



South Pasadena General Plan & Mission Street Specific Plan



Plan Mission Street



**Stakeholders
Interview
Notes**

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Interview

As part of the General Plan and Mission Street Specific Plan update process, the consultant interviewed a diverse cross section of community stakeholders. The purpose of the interviews was to engage stakeholders in an open and candid discussion to better understand existing visions, barriers to implementation, and opportunities.

In February 2017, the consultant interviewed 26 property owners, tenants, business owners, and civic and community leaders. This memorandum summarizes the key themes and comments heard during that process. The memorandum focuses on identifying patterns among the comments and does not attribute any comments to specific individuals.

Describe a place you like and what you like about the place?

- Enjoy places that are walkable, good food establishments, shopping and entertainment — to be able to walk to lunch and see a movie on a weekend. Sit at a coffee shop within nice surroundings. Dog friendly places to eat with outdoor seating. Parks with walking paths that lead to sidewalks that lead to businesses.
- Heirloom Bakery and Cafe (nice place to sit outside and see community people that you know, and also enjoy how this new project, with ground-level retail/ restaurant, and housing above and beyond to the north- fits into the downtown area- it is new but also feels good with the old).
- Meridian median, with the Preservation Foundation museum and the park at the Gold Line station (a real sense of history at the old horse watering trough in the middle of the street, and right next to the old rail-road right-of-way, that brought people here from the 1880's, and now it's the Gold Line).
- Famers Market — there is positive energy with a peaceful setting of people of all ages coming together. Young families, professionals coming off the Gold Line to enjoy the music, food, and small businesses in historic buildings.
- Mike & Anne's restaurant (a great place to sit outside and enjoy what was really well transformed from an old automobile repair shop into a restaurant, a great outdoor gathering spot).
- Both Raymond Lane (behind Gus's BBQ) and Edison Lane (behind the Rialto Theatre) alleys in our downtown that are great (you can feel the old history, with horse shoes imprinted into the concrete paving behind a converted old barn (behind Gus's) as well as the holes in the wall of the building on the north side of Gus's parking lot, where beams used to stick in that were the old building of the other- Ritz Theatre in town- ages ago and see the different levels of concrete pored for the back wall of the Rialto Theatre, and in both alleys-

see where the service of things needs to happen (trash and loading of goods every morning) but also the potential of more real activation of our alleyways, as well as our main streets).

- The neighborhood around Oak Meadow Lane and Oak Street is an ethnically and culturally diverse neighborhood.
- Neighborhood around the YMCA has beautiful homes and great streets.
- Eddie Park and the surrounding neighborhood — dynamic, diverse, and vibrant energy.
- 4th of July festivities at Garfield Park. Garfield Park is versatile — make it whatever you want.
- Mission Street — parade on 4th of July.
- Mission Street has “lively and low-voltage energy”.
- Various places where people gather: Library, Rialto, Arroyo Secco park and hiking trail, Fremont Center Theater, Holy Family Catholic Church, Calvary Presbyterian Church, and Judson Studios (stain glass).

Q. Describe a place you think needs improvement and describe how it might be improved?

- Rialto Theatre — \$15 million rehab project repurposed for today’s needs with a theater in the back and 6,000 s.f. retail/restaurants in the front. The building has no off-site parking. Needs an angel investor.
- Von’s center — mix-use development
- Micro-Dot/ Tyco at Pasadena Avenue, Monterey Road and Arroyo Drive — office and retail on frontage parcels with contextual residential development in the rear. Linkages to Metro station needs to be explored.
- Across the wash from the golf course, next to the freeway- a huge area, just needing a bridge to activate
- School District Offices on Mission (and thru to El Centro).
- Need grocery store or drug store within walking distance.
- Dirty looking strip malls that have not been updated — for e.g.,: the strip mall across from Trader Joe’s.
- Intersection of Huntington Drive and Fremont can use new businesses (restaurant/home decor).
- Mission Street may need more crosswalks and signalized intersections to slow down people that are speeding.

- Orange Grove Park needs facilities for kids and seniors.
- Police Facility at City Hall could be better designed to serve both internal and external customers. The small reception area is not very inviting.

Describe the changes you would like to see in the Mission Street area?

