



Summary: Workshops and First Survey

Murrieta General Plan Update
February 12, 2010



Introduction

To date, the visioning process for the Murrieta General Plan has engaged community members through a student workshop, online survey, and two community workshops. This summary describes these public participation opportunities and the input that was received from participants.

This summary is divided into two sections:

- Student Visioning Workshop
- Survey and Community Workshops

Student Visioning Workshop

The Student Visioning Workshop was held on January 22 at Vista Murrieta High School and was attended by 48 students from grades 9-12. Mary Lanier, Community Development Director, greeted the students and explained to the participants the importance of community input, and in particular, the students' input, in the General Plan process. Following introductions, the workshop facilitators gave a short presentation about what a General Plan is and the Update process. The students were then led through two hands-on activities to obtain feedback and help the students develop a vision statement for the City.

The main objective of the workshop was to gain input from the youth on their visions for the future of Murrieta. A few major themes were discovered during the workshop, including:

- A strong value in the safety and sense of community that the residents enjoy;
- A desire for affordable entertainment and programs for teens, such as a recreation/teen center or similar;
- A desire for more diversity in stores and restaurants; and
- A desire for more job opportunities for teens.

Treasures, Challenges, Visions

In the first activity, students were asked to identify "treasures," "challenges," and "visions for the future" of Murrieta. Students were asked to write their ideas on post-it notes and place them on the wall, grouping similar ideas. After the students were given time to get their ideas on the wall, the group reconvened and a summary of their responses was presented back to the group.

Some of the "treasures" that were identified by participants:



- Safety
- A sense of community and security
- Low crime rate
- Diversity
- Clean environment and neighborhoods
- Condition of parks
- Friendly people
- Population size (not too overcrowded or urban)
- Number of programs/activities for youth
- Variety of stores
- Great schools

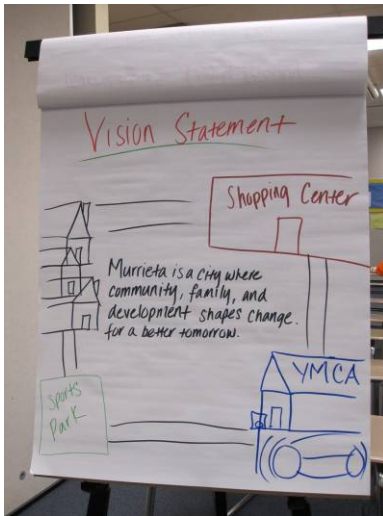
"Challenges" included:

- Recreation opportunities for teens
- "Boring," "Nothing to do"
- Lack of affordable activities for teens
- Variety of entertainment
- Access to malls (isolated)

In a second exercise, groups were asked to complete sentences to describe the future of Murrieta. Students identified Murrieta as a safe, diverse, family-oriented atmosphere with good public facilities, a healthy learning and growing environment, where youth are positively influenced by activities provided, where there is commercial and recreational diversity, and where there are ample job opportunities.

In the final group exercise, students were asked to write and/or illustrate a vision statement using the ideas from the previous exercises.

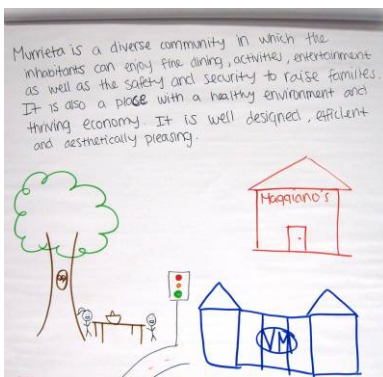
Student Vision Statements



"Murrieta is a diverse community in which the inhabitants can enjoy fine dining, activities, entertainment as well as the safety and security to raise families. It is also a place with a healthy environment and thriving economy. It is well designed, efficient and aesthetically pleasing."

"Murrieta is still a safe place with a variety of entertainment and safe activities for family's and kids to enjoy together."

"The City of Murrieta is a safe and secure place to raise families and offers outstanding education in our great school districts. It is a diverse community that offers job opportunities and entertainment for kids as well as young adults."



