



San Carlos Focused General Plan Update: May 26, 2021 Community Workshop Summary

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Introduction

In 2020, the City of San Carlos began efforts to draft a focused General Plan update. A general plan establishes a framework for how a city will grow and change over the next two decades. General plans are required to have chapters or “elements” that discuss land use, circulation/mobility, open space, conservation, noise, environmental justice, air quality, safety, and housing. The San Carlos Focused General Plan updates the Housing Element and the Environmental Safety Element as required by state law. As needed for consistency, other elements may be updated as well, specifically, the Land Use Element. Woven throughout the Elements’ update is a comprehensive community engagement program that will be used to inform the plan update process. This community workshop was the third workshop to engage the community in this process. The project website: www.sancarlos2040.org contains more information about the planning process and upcoming activities.

On Wednesday, May 26, 2021, MIG hosted a public workshop to recap what the planning team has heard so far, share the number of housing units that can be accommodated with the City’s existing zoning and policies, identify the anticipated housing shortfall, and discuss new ideas and strategies to achieve the City’s housing target. Following guidance from public health agencies regarding public gatherings and COVID-19, the workshop was held virtually using online video conferencing. Thirty-seven (37) community members and interested individuals participated.

MIG planner Joan Chaplick moderated and facilitated the meeting. Community and Economic Development Director Al Savay introduced Mayor Laura Parmer Lohan. Al provided remarks to set the context and introduced the City’s project team members including Lisa Porras, Planning Manager and Project Manager, and Aaron Aknin, Strategic Advisor and Principal of Good City Company. Al also introduced Lisa Brownfield of MIG who presented on the overall planning process.

The early analysis indicates that the City will need to consider changes to current zoning to accommodate the number of units the City must plan for. Al Savay walked through scenarios that showed potential changes to two specific changes. He described how, with modifications to height, density, parking and open space requirements or some combination thereof, more units could be accommodated in these areas. This was followed by live polling and verbal comments.

The workshop included presentations, live polls using Menitmeter software, question-and-answer periods, and public comment. Participants were encouraged to submit their comments using the live polling tool. At the end of the workshop, a public comment period allowed participants to provide their comments. Each participant had two minutes to provide oral comments. Live poll results and key themes are summarized in this document. The workshop’s live poll results and chat log are available in Appendix A.

Polling Results and Key Themes

The workshop collected input throughout the meeting using live polling. Close-ended questions asked participants about themselves and their preferred land use scenarios. Open-ended questions asked participants to share any additional questions and comments.

San Carlos intends to collect demographic information throughout the outreach process, so the City can understand who has been reached through the process. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number for closed-ended questions. Key themes are provided to summarize open-ended comments. “n” indicates the total number of responses for each question. Not all participants responded to each question.

Question 1. How long have you lived in San Carlos?

- Less than 1 year (11%)
- 1 to 4 years (14%)
- 5 to 9 years (7%)
- 10+ years (68%)

n = 28

Question 2. What is your housing situation?

- I own my home (85%)
- I rent my home (7%)
- I live with friends/family, do not own, or pay rent (7%)
- Do not currently have a permanent home (0%)

n = 27

Question 3. What is your age?

- Under 18 years (0%)
- 18 to 29 years (6%)
- 30 to 49 years (35%)
- 50 to 64 years (45%)
- 65+ years (13%)

n = 31

The planning team presented potential land use scenarios that would accommodate more housing than existing land uses. After asking questions, participants identified their preferred scenarios and provided input by answering closed- and open-ended polling questions. Figure 1 summarizes these land use scenarios.