- Mission Street is not a very cohesive walking experience.
- Mission Street has two key pulse points that are activity centers: the areas around the Metro Station and Fair Oaks. The frontages between Mound Ave and Fairview, and from Prospect to Pasadena are in need of more active and engaging frontages.
- Incentivize legal non-conforming businesses such as auto repair and self-storage facility to relocate or change use.
- More retail/ restaurants at the ground level for active storefronts, residential above (for those who will take important ownership of their downtown area and need real retail and restaurants), less ground-level offices or service use instead of important retail (bad recent example is “Dentists of South Pasadena on Fair Oaks), and more public plazas like open space of Mike and Anne’s (so will also be critical for proposed big huge dense project across the street at existing La Fiesta Grande site/ property owned by family that owns whole chain of Panda Express internationally).
- Update the façade at the strip mall at Mission and Grand.
- Move city yard off Mission — attract a more active use.
- Fix the intersection at Mission and Pasadena/Arroyo.
- Downtown entry sign.
- Repair sidewalk along Mission with seating and bike racks
- Build an entry park on corner of Fremont and Mission or some thing
- Public Art along Mission in Plaza areas (more sitting areas)
- Bring older buildings into compliance with the Fire Code.
- City Hall Facade fails to provide an engaging frontage on Mission Street.
- Need more daytime population to support Mission Street businesses.
- Need more places where people can gather (like a zocalo — public square).

- Like to see Mission Street become more culturally vibrant with more cultural amenities and galleries — massage parlors and nail salon don't add to the soul of the community. There are many stores on Mission Street that don't generate income or draw customers.
- Examine the office building surrounded by parking lot site at 625 Fair Oaks — assess feasibility for a more contextual frontages on Mound Avenue and more engaging frontage on Fair Oaks Ave.
- Mission Street is not well lit in the night — need better lighting particularly in between the two activity hubs.

Where are the key development opportunities on Mission Street?

- School District block.
- Southmark Storage west of Gold Line station.
- Mission at Fremont Christmas tree lot at south west corner.
- Northeast corner of Mission and Fairview (presently auto repair facility).
- Citizens Business Bank site.
- Mission Tile West — the site has maxed out. Incorporate the parcels as catalytic site for the Specific Plan: to allow future and phased growth and expansion plans, accommodate parking needs, and to realize the full build out potential of these key parcels on Mission Street.
- AT&T building in front of City Hall.
- Oroweat Bakery Thrift Store (SE corner of Mission and Fairview).
- Update the façades at the strip mall at Mission and Grand.
- Properties around the intersection of Mission and Pasadena/Arroyo.
- Repair sidewalk along Mission with seating and bike racks.

What kind of retail would you like to see more of on Mission Street and elsewhere in the City?

- Men's clothing and shoes.
- Office supplies store.
- Electronic store.
- Selective national chain store — but it has to be terrific draw like an Apple store.

- More family-friendly places like Tomato Pie Pizza Joint and fine dining like Crossings Restaurant.
- Curios and gift store.
- Bagel and coffee shop.
- Cleaners.

Q. What type of housing could South Pasadena use more of?

- South Pasadena has a good mix of homes and apartments.
- Need more affordable housing.

Q. Are you, your organization, or your organization's membership interested in participating in future planning and implementation activities or events?

- Yes — will participate in Focus Group Meetings and Charrette.

Q. What are the greatest challenges and opportunities for business owners in the City?

- South Pasadena has a reputation of being a tough place to build anything — the development approval process is perceived to be grueling and unpredictable — easier to build elsewhere.
- It is tough to draw in customers and do business on Mission Street.
- Stores need parking for employees and customers.

Q. What share of your patronage is from South Pasadena?

5% to 30%. Bring in patrons from outside the region and direct them to local restaurants and stores in South Pasadena.

Q. What public interventions could help your business grow?

- The City needs an Economic Development champion that can market the City and its various offerings, assist in business retention, and attract a right mix of new businesses to the City.
- A BID is needed for Mission Street for advocacy, streetscape enhancement, on-going capital needs, maintenance, support business retention and expansion, attract right mix of uses, and to market the area.

- Use the power of social media to market South Pasadena
- Need a comprehensive parking management plan.

Other

- The city is very accessible — people know each other.
- Make the entire city a great place, not just downtown.
- Golf Course men's restroom and Garfield Park tennis court needs to be upgraded.
- The small store size is a limitation to attract new tenants on Mission Street.
- More parking is needed at Garfield Park.
- Over 52% of property owners do not live in the City. Many underutilized or vacant property owners are sitting on their property and are not contributing to the community's well-being.
- Local ownership for retail and restaurants are key to preserving the Soul of Mission Street — “when you go in a store, you know the owner and they greet you.”
- November 2018 challenge to Utility User Tax, increasing retirement costs, and stagnant sales tax are potential threats to maintaining and enhancing the quality of life in South Pasadena.
- The demographic mix, existing arts and cultural enterprise, and businesses could support an entertainment and creative industry cluster in South Pasadena.
- South Pasadena is not a destination, not a college town, and no beach. Not many reasons to come and spent time here. Need more stuff for people to do when they visit South Pasadena.
- Need more venues for non-retail and restaurant uses on Mission Street — for e.g.: galleries, theaters, and similar other uses supporting more artistic endeavors.
- “Keep it small and quaint.”