attendees were provided post-it notes to draft a policy or provide key ideas, and place those ideas for others to build on. Furthermore, red (Disagree) and green (Agree) stickers were provided to allow people to indicate their support or opposition to the ideas. The policy topics were as follows:

- Define appropriate heights and intensities
- Encourage mixed-use and transit-oriented development
- Connect to surrounding communities
- Transition from auto-oriented environment
- Promote urban forestry
- Improve the bike and pedestrian experience
- Foster a tech and innovation economy
- Cultivate nightlife and entertainment
- Balance regional center identity with creating a locally-focused community



Figure 33. Policy on which design and planning professionals provided input

4.2 Workshop Results

A significant amount of input was collected primarily on large scale maps. The following sections provide some snapshots of the ideas collected, as well as each key themes for each activity.

ACTIVITY 1 - WESTERN MISSION VALLEY

Key themes included:

- Opportunity to increase tree canopy through street trees on Friars Road
- Need for quiet zones to block freeway noise (Figure 34)
- Increase interconnection within the community
- Mixed-use and parks on the golf course
- Connection enhancements including pedestrian bridges and crossings

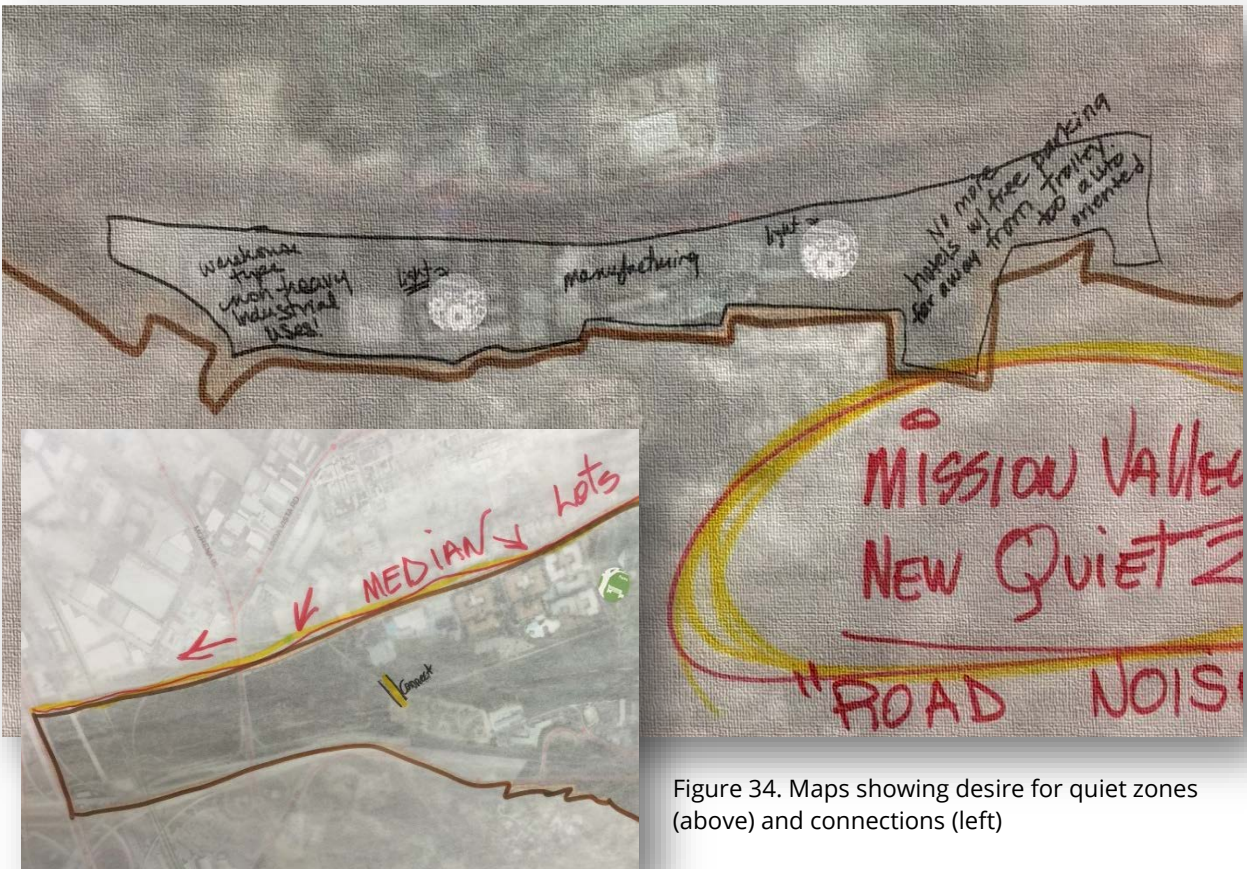


Figure 34. Maps showing desire for quiet zones (above) and connections (left)

-

- Residential developments surrounded by parks to serve the community
- A central trolley stop and transit-oriented development at Riverwalk
- Walkable/bikeable connections throughout the community (people-orientated)

(Figure 36)

- [illegible]

51

- Create more mixed-use, office space, and retail encircled by parks north of I-8
- Continue street connections from trolley stop to parks, office space, and mixed-use development (Figure 37)

