



CATALYZE **SV**

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS: Revitalizing Milpitas's Main Street

Report

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MEETING MINUTES

CONTEXT

The City of Milpitas hired [Catalyze SV](#) (CSV) to help facilitate three conversations/workshops in the spring of 2021 to discuss with Milpitas stakeholders the redevelopment of Main Street in Milpitas. Each conversation focused on different aspects of the future of Main Street.

OUTCOMES OF THE 3 CONVERSATIONS

These conversations gathered input from Milpitas residents, business owners, and other stakeholders on how they view Main Street and what new development they'd like to see in this area in the future. The City will use this feedback to inform its Specific Plan Update process and formulate effective development policies. Adoption of a new Milpitas Gateway-Main Street Specific Plan is anticipated in early 2022.

PARTICIPANTS: Held to engage anyone interested in the revitalization of Main Street, especially local residents, participants registered via Eventbrite. The slides for the conversations were presented in English and Spanish. The conversations offered Spanish and Vietnamese language interpretation with live transcription in English.

3 COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

1. April 29, 2021 - **Community Conversation #1.** Focus: **Small Business & Economic Development**

- *Overarching question: How do we keep, support, and expand Main Street businesses to encourage economic development throughout the neighborhood?*
- [PDF of the April 29 presentation](#)
- via YouTube, [video of Parts I & II](#) and also [Part IV](#) of the Conversation

2. May 27, 2021 - **Community Conversation #2.** Focus: **Housing**

- *Overarching question: How do we facilitate new housing development on Main Street that both provides opportunities for all types of people and is designed to connect with nearby shops, parks, transportation & other amenities?*
- [PDF of the May 27 presentation](#)
- via YouTube, [video of Parts I, II & IV](#) of the Conversation

3. June 24, 2021 - **Community Conversation #3.** Focus: **Historical & Cultural Resources**

- *Overarching question: How do we reimagine Main Street and support new development opportunities while maintaining its rich history as an important crossroads and community gathering place?*
- [PDF of the June 24 presentation](#)
- via YouTube, [video of Parts I & II](#) and also [Part IV](#) of the Conversation

Breakdown of Participant Engagement as of August 2, 2021:

- **April 29, 2021 Conversation:** There were 57 registrants* via the Eventbrite link. The video received 175 views on Facebook Live and 37 views on Youtube.
- **May 27, 2021 Conversation:** There were 86 registrants* via the Eventbrite link. The video received 48 views on Facebook Live and 14 views on Youtube.
- **June 24, 2021 Conversation:** There were 53 registrants* via the Eventbrite link. The video received 32 views on Facebook Live and 8 views on Youtube.

* The number of registrants include City of Milpitas staff, some individuals who registered multiple times for the same Conversation, individuals who registered for multiple Conversations, and some people who registered but did not attend.

MINUTES DISTRIBUTION: Appendix A lists the entities to which this report is distributed.

FORMAT FOR EACH CONVERSATION

Part I - Presentation (6 PM, virtually via Zoom)

- a. Catalyze SV welcomes everyone, reviews agenda & offers ground rules for the Conversation.
- b. City staff and officials introduce themselves.
- c. CSV & the City of Milpitas present the historic, current & future context of Main Street, with a special focus on the conversation topic.

Part II - Virtual Site Walk (6:45 PM, recorded videos)

- a. CSV shows 4 recorded videos taken from key sections of Main Street.

Part III - Small Group Discussions (6:50 PM, via Zoom breakout rooms)

- a. Participants separate into breakout groups of 5-8 people on Zoom to discuss the possibilities of Main Street & their priorities for it.
- b. Group discussions are facilitated by CSV volunteers. City of Milpitas staff take notes from group members.
 - i. Small Group Suggested Facilitator Questions
 - ii. Small Group Discussion Notes
 - iii. From these small group notes & summaries, Catalyze SV observed key themes [see below]

Part III - Small Groups Report Back to Larger Groups (7:45 PM, in the main Zoom “room”)

The small groups return from the Zoom breakout rooms to the larger group on Zoom. A representative or two from each small group summarizes themes of their respective discussions to the full group so all participants heard about the discussions in other groups.