"Murrieta is a city where community, family and development shape's change for a better tomorrow."

"Murrieta is a city with an emphasis on safety, education and opportunity in order to progress into an ideal society. Youth are able to feel close to those around them in the community while having a good time. Murrieta is a place that meets the wants and needs of the people."

"Murrieta is now a community with positive family and youth recreations, where education and safety is valued and first priority. Where there is less traffic, more economical opportunities for growth, and a clean environment."

At the end of the workshop, each student received a reusable canvas bag with the Murrieta General Plan Update logo, a workshop flyer, a button, a plantable business card with the Murrieta General Plan Update website link on it, and a certificate in appreciation of participation. The facilitators challenged the students to stay involved and to get others involved as well, through subsequent workshops, online survey and email updates.

Survey and Community Workshops

Online Survey 1

There were 94 responses to a visioning survey that was available on the project website from January 8 to February 8. This survey asked respondents some basic questions about themselves before prompting them to identify three “treasures” or assets of Murrieta, three “challenges” they felt the city would face, and three “visions” for the future of the community. These responses are summarized in the “Input Summary” section below.

Most participants (86) were residents; others owned property or a business in Murrieta, or worked in Murrieta, and two participants visited only for shopping or other reasons. For nearly two thirds of respondents, these relationships with Murrieta had lasted from 3 to 14 years. About 70% were in the broad age range of 25-54, one respondent was under 18, and all others were over 55. Respondents were almost evenly divided between those who had children under 18 and those who did not. More women (63%) than men took the survey. Respondents were also asked to describe their ethnicity, and were able to give multiple answers: most (73%) identified their ethnicity as White, although 9 chose Hispanic and each ethnicity of Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian, and “other ethnicity” was represented by at least one respondent.

Visioning & Issue Identification Workshops

The General Plan Update team held two identical workshops at Murrieta Mesa High School on the evening of Thursday, January 28 and morning of Saturday, January 30. These workshops began with short presentations to familiarize community members with the General Plan and the update process. Participants then answered basic questions about themselves using handheld polling devices; graphs of their responses were displayed in the PowerPoint presentation.

As in the online survey, participants then identified “treasures,” “challenges” and “visions” for Murrieta, writing 3 of each on Post-It Notes. The Post-It Notes were grouped according to topic and a summary of the common themes were presented back to the room. Participants then joined small groups; each group discussed one or two of the themes that emerged from the Post-It exercise. A representative of each group made a short presentation on the group’s ideas to the room at large. Comments from individuals and groups at the workshops are summarized below in the “Input Summary” section.



There were 61 attendees who signed in, with a few of these participating in both workshops. Based on their responses to the polling questions, these participants had a slightly different profile than the survey respondents. Almost all were residents, with most also owning property or a business in Murrieta. Over half of the participants in each workshop had lived in Murrieta at least six years, and most of those had been residents for at least 15 years. Most participants

did not have children under 18, and most had provided input into City plans before. The Saturday workshop attracted most of the people who had children and most of the people who were providing input for the first time.

Summary of Input

Comments received at the workshops and through the online survey fell broadly into the following topics, described in more detail below:

- Natural Environment and Rural Areas
- Community Character
- Recreation and Culture
- Balanced Land Use
- Transportation
- Infrastructure and Services
- Governance

Natural Environment and Rural Areas

Participants valued the natural beauty and clean air of Murrieta, as well as its rural areas. They listed mountains, hills, and waterways as treasures, with several calling out the Santa Rosa Plateau in particular. One workshop group valued the rural environment as “safer and personal” for raising children, and suggested ensuring compatible land uses near rural and agricultural areas. A few mentioned the equestrian center and trails.

Many participants cited open space as a treasure and/or expressed that natural scenery should be retained in the future. A group that focused on open space and trails cited several benefits: quality of life, property values, sense of community, recreation, and wildlife preservation. This group suggested that connections between open space should work for people and for wildlife, and proposed a park along the river from Wildomar to Temecula—including removing cement from the riverbed to allow groundwater recharge. Another group echoed the suggestion of linking trails to Old Town.