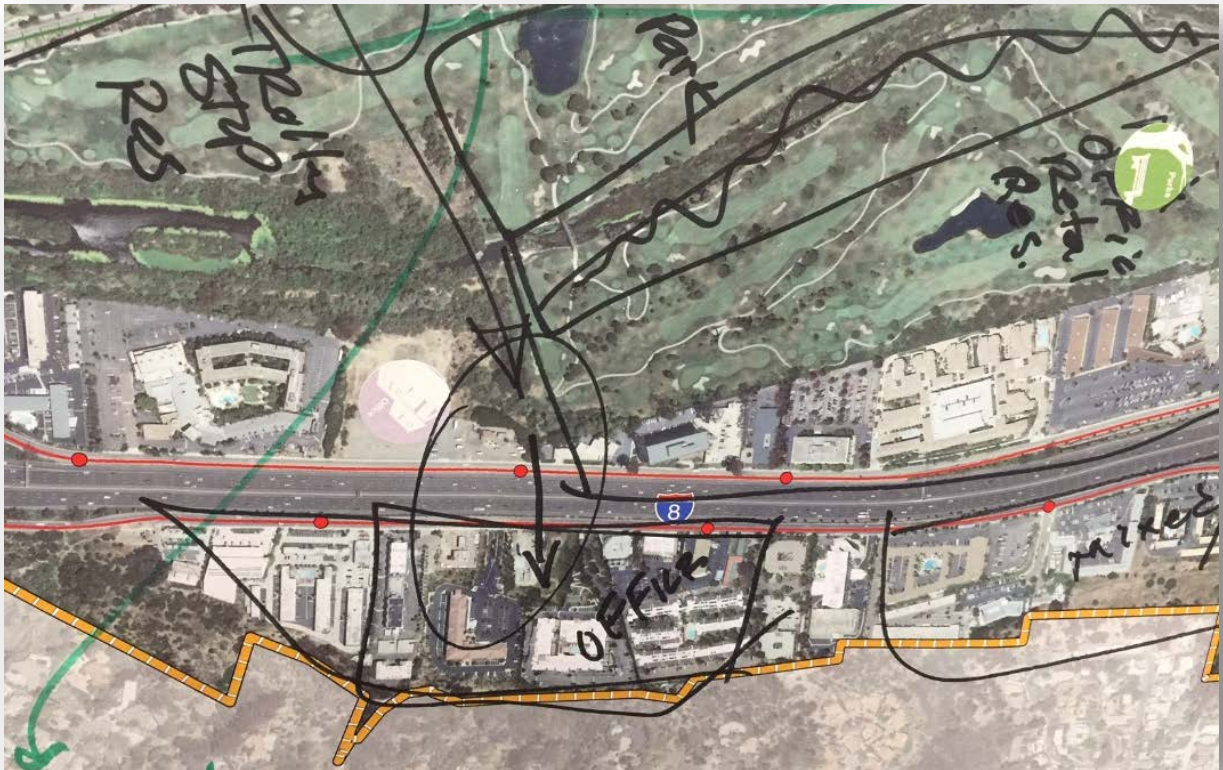


Figure 37. Professional input showing a desire for mixed-use spaces and better connections between the trolley and other uses

- Increase mixed-use and office space south of I-8
- Light Industrial as a potential use south of I-8
- Add medical office south of I-8 to connect to UCSD hospital (Figure 38)



Figure 38. Input showing desire for mixed-use, industrial uses, and medical uses south of I-8

- Connecting Fashion Valley Mall and the Town and Country Resort using different design features such as mixed-use/retail street-facing buildings surrounded by parks
- Focus residential south of Fashion Valley Mall adjacent to the Green Trolley Line
- Intersection enhancements are needed on Friars Road and Fashion Valley Road to accommodate 400 units of residential development
- Incorporating more residential adjacent to Fashion Valley Mall and Fashion Valley Transit (Figure 39)



Figure 39. Input showing where to incorporate mixed-use and residential development as well as enhancements needed to support such growth

- Extend the San Diego River to Fashion Valley Mall along Friars Road creating a tree canopy
- Expanding from the center of the golf course/San Diego River throughout the community to create Urban Green Streets (center green line) (Figure 40)



Figure 40. Input showing desire for green canopies and connections

Key themes included:

- [illegible]

54

-

55

- Provide a mixed-use gridded system in northeastern part carried down to Green Line transit center stops
- From the transit stop a bike and pedestrian bridge will connect the north and south of the eastern portion of the community across Interstate 8 connecting into the green boulevard system
- Central connections enhancing transit access are needed to move away from auto-oriented structures (Figure 43)

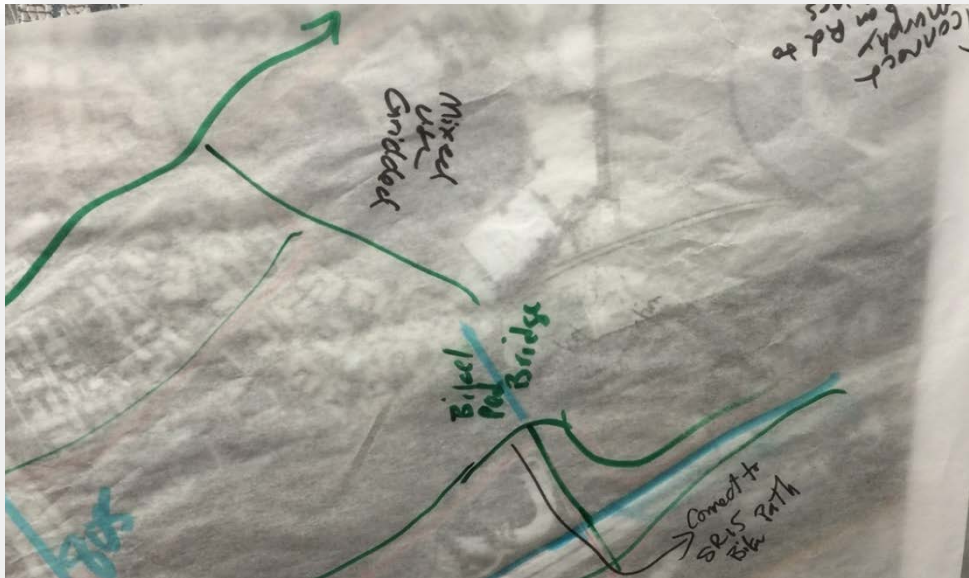


Figure 43. Map showing the desire for connections to the trolley through a grid and pedestrian bridges