Conversation Concluded (8:00 PM)

Disclaimer

The opinions expressed below are those of individual community members in attendance and may not represent the opinions of Catalyze SV or the City of Milpitas. All small groups were facilitated by CSV staff or CSV volunteers. Notes were taken by Milpitas staff, who sought to capture and present information as fully and accurately as possible.

About Catalyze SV

Engages community members, developers, & city leaders to envision and create sustainable, equitable, & vibrant places for people in Silicon Valley. Catalyze SV is funded 100% by individual donors, other nonprofit organizations, businesses not involved in development, government grants, & foundations.

OVERALL THEMES (EXECUTIVE SUMMARY)

For each of the respective Community Conversations, we pulled out and highlighted key themes - those ideas that were shared among multiple small groups during one Conversation. Then, we analyzed the key themes from all of the 3 Community Conversations and folded them into overall themes. The themes listed directly below could be considered an executive summary of the three Conversations.

Diverse Local Business:

The Main Street revitalization plan should include ways to support and grow the local economy. Across the community conversations, participants indicated that Main Street lacks sufficient businesses. As a result, locals mainly shop away from Main Street. The businesses that do exist in this area seem to be struggling. Participants voiced that they would like to see more businesses open locations on Main Street including restaurants, coffee shops, bars, retail stores, hair salons, nutrition centers, and medical offices. There was also a consensus that Main Street needs a grocery store (like Trader Joe's) to address current and future food access needs. Participants also urged the City to create programs that will incentivize businesses to relocate to the area, as well as programs geared towards supporting existing businesses.

Central Identity and Unique Draw:

The City of Milpitas should work to create and define Main Street's identity. Doing so will help foster community, strengthen the local economy, and help shift Main Street into a destination. Participants in every Community Conversation shared that Main Street lacks a cohesive identity. The existing businesses and infrastructure do not seem connected. Moreover, they shared that Main Street holds a rich history. The City should uplift its history in Main Street's new identity. Many others expressed that they hoped to see Main Street's identity shaped around being the "new" downtown for the City.

Transportation Options:

Milpitas should invest in infrastructure that promotes alternative modes of transportation on Main Street while allowing for more parking. Currently, Main Street is not very pedestrian or bicycle-friendly. It is also not well-connected to existing public transit. Across each of the Community Conversations, participants expressed how they wished to see infrastructure like bike lanes, wider sidewalks, and a dedicated bike path included in the Main Street revitalization plan. These features will not only encourage people to bike or walk to Main Street but will also make it safer to do so. Participants in each group also voiced that Main Street is not well-connected; they would like to see this changed so that Main Street is more walkable. Last, participants suggested that Milpitas build plans for either new transit options, like shuttles, or create additional routes along Main Street for existing transit. Perhaps in conflict with a focus on walking and biking, multiple community members also emphasized the need for more parking in two of the Conversations.

Beautification & Revitalization:

Main Street's future should include an investment in its infrastructure, creating a warm and inviting area. In two of the Community Conversations, revitalizing Main Street's infrastructure was a very prominent point. Many participants shared how Main Street's buildings looked weathered and the area lacked color. Along with the unkempt lots, Main Street's physical appearance serves as a deterrence for visitors. Participants suggested that the City implement a beautification program on Main Street that would help add modern storefront designs, new landscaping, flowers, and appealing signage. High on the list of changes was for the City to also preserve and restore historic buildings, as well as have signage to mark other historical sites. The conversation on beautification also bridges the conversation on the arts. Many participants wanted to see murals or decorative art pieces added, throughout Main Street, to create a welcoming community space.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION (April 29, 2021)

Themes from Small Group Discussions

Diverse Local Business:

The future of Main Street should include a wide variety of businesses that encourage individuals and families to purchase locally. A common consensus from the participants is that Main Street currently does not have many businesses to shop from or restaurants to eat at; it does not create an enjoyable experience for visitors. Some of the types of businesses participants would like to see established on Main Street include grocery stores, restaurants, bars, retail, and commercial services like dental offices and nail salons. A common suggestion was that new restaurants should include much more outdoor seating. Participants also suggested the City create an incentive program to encourage new businesses to relocate or open a new location on Main Street.