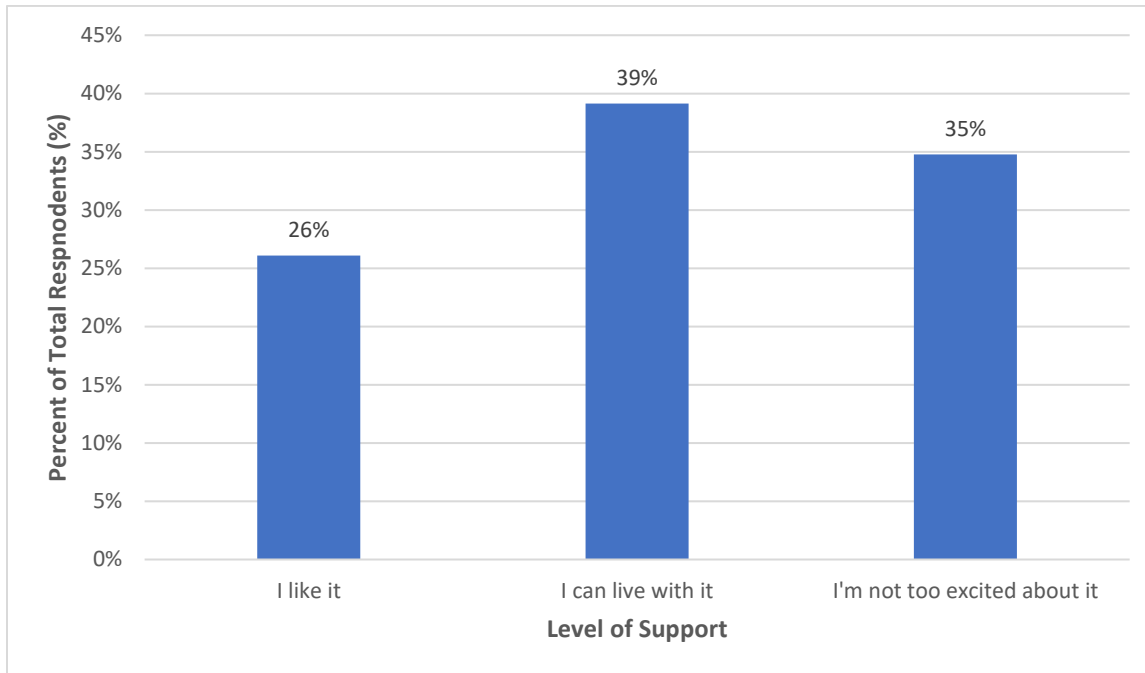
Figure 1. Land Use Scenarios

All Scenarios | 910 Laurel

Scenario - Lot Size 50' x 100'	Existing MU-N			
	A	B	C	D
du/acre	20	30	40	50
Lot Width	50'	50'	50'	50'
Lot Area	5,000 sq ft	5,000 sq ft	5,000 sq ft	5,000 sq ft
Number of Units*	2	3	4	5
Commercial sq ft	5,182	3,000	3,300	2,050
Open Space sq ft	1,500	1,525	1,250	1,250
Total sq ft	9,185	7,825	9,000	9,000
Stories	4	3	3	3
Max Building Height	50'	34' (highest eave)	34' (highest eave)	34' (highest eave)
FAR	1.83	1.56	1.80	1.80
Parking Spaces	4 (car lift)	4 (car lift)	4 (car lift)	4 (car lift)
Parking Requirement	Studio & 1 BD units: 1 space/du, 2+ BD units: 1.5 spaces/du	Studio & 1 BD units: 1 space/du, 2+ BD units: 1.5	Studio & 1 BD units: 1 space/du, 2+ BD units: 1.5 spaces/du	Studio & 1 BD units: 0.75 space/du, 2+ BD units: 1 spaces/du
*Unit Size and Details	1,650 sq ft units: 2	1,450 sq ft units: 2 1,250 sq ft unit: 1	1,250 sq ft units: 4	1,250 sq ft units: 5

Scenarios B, C and D generate more housing with less building height and FAR than what the MUN currently allows.

Question 4. What is your Level of Support for Scenario B?