- River-facing commercial building
- Street connections from the northern to southern side of the community
- Integrate bike and pedestrian access from Friars Road down to Camino Del Rio N (North of I-8) (Figure 44)



Figure 44. Map showing the desire for river facing residential and connections across large developments and the river

- Potential for mixed-use development on Camino De La Reina and Mission Center Road
- North of I-8 and south of Camino De La Reina intersecting Auto Circle a street widening will alleviate traffic congestion
- Camino De La Reina important secondary for vehicles, however can still provide pedestrian overlay (Figure 45)

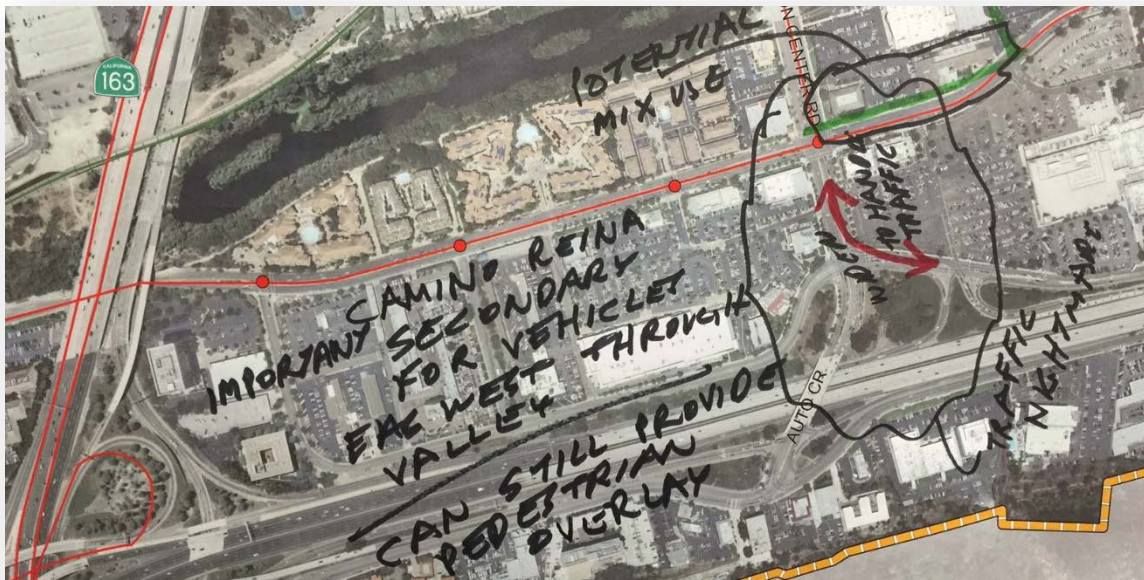


Figure 45. Map showing potential for mixed use development and the need for widening at Mission Center Road and I-8

- South of Friars Road has a potential for new road connections with river facing commercial buildings, it is an opportunity site.
- New road connections (orange) to extend from west into east south of Friars Road spreading out to residential development
- Pedestrian and bike connections (green) from Rio San Diego into adjacent residential development (Figure 46)



Figure 46. Map showing the desire for new connections for vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles as well as opportunity sites

- Rio San Diego has a potential to be a main street connecting residential to adjacent commercial establishments
- Camino De La Reina has a higher pedestrian orientation then Camino Del Rio North
- North east of Camino De La Reina has potential for mixed-use to reflect the residential development across the street
- Promote hotel or office space on Camino Del Rio South (Figure 47)

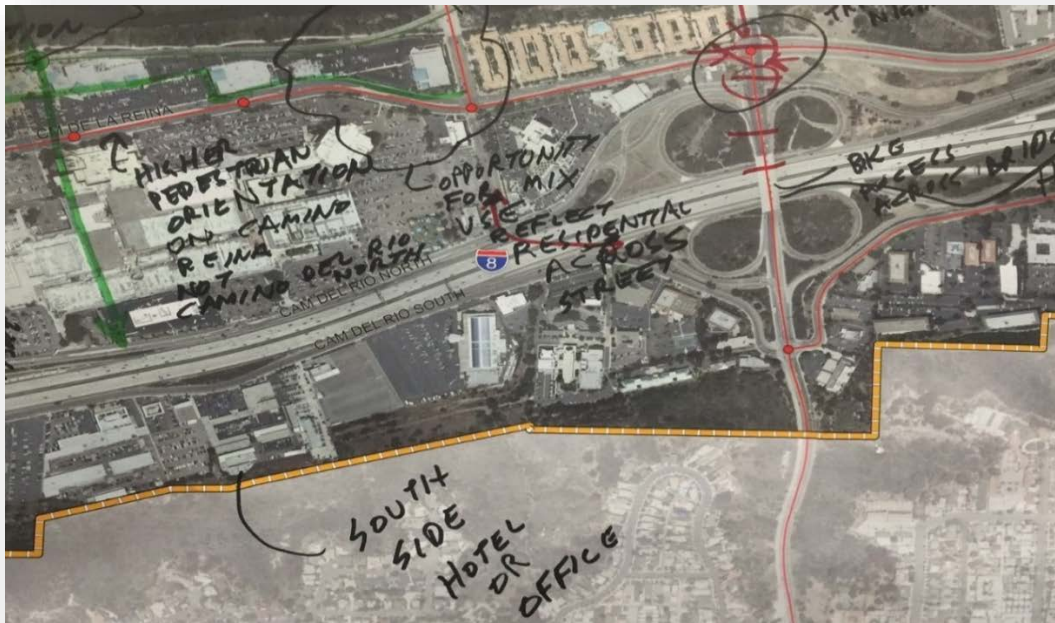


Figure 47. Map showing the potential for main street, mixed-use and pedestrian oriented uses as well as commercial uses south of I-8

