

# PHASE 1 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SUMMARY

## A. Overview

A primary goal for the General Plan update is to actively engage the entire community in the process. It is widely recognized across the country that many residents and stakeholders do not regularly participate in local government meetings such as City Council and Planning Commission hearings. As a result, a variety of other methods are necessary to ensure that a full range of community viewpoints are represented in the preparation of the 2040 General Plan. In addition to City Council and Planning Commission meetings, three strategies are being employed to encourage broad-based community participation: 1) a public opinion survey; 2) community workshops; and 3) interviews with selected stakeholders and groups. These three efforts and the preliminary findings thus far are discussed below.

### Public Opinion Survey

During November-December 2015 a Community Public Opinion Survey was distributed in both English and Spanish to City residents and businesses through utility bills and also posted on the City website. Approximately 170 responses were received. The survey asked participants to give their opinions on these questions:

- What do you see as the City's most important strengths and opportunities for the future?
- What characteristics would you like to preserve that make Santa Paula a good place to live?
- What are the most significant challenges facing the City?
- What things about the City would you most like to change or improve?
- What do you think should be the City's top priorities for the next 25 years?

### Interviews

A sample of stakeholders including City Councilmembers, Planning Commissioners and other community leaders were interviewed individually to provide an opportunity to explore important issues in greater depth during Fall/Winter 2015-16.

### Community Workshop

A General Plan Public Workshop was conducted on November 19, 2015 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Santa Paula Community Center. Approximately 50 persons attended the workshop.





Three “stations” were set up focusing on issues related to land use and the environment, transportation and mobility, and economic development and downtown. Participants had opportunities to discuss issues with City staff, other attendees and the General Plan team, and recorded their comments regarding issues that are important to them.

## B. Findings

Comments heard during the initial outreach effort are summarized in Table 1. The intent of the outreach process thus far is to capture the full range of issues that should be addressed as part of the General Plan update, and not to rank issues according to importance. It is important to recognize that some of the issues mentioned are very important but are primarily addressed through mechanisms other than the General Plan (e.g., the City budget process, enforcement of existing regulations) or by other organizations and agencies.