Alternative Transportation Options:

The City should invest in alternative transportation options that connect people safely to and throughout Main Street. Currently, Main Street is largely structured to accommodate vehicle travel, lacking adequate bicycle lanes and sidewalks. Therefore, vehicles that are speeding make it very unsafe for pedestrians and bicycles to travel along this road. Participants would like to see an investment in making Main Street more walkable, by expanding sidewalks and better connecting the sections comprising Main Street. They would also like to see the incorporation of bicycle lanes throughout Main Street and a bicycle path that leads to Main Street. In addition, many participants voiced their support for public transit options that make it easier to travel throughout Main Street, including a shuttle service or personal rapid transit.

Parking:

In the design for Main Street, the City should consider adding additional parking to address current and future constraints. Parking is currently a challenge for many participants who have shopped on Main Street. Many participants suggested the City should invest in parking on Main Street. Doing so would encourage more people to visit, shop, and eat at Main Street. Participants voiced that the City's design should include parking infrastructure, like parking lots or parking garages.

Family Entertainment & Nightlife:

Main Street's design should include opportunities for family-friendly entertainment, community events, and an active nightlife. Participants shared that Main Street lacks events and activities that encourage people to stay in the area and enjoy their time. Hosting more family-friendly events like street fairs, outdoor activities, and community celebrations could attract a diverse population to Main Street. In addition, Main Street's design should foster a lively nightlife through dance venues and musical performances. This would show that Main Street is not just for work and business, it is here to foster social interactions amongst friends and family.

Community Safety:

The City should include community safety as part of the revitalization plan for Main Street. Participants feel unsafe in certain areas of Main Street. A few factors that contribute to this sentiment include speeding, incidences of vandalism, and poor lighting on Main Street. Participants recommended that the City address

these challenges before looking to expand businesses and housing on Main Street. More lighting throughout Main Street would make it safer for pedestrians and bicyclists traveling through the area at night.

Central Identity and Unique Draw:

Main Street's revitalization plan should examine how to build a central identity that draws people to the area. Participants shared that they would like to see a central identity that is authentic, speaking to the area's history and the types of local business established on Main Street. As part of this conversation, participants discussed how Milpitas lacks a true downtown; the revitalization serves as a key opportunity to establish this in Main Street. In discussing Main Street's identity, some participants voiced that they want to bridge the old Milpitas with the new Milpitas. Others want to establish the feeling of a "small-town" on Main Street.

Parks & Community Space:

Main Street's revitalization plan should include spaces that connect people with each other and with nature. Participants reflected on the need for parks for all community members including those geared towards families with children and residents with dogs. They also expressed the need for different sized parks including pocket parks and parks with trails. There are many vacant lots on Main Street and some participants suggested converting these lots into green space.

Small Group Suggested Facilitator Questions

Milpitas Community Conversation #1

About your group (5 mins)

- What is your name and profession?
 - Are you a teacher, cook, business owner, engineer, public representative, parent?
- What are your goals in coming here today?
- Do you work, worship, shop, play, and/or live near Main Street?

General Questions (10 mins)

- What's your current experience with Main Street?
 - What do you like about it?
 - What do you not like about it?
- What would draw you more to live, work, play & stay on Main Street?
 - What do you want to experience here?
- What's your ideal version of Main Street and Milpitas now?
- What's your ideal in 20 years?
- How do you want to feel here?
- What are your fears or concerns with Main Street developing more?

Economic Development / Small Business (15 mins)

- Is there anything on Main Street that current residents/businesses use on a daily or weekly basis?
Weekly basis?
- What services/businesses would you like to see on Main Street?
- What is needed to retain existing small businesses on or near Main Street?
- What is needed to recruit new small businesses to locate on or near Main Street?
- What can the City do to promote economic development?
- Where would be the best locations on Main Street for ground-floor retail?
- What kinds of businesses are/would be most successful on Main Street?
- How is Main Street different from other commercial areas of the City?