- Traffic constraint on Camino De La Reina and Qualcomm Way intersection
- Promote bike access and bridges connect to I-805
- Provide opportunity to connect to I-805 from Qualcomm Way (Figure 48)

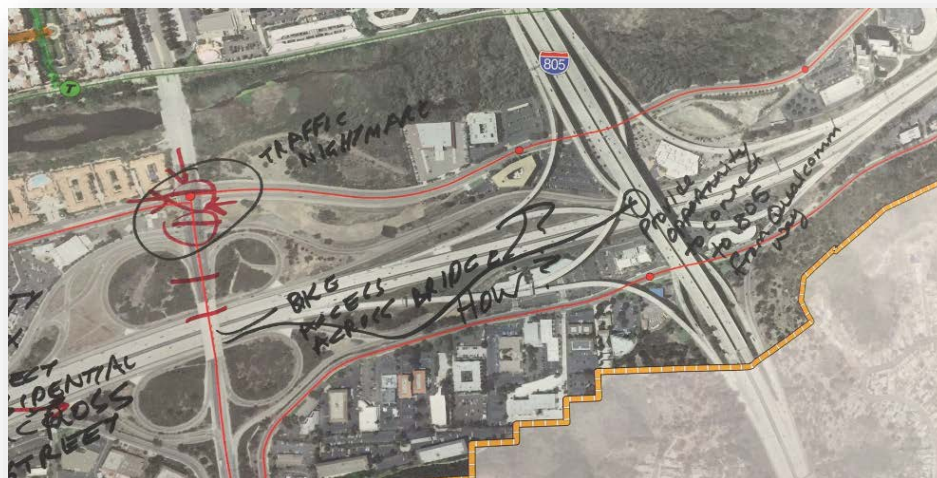


Figure 48. Map showing the desire to create better connections at I-805 and Qualcomm Way

- Bus stops should be added on Rio San Diego to serve residents
- Pedestrian crossing suggested along Texas Street to enhance the pedestrian access into adjacent residential and mixed-use development
- A new Bike Path along Texas Street is needed as proposed by SANDAG
- Attendees suggested to increase retail and office space south of I-8 (Figure 49)

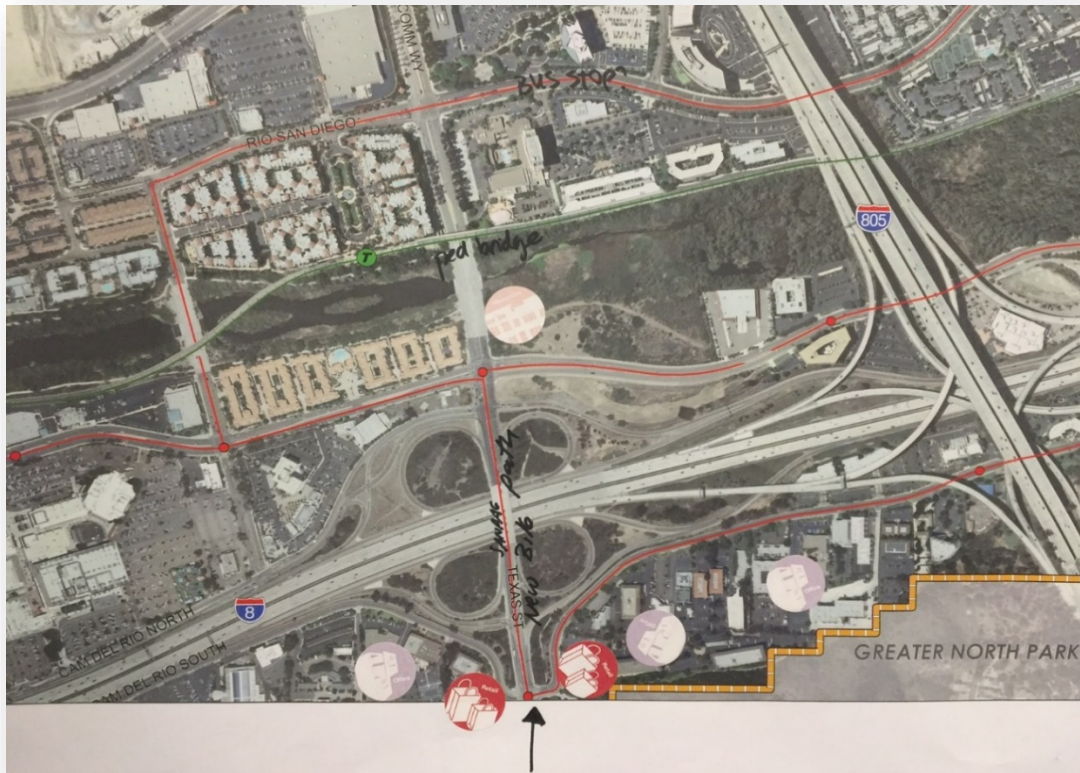


Figure 49. Map showing desire for additional mobility options as well as retail and office south of I-8

- Connecting Rio San Diego to Camino De La Reina, incorporating parks and mixed-use developments along the way to be serve the community (Figure 50)