Common Themes:

- Air and Climate
- History/Heritage
- Natural Environment
- Open Space
- Rural
- Santa Rosa Plateau

Examples of Comments:

“More outside cafes with views of the beautiful Santa Rosa Mountains and just easy living kind of like Santa Barbara.” (Vision Comment)

“Capitalize on the natural beauty of the area, making it a community that calls people out of their homes for activities.” (Vision Comment)

“Keep quaintness but live in modern world.” (Vision Comment)

Community Character

Many participants described Murrieta as safe, and placed importance on keeping it that way. Participants felt that Murrieta was good for families and wanted the community to be a safe, healthy environment for children in the future. Suggestions regarding youth included a teen center, activities, sports, mentoring and job skills training. A group of young participants asked for a pre-teen dance club.

Several participants expressed that Murrieta had a small town feel and sense of community. They valued community events and considered other people in Murrieta to be an asset. Participants referred to Murrieta as "clean" but some suggested more landscaping and image improvement. Some expressed a desire for Murrieta to have a distinct identity.

Common Themes:

- Clean
- Family and Youth
- Image/Identity
- Landscaping
- People
- Quality of Life
- Safety
- Sense of Community
- Small Town



Examples of Comments:

"Keeping Murrieta safe and focused on family and community is very important...in addition to the great schools, that's why we moved here!" (Vision Comment)

"Healthy, safe children with lots to do." (Vision Comment)

"Keeping the home town feel as population grows." (Challenge Comment)

"A city that offers more community building events and encourages local business so there is not as large of a 'commuter' population" (Vision Comment)

"Relatively small size, small enough (perhaps) that we might be able to overcome some of the social isolation that plagues communities these days. I love things like our Santa visits and the Holiday Parade -- as corny and funky as those are, they're great for everyone, adults and kids." (Treasure Comment)

"A nice home town feel." (Vision Comment)

"A community with a distinct identity full of people who are engaged with one another and their connection to the surrounding environment" (Vision Comment)

Recreation and Culture

Many comments related to recreation and culture. Participants valued parks and outdoor activities, and one group suggested building a campground. This group also suggested that

volunteers could contribute to recreation, for instance through an “adopt a trail” program. Suggestions for recreational facilities included a dog park, aquatic facility and a skating rink.

Participants placed importance on Murrieta’s historic downtown and Town Center, describing their envisioned downtown as “magical,” “bustling,” “prosperous,” and “vibrant.” They valued the historic character of downtown and suggested street lights and windmills as enhancements.

Participants expressed a need generally for more dining and night life in Murrieta. Others hoped for more arts and culture events and facilities, such as a concert hall. One workshop group wanted to see cultural amenities that would attract residents aged 18-30.

Common Themes:

- Dining and Nightlife
- Downtown
- Outdoor Activities
- Parks
- Recreation and Culture

Examples of Comments:

“A vibrant Historic Downtown with restaurants, shops and nightlife” (Vision Comment)

“A healthy city with numerous recreational activities for adults and children.” (Vision Comment)

“A thriving, well educated, and cultural and recreational center” (Vision Comment)

Balanced Land Use

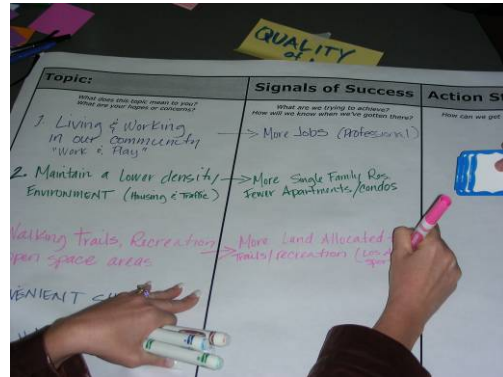
Many participants expressed a desire for economic development that would lead to more jobs—including high-paying jobs and jobs for younger residents—and fully occupied retail centers. Several participants hoped to see development in the Golden Triangle. Participants noticed local signs of the economic downturn, expressing concerns about commercial vacancies, foreclosures, and lower housing values. However, others considered the affordability of housing in Murrieta to be an asset.