**Table 1  
Summary of Public Comments**

<u>Strengths, opportunities and characteristics that should be preserved</u>	<u>Challenges facing the City and things that should be changed or improved</u>	<u>Priorities for the next 25 years</u>
<b>Land Use, Conservation and Open Space</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small town “Old California” feel, slow pace, sense of community, easy going people, caring citizens, neighbors and businesses support one another</li> <li>• Natural beauty</li> <li>• Historical buildings</li> <li>• Museums, arts, murals, playhouse and unique events</li> <li>• Clear city limits bordered by agricultural land</li> <li>• Family roots, cultural diversity and local pride</li> <li>• Bike path (would be great to connect it to Fillmore's and Ventura's)</li> <li>• Walkability</li> <li>• Parks and the greenbelt</li> <li>• Development of eastside homes</li> <li>• Central downtown and Main Street business district</li> <li>• Community involvement &amp; non-profit organizations</li> <li>• Room to grow</li> <li>• Local water source</li> <li>• Opportunity to grow in Fagan Canyon and Adams Canyon, which would create a larger tax base to support needed infrastructure improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial property maintenance and signage</li> <li>• Water usage must be more efficient as we plan long term, especially with growth on the horizon with the development of some Limoneira lands.</li> <li>• Schools need more money for refurbishments, air conditioning units in all schools, parking or a drop off zone, crossing guards.</li> <li>• Better street lighting</li> <li>• Maintenance and repair of roads and other infrastructure</li> <li>• Park playgrounds</li> <li>• Low property values</li> <li>• Privatization of essential public services to for-profit entities who don't care about our community</li> <li>• Impacts of fracking on the water supply</li> <li>• Artificially low property values and revenues due to Prop. 13</li> <li>• Too much emphasis on cheap housing rather than encouraging a diversity of housing – need to invite those of greater wealth to live in Santa Paula and create a better balance without excluding those of greater need</li> <li>• Better schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain the natural beauty of our surroundings while seeking responsible, high quality developments, residential &amp; commercial, with a tourism and job development focus</li> <li>• Improve infrastructure</li> <li>• Energy efficiency</li> <li>• Water supply &amp; conservation</li> <li>• Encourage reasonable residential and commercial development that would bring much needed revenue</li> <li>• Keep Santa Paula home to the locals and for generations to come and stay where their grandparents stayed and go to the same schools. I believe that we should stay as we are and preserve and nurture what we have.</li> <li>• Avoid overbuilding as has occurred in Camarillo, Thousand Oaks and Moorpark</li> <li>• Provide incentives for property owners to refurbish and maintain properties</li> <li>• Avoid higher housing density and reduced setbacks</li> <li>• More trees near the Ag museum and the small park adjacent</li> </ul>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Santa Paula Airport</li> <li>• “Heritage Valley” evokes longevity, health and value</li> <li>• Unified school district</li> <li>• New water treatment plant</li> <li>• Local newspaper</li> <li>• Affordable housing</li> <li>• Small enough for that friendly neighbor feel but big enough to provide basic services</li> <li>• Limited sprawl</li> <li>• East Area 1 is a great place for development. A site for a new grocery store out there would be great. What about a new high school too?</li> <li>• Beautiful neighborhoods such as the Oaks, area around Monte Vista, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More green space in the city</li> <li>• More recreational options for kids</li> <li>• Would like skating and bowling facilities</li> <li>• Better maintenance of public bathrooms in parks and train depot</li> <li>• Subsidized housing affects rest of community because they do not pay property taxes but use most of the services!</li> <li>• Lower water/sewer rates</li> <li>• Need for community service centers with parking and restrict large community gatherings in residential areas</li> <li>• Lack of affordable housing</li> <li>• More funding for City maintenance staff to keep up the public areas</li> <li>• Maintenance of Santa Paula Creek (sediment buildup)</li> <li>• Additional development (EA1/Peck Rd/Adams) will increase traffic and public safety requirements and will not cover those costs</li> <li>• Residential and commercial code enforcement could improve the general appearance, increase property values, and increase demand from businesses.</li> <li>• Better sustainability in our landscaping</li> <li>• Add a farmers' market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More trails like the one running from 12th Street to Peck Road and patrol the trails more often by walking/biking police. All new developments should include connectors to developed walking paths and bike paths. I would like to see even more options like a healthy hiking path between Mill Park and the Hospital to encourage residents to be active and make the city a more attractive destination.</li> <li>• Open spaces and recreational facilities should be maintained and expanded</li> <li>• Cleanliness such as graffiti removal</li> <li>• Keep the current small town atmosphere</li> <li>• More solar panels</li> <li>• Controlled residential, retail, and commercial construction to increase the tax base and create local jobs</li> <li>• Support the strong artistic element in the community such as museums and art</li> <li>• Expand our sphere of influence before the county or city of Ventura takes it away</li> <li>• Promote infill development within the city limits where there is blight</li> <li>• Develop programs to benefit those who may live on the street or who have drug issues affecting their mental health</li> <li>• Encourage more middle/upper income housing</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More green spaces for recreation: Improve parks, add hiking trails in the river bed, etc.</li> <li>• Connect our bike path to the Fillmore path and possibly even Ventura: This will provide much-needed recreational opportunities for youth in our own town as well as attract out-of-town people to eat in our restaurants, etc.</li> <li>• Add a dog park</li> <li>• Start a community garden</li> <li>• Re-open and expand Toland Park</li> <li>• The City could partner with school districts to promote afterschool programs</li> <li>• Better enforcement of codes and ordinances</li> <li>• More cohesive and consistent architectural vision for new commercial construction</li> <li>• Limit yard sales</li> <li>• Prevent &amp; clean up graffiti</li> <li>• Better public communications &amp; transparency (public outreach, news coverage, etc. on important issues)</li> <li>• Make the permit process easier for home &amp; business improvements</li> <li>• Clean bathrooms in all parks (e.g., Portland OR)</li> <li>• Improve the appearance of the east/west gateways to city</li> <li>• Need more investment in the library - the books</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect our watershed</li> <li>• Build more nice apartments</li> <li>• Provide attractive housing to keep people who want to step up to a nicer home from leaving the city</li> <li>• Develop an 18-hole golf course</li> <li>• Support for a music and cultural performance venue</li> <li>• Add a community garden along the rail line</li> <li>• More public parks with restrooms &amp; public use of school playgrounds</li> <li>• Natural parks with logs, rocks, butterfly gardens</li> <li>• Water playgrounds</li> <li>• Support well-planned higher-density residential developments</li> <li>• Need homeless shelters in every area of the city</li> <li>• A “peaker (electrical generation) plant” should not be built in this agricultural valley</li> <li>• East Area I should have a variety of housing types</li> <li>• Need for more affordable housing for young families, farmworkers, seniors, etc.</li> <li>• Mixed-use (housing with commercial) downtown</li> </ul>

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	<p>are too old and there are not enough programs for the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convert the old packing house into an antique mall and café</li> <li>• Use reclaimed water</li> </ul>	
<b>Transportation and Mobility</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No traffic problems</li> <li>• Free parking downtown</li> <li>• Bike path (would be great to connect it to Fillmore's and Ventura's)</li> <li>• Walkability</li> <li>• Public transportation system</li> <li>• Railroad - a great tourist attraction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highway 150 traffic is becoming a problem</li> <li>• Harvard/Main should have a turn signal and not just a yield</li> <li>• Left turn arrows needed at Harvard/10<sup>th</sup> and Harvard/Palm</li> <li>• Too many cars parked in residential streets – parked cars block bike lanes</li> <li>• Maintenance and repair of roads and other infrastructure</li> <li>• Railroad tracks on Steckel</li> <li>• Fix railroad crossings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect with light rail service throughout the valley corridor</li> <li>• Keep/enhance the Fillmore &amp; Western Railway</li> <li>• Need a signal (on-demand) at Peck/Foothill</li> <li>• Increase public transit options and connections with other communities for jobs and educational institutions</li> <li>• East Area I should have better access &amp; connectivity to other parts of the community</li> <li>• Fix 8th Street</li> <li>• Need bike trails and hiking trails</li> <li>• Connect a rail trail to Fillmore</li> <li>• Improve access to the river trail</li> <li>• Improve ADA compliance &amp; pedestrian ramps</li> <li>• Improve street lights</li> </ul>