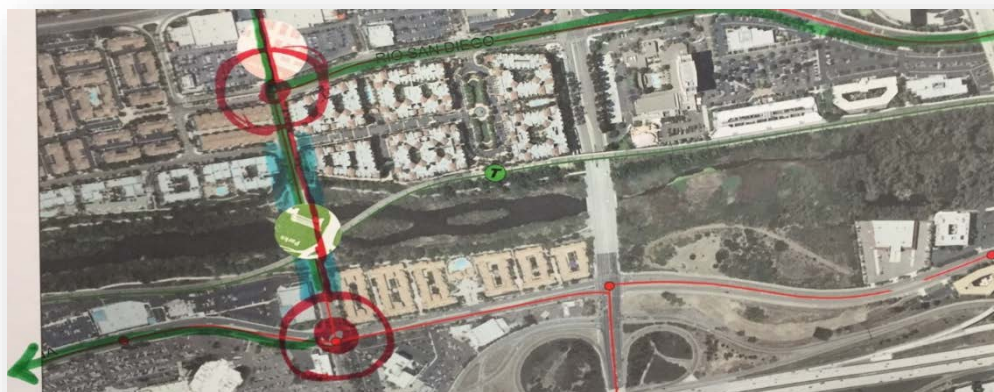


Figure 50. Map showing connection between Rio San Diego and Camino De La Reina

ACTIVITY 1 – EASTERN MISSION VALLEY

Key themes included:

- Attendees suggested future development of Qualcomm Stadium to be focused on utilizing the arena for commercial, mixed-use, entertainment, and small portion to be residential
- Expansion of the San Diego River south of Qualcomm Stadium by creating parks along the Green Line Trolley – integrating a bike and pedestrian only path connecting people from transit into commercial establishments.
- Additional bus stops between Fenton Parkway and Rio San Diego will benefit residents (Figure 51)

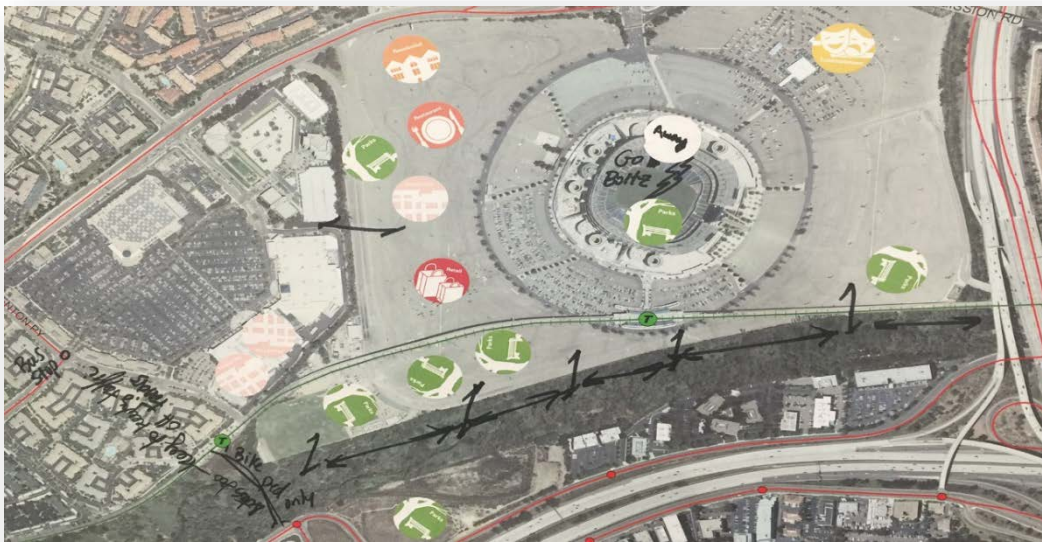


Figure 51. Map showing Qualcomm Stadium as a mixed-use site with a park along the River

- Interconnections from west of I-805 to Qualcomm Stadium and to neighborhood communities
- Utilizing Qualcomm Stadium for a transit-oriented development (Figure 52)



Figure 52. Map showing Qualcomm Stadium as a transit oriented development

- Create a bike path (green-line arrow) along Rio San Diego and expanding it to Qualcomm
- The bike path (green-line arrow) should pass through commercial development leading into the Qualcomm Stadium site
- Attendees recommended a trolley extending from the northern to southern part of I-15, and 40 acres of parks, housing, mixed-use, commercial, and entertainment development at the Qualcomm Stadium site
- The connection will have access a current access to a trolley stop (Fenton Parkway Station)
- A bridge or crossing connecting Fenton Parkway and Mission City Parkway for bike and pedestrian access only was also suggested (Figure 53 and 54)



Figure 53. Map showing the Qualcomm site as mixed use with an extended trolley line and additional pedestrian connections



Figure 54. Professionals collaborating on ideas for Eastern Mission Valley.

ACTIVITY 2 – CONNECTING NEIGHBORHOODS

In the second activity, a common theme attendees focused on was connecting north and south of the San Diego River through bridges or other crossings (Figure 55). The bridges or crossings would be interconnected with a multi-use trail that would allow users to move more easily through the community. Another common theme focused on streetscape improvements and intersection enhancements along Friars Road and Camino De La Reina. A lot of attendees placed their stickers and comments all along these two (2) major roads.



Figure 55. Map showing additional connections across the San Diego River

The connectivity near the Town and Country and Union Tribune sites was heavily commented on by participants (Figure 56). Many attendees placed stickers and comments (general and specific). Many indicated the need for better intersection enhancements and street-facing building to improve the look of fashion valley Road and Hotel Circle North.