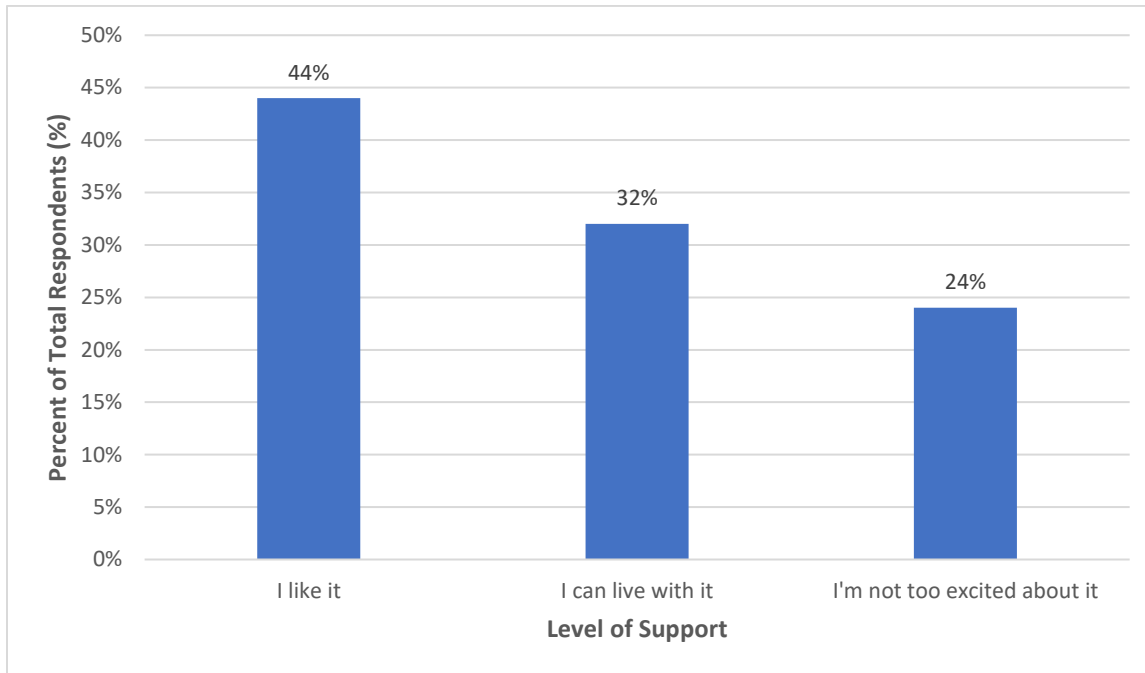
n = 23

Question 5. Please share any additional comments of Scenario B.

- **Building Height** - Some participants would like to increase the proposed height limits to increase density, while others would like to decrease the heights permitted under density bonuses. Others noted that the proposed height limit is perfect for single-family homes.
- **Commercial Development** - Several participants indicated that there is too much commercial space and too little housing. Several participants would like to see additional workforce housing.
- **Density** - Participants expressed conflicting opinions around increasing density. Some participants indicated that increasing density would make San Carlos less desirable, while others support increasing density and would like to see greater density increases than that proposed in Scenario B.
- **Open Space** - Some participants dislike the potential loss of open space in Scenario B.
- **Parking** - Some participants do not think there is enough parking, noting an existing parking shortage. One participant suggested building underground parking.

n = 25

Question 6. What is your level of support for Scenario C?



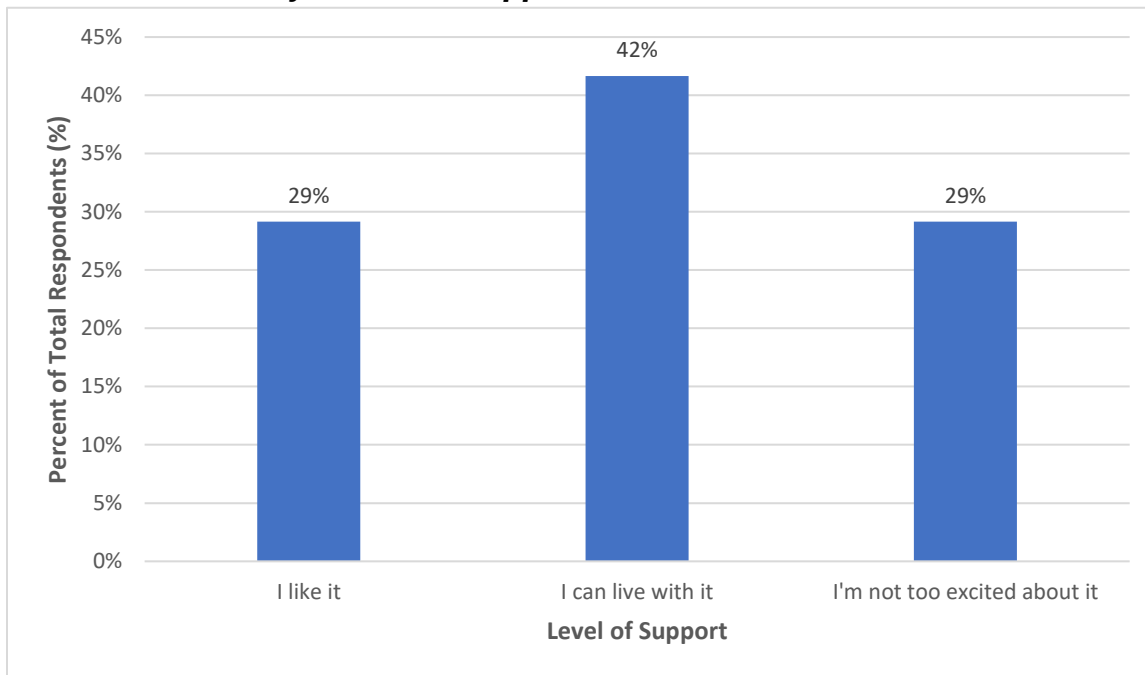
n = 25

Question 7. Please share any additional comments on Scenario C.