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<b>Economy and Downtown</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close to other cities via 126 - good location for businesses.</li> <li>• Lower tax base than other cities within the county that are attractive to agriculture business and industrial business</li> <li>• Free parking downtown</li> <li>• No mall &amp; non-franchised companies</li> <li>• Central downtown and Main Street business district</li> <li>• Small business opportunities</li> <li>• Agricultural businesses</li> <li>• Small "Mom and Pop" shops, vintage and antiques stores, and specialty cafes</li> <li>• Professional and hard-working citizens</li> <li>• Educational opportunities (e.g. Ventura College Santa Paula Campus &amp; Thomas Aquinas College)</li> <li>• Santa Paula Airport</li> <li>• "Heritage Valley" evokes longevity, health and value</li> <li>• Economic opportunities: movie industry, small aircraft, agriculture. Could the Ventura Community College satellite campus become a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discourage more professional offices or massage parlors on Main Street</li> <li>• Need more job opportunities for residents</li> <li>• Jobs for youth</li> <li>• Lack of retail options forces the community to shop out of town</li> <li>• Many vacant stores downtown</li> <li>• Need a good grocery store and higher-quality shopping and family entertainment to generate sales tax</li> <li>• Bring music events that have a variety of sounds for different people</li> <li>• Need better marketing of the historic, natural, cultural, and agricultural aspects of our town to bring new people in, either as tourists or new residents</li> <li>• Promote Santa Paula as the gateway to Los Padres hiking and mountain biking</li> <li>• Encourage more events like the balloon festival &amp; car show to bring in money</li> <li>• Fewer liquor stores and smoke shops</li> <li>• More cohesive and consistent architectural vision for new commercial construction</li> <li>• Improve our image to the outside world so visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a Main Street Specific Plan to include types of businesses, signage, and a business development manager who will work to populate the downtown with the right businesses</li> <li>• Promote tourism to bring in revenue</li> <li>• Stimulate business and downtown area without massive housing growth.</li> <li>• Preserve the "Heritage Valley" by building on this brand. Businesses and development should be related to this theme: agri-tourism, culinary research and preparation, specialty farming, agri-STEM, to name a few. The unique neighborhoods uncluttered by typical Southern California tracts, mature landscaping and a walkable downtown should be featured in this brand development.</li> <li>• Keep downtown where it is, not East Area 1 (i.e. city hall, jail)</li> <li>• Encourage family businesses rather than major fast food corporations</li> <li>• Maintenance and improvement of our Historic Downtown</li> <li>• More upscale shops that cater to a wider variety of shoppers</li> <li>• More good restaurants and businesses like Garmin's and Rabalais</li> </ul>

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<p>training center for those types of jobs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordable housing</li> <li>• Available workforce</li> <li>• Downtown potential to become a visitors destination with the right businesses</li> <li>• Railroad - a great tourist attraction</li> <li>• Gateway to Ojai</li> </ul>	<p>will come here</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make the permit process easier for home &amp; business improvements</li> <li>• Improve the appearance of the east/west gateways to city</li> <li>• Convert the old packing house into an antique mall and café</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More job opportunities for local residents to work in Santa Paula versus commuting to another city</li> <li>• Create a destination restaurant/retail corridor in downtown</li> <li>• Support the strong artistic element in the community such as museums and art</li> <li>• Build city parking lots near businesses, near community-sponsored activities away from residential areas</li> <li>• Support green technology or alternative energy companies to create jobs</li> <li>• Support existing vendors and offer incentives for new “mom &amp; pop” stores</li> <li>• More emphasis on STEM education and cooperation with local colleges to encourage education</li> <li>• Target store (but no “mega stores”)</li> <li>• Trader Joes</li> <li>• Boutiques, small hotels and deli’s</li> <li>• Brewery</li> <li>• Public art emphasizing cultural diversity with links to local museums</li> <li>• Cultural-themed businesses</li> <li>• Mixed-use (housing with commercial) downtown</li> <li>• Better pedestrian and wheelchair access</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design guidelines, façade improvements and better integration and enforcement of sign regulations</li> <li>• Improved sidewalks (clean &amp; fix cracks)</li> </ul>
<b>Public Safety</b>		
<u>Strengths, opportunities and characteristics that should be preserved</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Police doing an excellent job cleaning up the city and making it safe</li> <li>• Police and Fire departments</li> </ul>	<u>Challenges facing the City and things that should be changed or improved</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crime and gang problems, drugs, littering and vandalism</li> <li>• More funding for public safety</li> <li>• Adequate pay for police and fire services</li> <li>• The homeless population and panhandlers</li> <li>• Dogs roaming the streets</li> </ul>	<u>Priorities for the next 25 years</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gang problems</li> <li>• Funding for police &amp; fire</li> </ul>