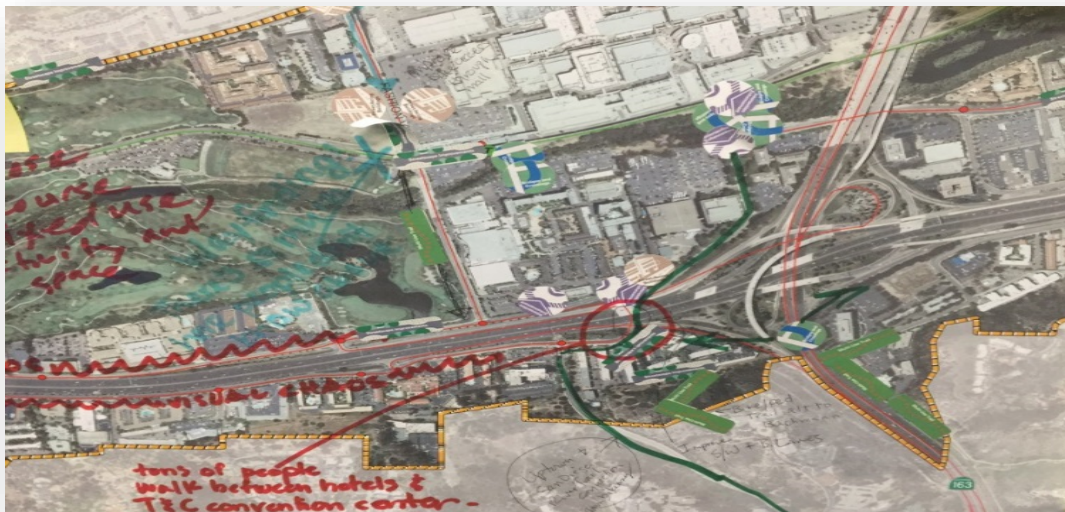


Figure 56. Map showing desire for connections near Town and Country and the Union Tribune sites

The large plot map generated many comments, which have been transposed into a table for review (Figure 57, 58 and Table 1).