- **Additional Information** - Some participants would like additional information to make informed decisions.
- **Additional Open Space** - Several participants like the additional open space proposed in Scenario C.
- **Affordable Housing** - Several participants would like to prioritize affordable housing for all income levels.
- **Building Height** - Some participants were pleased to see higher building limits. Others want to increased height limits, and others want to keep height limits low. One participant was concerned about the height of buildings after density bonuses.
- **Commercial Development** - Several participants again indicated there is too much commercial development.
- **Density** - While some participants were pleased that Scenario C accommodates more housing compared to Scenario B, others would like even greater density and higher buildings.
- **Parking** - Although Scenario C provides more housing than Scenario B, some participants still do not think there would be enough parking. One participant noted that public transportation in the area is insufficient to replace vehicles. Another participant suggested below grade or podium parking.
- **Proposed Square Footage** - Participants expressed conflicting opinions around the proposed square footage. One commented that 1,200 square feet is not realistic for families. Another commented that San Carlos needs to provide small units as well.

n = 27

Question 8. What is your level of support for Scenario D?



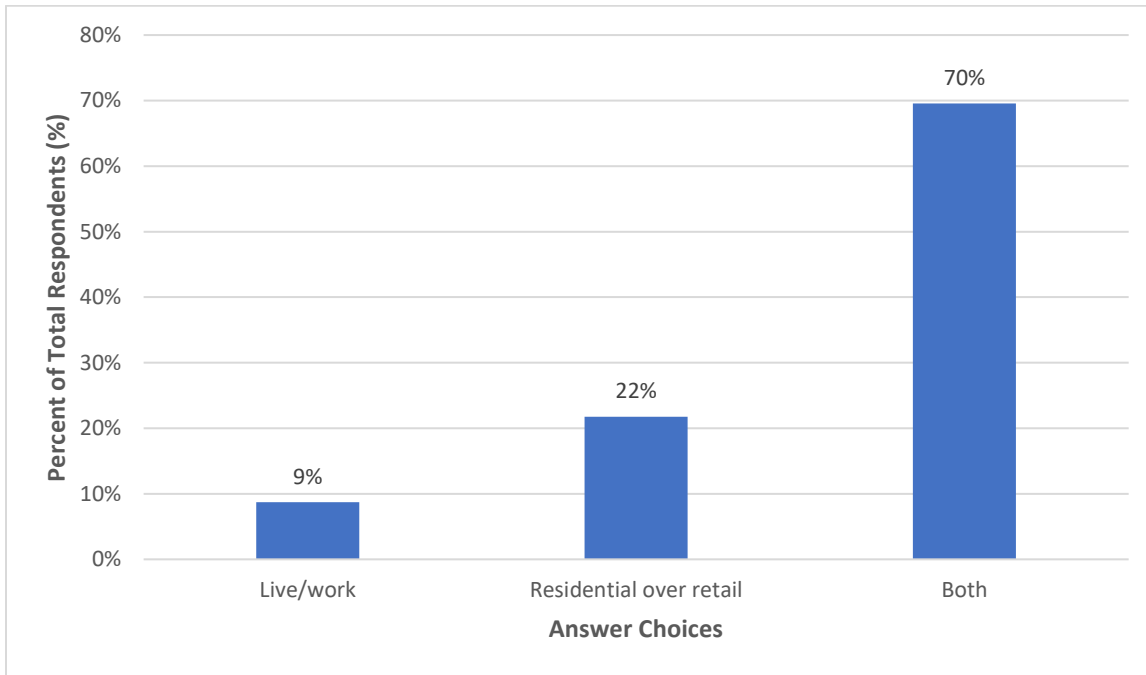
n = 24

Question 9. Please share any additional comments on Scenario D.

- **Building Height** -Some participants suggested increasing building heights, with several requesting increased building heights in exchange for below market rate housing.
- **Density** - Participants expressed conflicting opinions around density, with some requesting higher densities and others requesting lower densities.
- **Mixed-Use** - Several participants requested ground floor commercial uses, with one participant questioning how Scenario D creates a mixed-use neighborhood without commercial uses.
- **Multifamily** - Several participants would like to see more multifamily projects throughout town.
- **Nearby Homes** - One participant was concerned that new buildings could block solar panels of nearby homes. Two participants questioned why existing, wealthy homeowners have outsized influence over decisions around new housing.
- **Parking** - Several participants were concerned over the lack of parking.
- **Proposed Square Footage** - Although several participants were concerned that the proposed square footage is too small, several commented that a mix of unit sizes are needed and that small units can attract a mix of residents such as seniors and young workers.