Community Benefits / Amenities (10 mins)

- What is the City of Milpitas's responsibility to the community for Main Street?
- What types of community investments or events would support existing & future businesses?
- How can we make Main Street more accessible?
- What amenities or community benefits should be considered during its revitalization?
 - Transportation: Transit/road improvements, transit passes, bike paths, VTA frequency, streetlight timing, bike storage, connected streets?
 - Public space improvements: Sidewalks, parks, open space, walking paths/trails, gathering areas, plazas?
 - Community gatherings: social/cultural events, holidays, nighttime activities, temporary markets, food trucks?
 - Others: Community room, community garden, community center, childcare?
- Is there anything Main Street's revitalization can do to make your life easier or better?

Summary (5 mins)

- Which aspects of the redevelopment are most important to you or most interest you?
- If there were two improvements to Main Street you would want, what would they be?

Small Group Discussion Notes

Group 1 (of 5), led by J. Lee

About Your Group

1. Property owners and retailers on Main Street (Black Cat Comics and Reiki business), a retiree from the high tech industry, a real estate agent, and a commercial real estate broker.
2. Want to see Main Street become more like Santana Row, modernized while retaining history; become a place where people walk and gather.

General Questions

3. Existing local businesses (New India Bazaar, sandwich shop, and hair salon).
4. Park space (linear park) but underutilized.
5. Business has been vandalized in the past; want the area to be more inviting.
6. Dangerous intersection at Main/Serra (difficult to turn left onto Serra from Main going north)
7. Not enough parking at New India Bazaar, the largest Indian store in the area, and other nearby operations bring a lot of traffic to the area, creating an unsafe situation.
8. Too much through traffic.
9. More stores (cosmetics stores, fun shops, etc.) and restaurants with outdoor seating.
10. More stores like coffee shops, clothing stores, and pastry shops.
11. More attractions to encourage staying there for a long time (entertainment, commercial service uses, etc.).
12. More park space along Main Street, area near the Hetch Hetchy water main, and the car wash.
13. Parking structure.
14. Beautification, walkable, and more shops.
15. Wider street, two lanes each way, with wider sidewalks.
16. Safe place with more parking, like Santana Row.
17. Environmentally friendly uses (e.g., modernize the car wash).
18. More ways to get around; multimodal transportation.
19. Mixed-use development with retail on the ground floor and housing above.
20. There are infrastructure and safety issues that we need to address before bringing more people in; traffic is already bad.
21. Vehicles speed through when there's traffic, creating a dangerous situation for bicyclists, or cut through residential neighborhoods.
22. Need to address visibly rundown areas first to attract development.

Economic Development / Small Business

23. Small grocery stores like Trader Joe's.
24. Grocery stores and commercial service uses like hair salons.

Community Benefits / Amenities (10 mins)

25. Bike facilities (bike racks, etc.) and better lighting.
26. Active transportation options like electric scooters.
27. Seating areas in front of cafes.
28. Greenbelt on the northern end.
29. Street landscaping (flowers and trees).
30. More signage to bring attention to existing amenities.
31. Public art on the street.
32. Park space on vacant property near the library.

Summary

33. Social interaction (pedestrian atmosphere and sidewalk dining).
34. Civic plaza.
35. Different kinds of small businesses, including service businesses.
36. Retain a small-town feel like Downtown Los Gatos but differentiate it from other downtowns.
37. Authenticity (local businesses).
38. Entertainment and events (theater, local art, small festivals, etc.).
39. Parking structure nearby to allow people to access Main Street.
40. Consistent theme (branding and streetscape).
41. Establish a distinct character and a defining feature (parks, entertainment, food trucks, etc.).
42. Parking, parks for all ages (and dogs), services/amenities for attendees of places of worship, and more housing to serve businesses on Main Street.
43. The connection between old Milpitas (Main Street) and new Milpitas (Metro Plan).
44. Access to greater Milpitas (other key destinations).