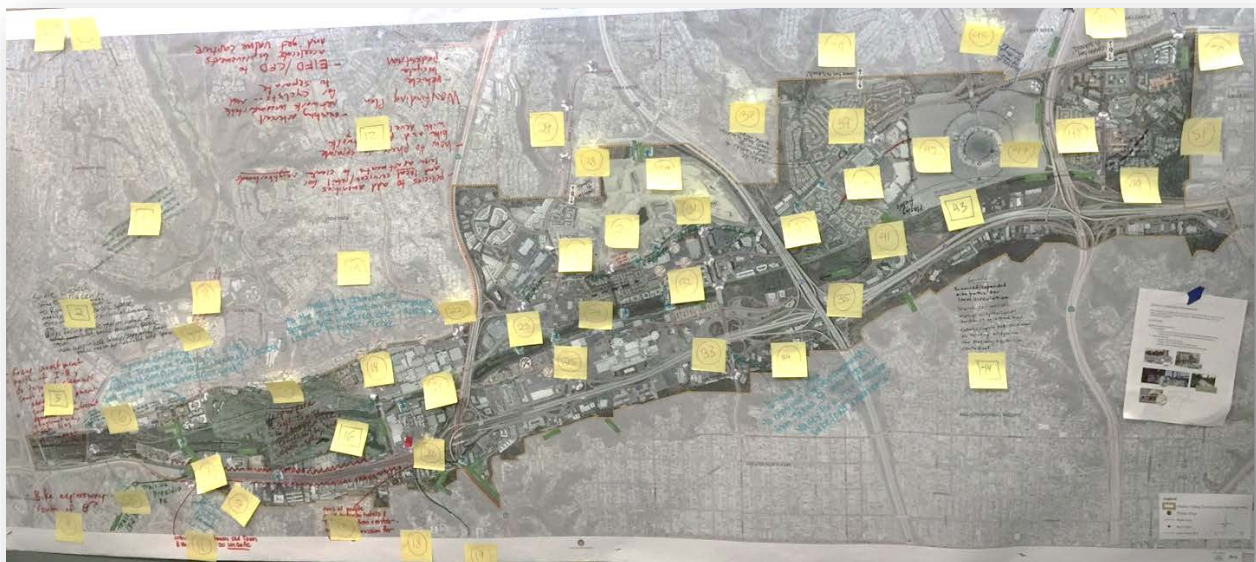


Figure 57. Professional comments on the large map of Mission Valley

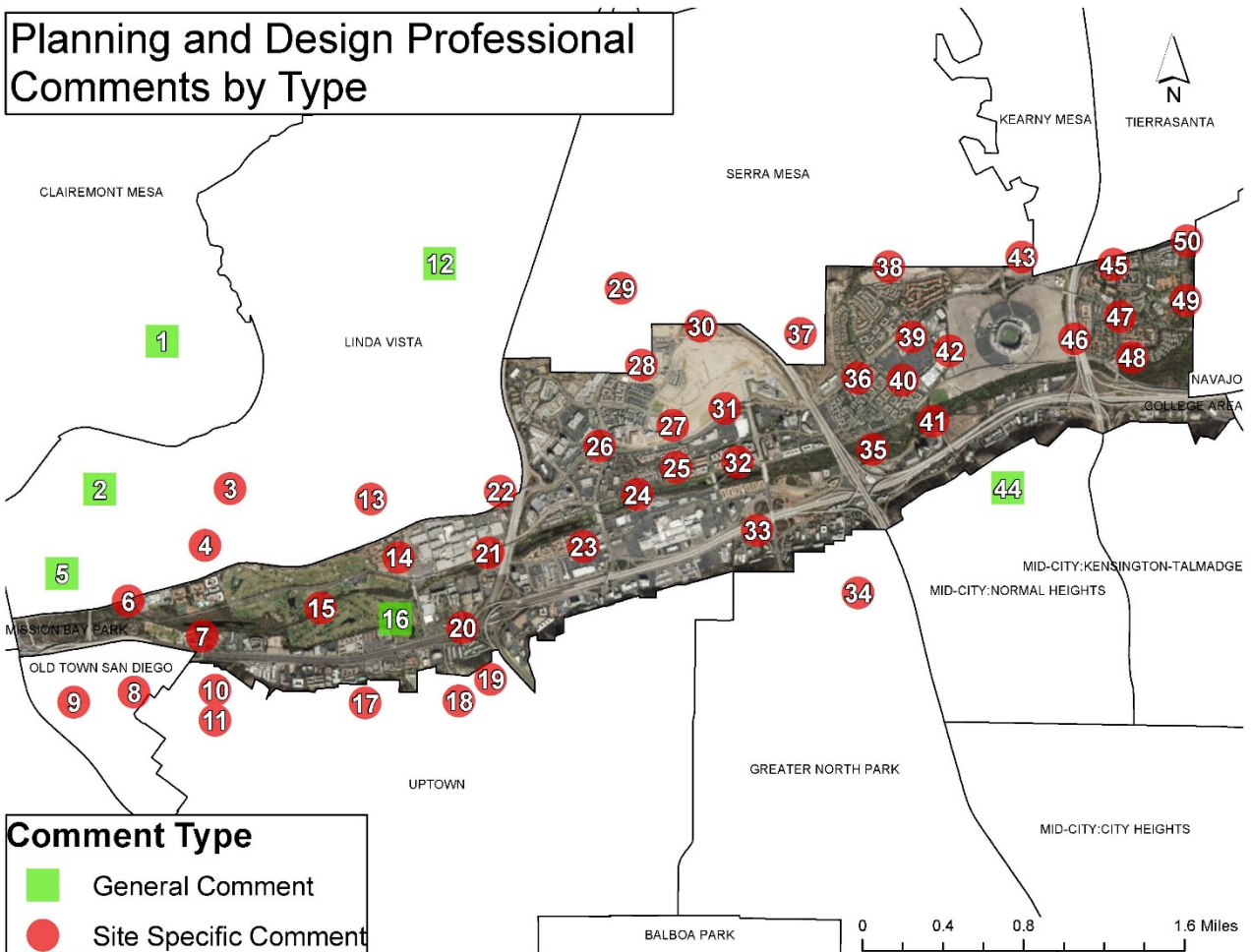




Figure 58. Reference map for the professional comments chart

Table Legend	Shape Type
General Comment	
Site Specific Comment	

Shape Type	Planning and Design Professionals Comments
1	A shame that Car2Go scaled back their operations in Mission Valley. Kudos to Mission Valley Center for accommodating Car2Go parking – more of the shopping centers need to follow their lead
2	<p>Single loaded streets adjacent to River (and other amenities), make public amenities feel like a public space, eyes on the street/visual surveillance, etc.</p> <p>Buildings facing public realm instead of the backs toward public realm</p> <p>Auto-use inside blocks/separated from public realm by habitable buildings space</p>
3	Need a stoplight for driveway at courtyard because of bicycle path and cars
4	<p>Improve existing cycle track on Friars (S. Side)</p> <p>Minimal conflicts with driveways (good!) but poorly maintained (not good!)</p>
5	<p>Focus investment North of I-8; do targeted cleanups</p> <p>South of I-8 demands significant infrastructure, which has less impact than North I-8</p>
6	Need another pedestrian crossing, or bridge/tunnel to trolley so don't have to cross two (2) crossings from the south to catch the trolley
7	Multi-Trail Connections stickers were placed across the San Diego River to a Presidio Place residential development on Friars Road
8	Connect the Multi-trail from the San Diego River to Presidio Place with another trail to Old Town and Presidio Park (all interconnected)
9	Bike expressway South of I-8?
10	Leading from comment 7, keep bridge after ramp closed
11	Critical link between Old Town and Hotel Circle – So Unsafe
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies to add amenities and local services/retail for large apartments to create neighborhoods • How to phase in bike and pedestrian network, with development? • Wayfinding Plan: Vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian • Existing arterial network uncomfortable for cyclists....need to separate • EIFD/CFD to accelerate improvements and get value capture

13	At the intersection of Friars Road and Fashion Valley Road: make this connection to the Transit Station a complete street! Add buffered bike lanes and connect Cycle Track
14	Improve bike access through the Fashion Valley Mall
15	Re-purpose the Golf Course w/ mixed use connectivity and open space
16	Wayfinding! There's so much here that people don't know about
17	Hotel Circle North and South Intersect with Fashion Valley: tons of people walk between hotels and T&C Convention center terrible impression for visitors
18	South of Hotel Circle and Bachman Place: Uptown and San Diego River Trail Correction urban bikeway
19	Hotel Circle North and South Intersect with Fashion Valley: Multi-Use Trail that provide a Bike/Pedestrian Trail alternative on Bachman Place
20	Across I-8 West and East: it was highlighted to have a street-facing building and a lot of streetscape improvements and intersection enhancements
21	Intersection of Riverwalk Drive and Avenida Rio intersection enhancement, bridges, and crossings
22	Intersection of Friars and Ultric Street, street enhancements are needed.
23	Hazards Center across trolley station stop with a condo across the way – cross the San Diego River: Building bridge and crossings, without the bridge “how do we get to school?”
24	Mission Center Road crossing Camino De La Renia needs intersection enhancement Mission Center Road and I-8 ramp entrance needs to be widened
25	Along Friars Road between Mission Center Road and Qualcomm Way a large residential development is lacking street connections Single Loaded Street was suggested with the same residential development along the San Diego River