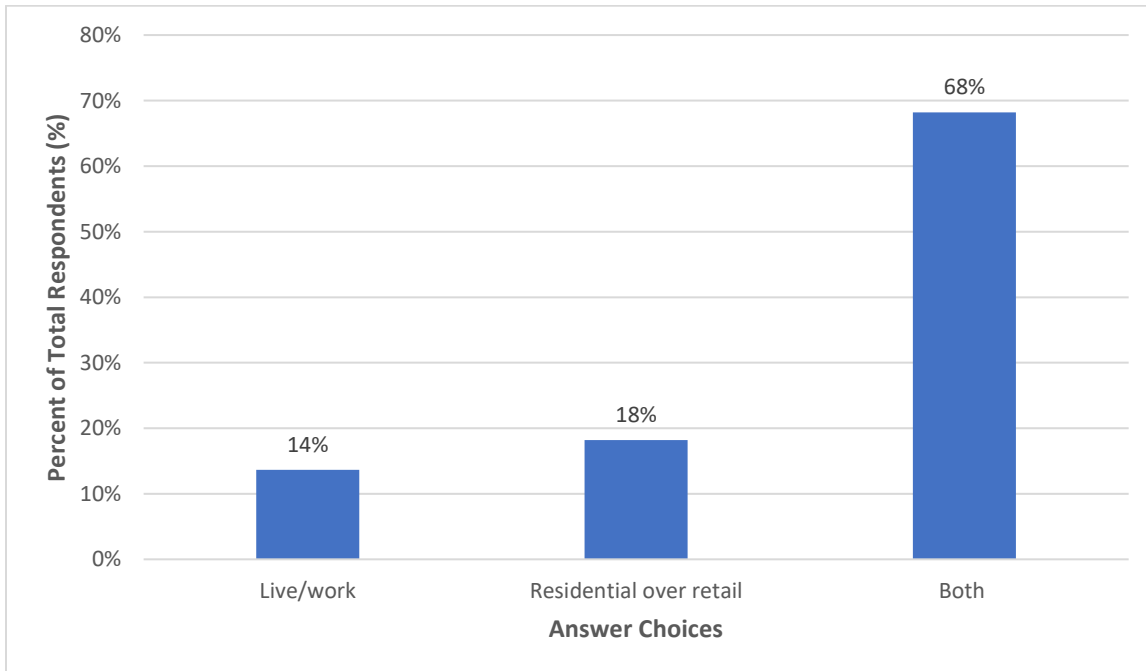
n = 26

Question 10. For the North Side of Terminal Way, would you consider live/work, residential over retail, or both?



n = 23

Question 11. For the South Side of Terminal Way, would you consider live/work, residential over retail, or both?



n = 22

Question 12. Please share any additional comments.

- **Additional Information** - Some participants asked questions requesting additional information: How does this fit into the greater innovation project? How would this change our jobs/housing balance? How will you engage the residents of the east side? What is the proposed building height? Can you provide specific live/work examples?
- **Complete Communities** - Several participants would like to see complete, walkable communities with housing, jobs, and goods and services.
- **Density** - Participants expressed conflicting opinions around density. Some participants would like to see lower densities, while others would like to see high densities.
- **Nearby Communities** - Several participants are concerned about the impacts of new development on nearby communities, with some suggesting constructing multi-family housing throughout San Carlos, but not immediately adjacent to single-family neighborhoods.
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- **Mixed-Use** - Some participants suggested developing mixed-use projects with commercial and residential uses.
- **Nearby Communities** - Several participants are concerned about the impacts of new development on nearby communities, with some suggesting constructing multi-family housing throughout San Carlos, but not immediately adjacent to single-family neighborhoods.
- **Neither** - Several participants would not consider either option. Several suggested keeping the North side residential only.
- **Proposed Height** - Several participants support the proposed heights, several requested higher heights, and several requested lower heights.
- **Residential** - Some participants would like to prioritize or focus on residential development.
- **Strong Support** - Several participants expressed their strong support for the options presented.

n = 55

Next Steps

The City and MIG will share workshop results with the public and incorporate input into the development of the San Carlos Housing and Environmental Safety Elements.