To stimulate economic development, workshop groups suggested providing higher education, infrastructure, and incentives, as well as promoting downtown. One group felt that high-speed rail could provide an opportunity. Another group suggested constructing office buildings for large employers. Some areas of growth the groups identified were medical and bio-tech industries, “green” businesses, hotels (including one by the Loma Linda University Medical Center), and mixed use. Participants saw opportunities for Murrieta based on assets such as freeway access and an educated workforce.

Participants recognized the role of the City and the General Plan in directing land use and growth, with some expressing the need to manage growth in order to provide adequate infrastructure and services, or to preserve certain qualities of the community that they value.

Common Themes:

- Affordability
- Balanced Community
- Economic Development
- Golden Triangle
- Housing and Neighborhoods
- Jobs
- Land Use and Growth
- Opportunity
- Property Values
- Population
- Retail
- Vacancy and Foreclosures



Examples of Comments:

“A thriving, well planned community with an ability to attract well paying, professional jobs.” (Vision Comment)

“Opportunity to live, work, grow old, recreate” (Vision Comment)

“Growth without destroying our history and community fellowship.” (Challenge Comment)

“High end industry - health care, clean energy/water businesses, tourism.” (Vision Comment)

“Attracting high quality jobs.” (Challenge Comment)

Transportation

Transportation systems are important to Murrieta residents to help them reach other regional destinations and to travel within the city. Participants said that Murrieta was conveniently located, but many would rather be able to work, shop, dine, and recreate in Murrieta instead of driving out of town.

Time spent in the car is clearly an issue for Murrieta residents, with many participants citing traffic as a concern—on local streets and freeway interchanges. As individuals and in groups, participants suggested more connections for Clinton Keith, Diaz, Winchester, Washington, and Ynez, as well as more freeway overpasses and north/south connectivity to Temecula. Some participants asked for more paving.

Participants also hoped to see a citywide system of bicycle lanes. Several sought recreational trails (including equestrian trails) that connect parks and open space, hoping to be able to access these amenities without needing to drive. Groups discussing transportation also suggested developing other modes of transportation: Safe Routes to School, wheelchair-accessible connectivity, a trolley, golf carts in Old Town, improved bus service, and rail connections to San Diego and Orange County.

Common Themes:

- Location/Access
- Traffic and Circulation
- Trails
- Transportation

Examples of Comments:

“Implementing a safe and well connected bike path system.” (Challenge Comment)

“We are there when I can walk and get on a trail within 5-10 minutes from home.” (Group Comment)

Infrastructure and Services

Many participants considered Murrieta’s school system to be a community treasure, and hoped it would continue to be strong in the future. They also valued the police and fire departments, recreation services, library and senior center. Health care was a concern—in particular, hospital services—and participants looked forward to the new Loma Linda University Medical Center. Some participants desired more opportunities for higher education. Participants made suggestions for infrastructure, including facilities for water, sewer, and stormwater. Services suggested by participants included services for the homeless or near-homeless, and animal shelters.

Common Themes:

- Health Care
- Higher Education/Workforce
- Infrastructure and Services
- Library
- Police and Fire
- Schools
- Water

Examples of Comments:

“I would like Murrieta to continue to invest in its police and fire dept. to ensure it is a safe place for people to live and raise their children. I hope our community services will be maintained and increased to provide the great services, such as the rec dept. and parks, we currently have for the people who live here. I would like the growth to be managed and planned, so that we can pay as we grow.” (Vision Comment)

“Maintaining services for kids, youth, adults and seniors that makes Murrieta the great place it is today.” (Challenge Comment)

Governance

Participants valued the opportunity to be involved in their community, including the General Plan Update workshops. Some were concerned about interference in Murrieta from special interests or excessive regulation from higher levels of government. Participants hoped for a

fiscally sound future for Murrieta. They wanted leaders with vision, a responsive local government, communication with residents, and coordination with neighboring communities.

Common Themes:

- Community Involvement
- Local Government
- Regional Neighbors
- Regulation
- Revenue/Budget
- Special Interests

Examples of Comments:

“Opportunity to get involved” (Treasure Comment)

“A community open to new ideas and new experiences” (Vision Comment)