26	All along Mission Center Road and Friars Road streetscape improvements, intersection enhancement, and planting more trees to create park-like feeling
27	Gill Village Way and Civita Blvd along Friars Road needs more lanes, "do not block off" comment was left on map
28	South of Mission Center Road crossing Civitia Road the need for "Connections to school"
29	Widen the lanes and create intersection enhancements on Mission Center Road leading into the Serra Mesa community
30	Off I-8 South of Mission Center Road as the current undeveloped lot will be turned into residential development, the need for streetscape improvements, bridge crossings, and multi-use trail will need to be incorporated into the community to allow for better connectivity
31	Along Friars Road create more streetscape, planting more trees, and creating more nearby parks, with intersections enhancements across from all the residential developments
32	A lot of street-facing buildings, streetscape improvements, and intersection enhancements stickers were place on Rio Vista Shopping Center. Also, along Friars Road intersecting Qualcomm Way and Mission Center Road streetscape improvements, bridge crossing, and multi-use trail
33	South of Texas Street into Mission Valley and on ramp of I-8 (West and East) streetscape improvements and intersection enhancements.
34	Is there a way to continue the improvements from Texas Street into Mission Valley for a more pleasant bike/pedestrian experience?
35	A multi-use Trail along the San Diego River across Camino Del Rio North
36	Along Friars Road and Fenton Parkway, the two Residential Developments across from one another are in need of bridges and crossings
37	On the corner of Fenton Parkway and along Friars Road, Rebuild switchbacks to undercrossing Needs steps in addition to the ramps to provide pedestrian easy access
38	South East of Mission Valley and Kearny Mesa needs better connections to schools
39	Friars Road and Northside Drive, street improvements and intersection enhancements

40	Park N Ride system located at Fenton Marketplace Place
41	Connect the Fenton Parkway Transit Station to a Multi-Use Trail that stretches out to connect Camino Del Rio North with bridges and crossings, with additional streetscape improvements Utilizing the existing playing field into the entire area not only connected to the stadium Improve security at the Qualcomm Park N Ride
42	Connect Fenton Marketplace with Qualcomm Stadium for pedestrians to easily access
43	Connect San Diego Mission Road to and Murphy Canyon Road
44	Enhance/expand bike paths for local circulation Shared car services More priority treatments for transit to decrease travel time Retrofit/improve pedestrian walkways on existing bridges over the freeway, e.g. Mission Center Road
45	Northeast of Mission Valley and Tierrasanta Residential needs better connections to schools
46	Create a Multi-Use Trail extended from San Diego River past San Diego Mission Road to Kearny Mesa
47	At the intersection of San Diego Mission Road and Rancho Mission Road, along these two (2) streets the need for streetscape improvements and intersection enhancements
48	Street on axis center of Mission Plaza Community, connect will be from San Diego Mission Road to Rancho Mission Road
49	Mission Basilica San Diego De Alcala is a "Significant visual resource"
50	"Multi-Use Trail from the San Diego River going through Friars Road and leading to Tierrasanta by intersection enhancement"

Table 1. Chart of planning and design professional comments

ACTIVITY 3 - POLICY IDEAS

Attendees provided general comments or questions regarding the suggested policy ideas. Many placed green stickers toward the ideas “Improve bike and pedestrian experience,” “Encourage mixed-use and transit-oriented development,” and “Promote Urban Forestry” (Figure 59)



Figure 59. Comments on policy statements

Input on the all the policy ideas is presented in Table 2.

Suggested Policy Ideas With Attendees Comments	Dot Count
<p>Define appropriate heights and intensities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Form based code? 2. TDR: Transit Development Rights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine receiver size • Determine sites to maintain lower density • Use bonus density incentives 3. Limit building heights in front of hillsides to maintain regional views of topography 4. Step back from San Diego River per the San Diego Master Plan 5. Plan taller building near transit stations on north side of the freeway 	4
Encourage mixed-use and transit-oriented development	6
<p>Connect to surrounding communities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Connection to Presidio/Old Town 2. Implement a wayfinding program there's SO much in Mission Valley people don't know about. 3. North/South multi-mode across San Diego River 	4
<p>Transition from auto-oriented environment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote express bus transit lanes 2. Vertical "funiculars" to connect surrounding higher elevation neighborhoods to Mission Valley 3. Design bike route along San Diego River to Function as part of the circulation network, put into the Circulation Element and give credit against car trips in models. Finance with transportation impact fees 4. MEDIAN ON FRIARS RD A LOT OF TREES!! 5. Mission Valley new Quiet-zone for "Cars" 	3
<p>Improve bike and pedestrian experience:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bridges over Friars Road 2. Include maintenance! San Diego River bike/multi-use path is nice, but ≠ well-lit or maintained 	6
<p>Foster a tech and innovation economy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More schools! Any schools! 2. Attract a big name tech industry leader 3. Public-private partnership to create more schools! Like downtown library 	2
<p>Cultivate nightlife and entertainment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Main street with restaurants and bars 2. Connect to apartments communities to create neighborhoods 	1
<p>Balance regional center identity with creating a locally-focused community:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not a single community, multiple Mission Valley neighborhoods 2. Replace current zoning with form-based code 	3
<p>Promote Urban Forestry:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Add more street trees: Reduces heat impact effect shade for pedestrian and contributes to urban forest 2. Establish GHG reductions through increased tree cover 3. Set goals of increasing urban tree forest/cover by a certain % by certain metrics 4. Friars – central median landscaped parkway 	6

Table 2. Comments on policy ideas

4.3 Reflections

Planning and design workshop provided city staff with insightful information to Mission Valley. The professional community identified a tremendous amount of placemaking potential, with ideas to properly tap into it (Figure 60).

It was clearly communicated that a connection between the north and south of the San Diego River needs to be addressed. The San Diego River is a valuable resource that can be utilized to improve the quality of life for the community. Many comments and the use of stickers aimed toward creating a multi-use trail that caters to the community's needs. Lastly, it was often communicated that Friars Road would benefit from streetscape improvements and intersection enhancements.



Figure 60. Staff gathering input from planning and design professionals

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