Group 2 (of 5), led by D. Degu

About your group

45. Santa Clara resident who is interested in learning how Milpitas intends to revitalize Main Street.
Interested in doing something similar in Santa Clara.
46. Planning Commissioner.
47. Resident & Milpitas Chamber of Commerce board member.
48. Serves on the Milpitas Chamber of Commerce
49. Energy & Environmental Sustainability Commissioner.
50. The small group unanimously agreed that their goals in attending this webinar are focused on seeing a better and improved Main Street.
51. No one from the small group lives near Main Street. One person said they go to a couple of places on Main Street, but for the most part, they have no reason to go to Main Street. Others agreed that there are no real reasons to go to Main Street, aside from the Best Sandwiches and the library for example.

General Questions

52. Best Sandwiches and other Restaurants. Library. Housing for senior living.
53. Lacks attraction. No parking. Lacks true a downtown or main street like Mountain View, Los Gatos, and Campbell. No walkability. Needs better lighting to encourage safety and place of gathering for visitors
54. Lacks a true downtown, walkability, and better lighting.
55. One person said there needs to be some sort of shuttle, bus, or vehicle service that can help activate the area so that it's easy for people to move throughout Main Street.

Economic Development / Small Business

56. Library. Restaurants. Places of worship.
57. More restaurants.
58. Keep leases affordable. Have a downtown association.
59. Entertainment. Pop-up businesses like in San Francisco. Family and kid-friendly amenities (i.e. food trucks, outdoor exercises, beer gardens, etc.). Open area plazas. Performing Arts Center. More restaurants. Repurpose the railroad lines.
60. Help establish a downtown association.

Community Benefits / Amenities

61. Wider sidewalks to encourage pedestrian friendliness. More social experiences, like street fairs and sidewalk cafés.
62. Encourage mixed-use developments and ensure there is ground-floor retail. Address parking challenges. Ensure the Gateway-Main Street Specific Plan Update fully integrates housing, retail, and commercial uses with community activity.

Summary

- a. [Group ran out of time]

Group 3 (of 5), led by A. Andrade**About Your Group**

63. Business owner; Board on the Milpitas Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development and Trade Commission; long-time Resident, Recreation & Community Services Director and historical resources expert; resident of 40+ years, seen lots of changes; Economic Development and Trade Commission and resident/employee at Flex, love Milpitas – business Postnet.

General Questions

64. The question was asked but participants talked about what they did not like and what it lacked. Some participants offered suggestions. See below.
65. Main Street is sad, needs something to enjoy and experience; not much to do in Milpitas. Residential multi-story shopping complex desired; need nightlife and social interactions. Commercial businesses could be located on the ground floor, within several floors. Wants to build another business. Needs liveliness. In the Gateway/Main Street Specific Plan, Main Street is hidden and set back from Calaveras Boulevard.
66. Smart transit with dual-loop Personal Rapid Transit stop on Main Street. Facilitate different types of businesses.
67. Wants to be impressed with tall buildings, places to eat, and nightlife; a Los Gatos type of historic look but a true downtown with modern aspects. Shaped for modern living with a pedestrian-friendly environment. Denser area. Population growth.

Economic Development / Small Business

68. Has to be all retail; Main Street is supposed to be a place to walk and retail will help like Santana Row with high-end fashion shops. It will take time to develop. A place to walk with family and partner. Retail is changing. Restaurants will be important to attract people to downtown, include ones that will be appealing for young professionals. Accommodate small businesses, attorneys, doctors' offices, financial advisors in a multistory building.
69. More Small Business Administration loans to restaurants; no handouts. Need to encourage more small businesses to open. Restaurants and food trucks are the perfect examples. Need financial freedom; root problem to attract businesses is acquiring a license, everything must be done by noon. City does not accommodate fast results.

Community Benefits / Amenities

70. Dog park, open space, places to sit for enjoyable experiences, food trucks, protected bike lanes, and bike trails from business parks; need a point of interest and a centerpiece for Main Street that represents Milpitas; need a point of interest unique to Milpitas/Silicon Valley.

Summary

71. Turning Capitol Avenue to a downtown Trader Joe's, dance places, and residential; only high-end businesses. Do we want high-end businesses on Main Street?

Group 4 (of 5), led by N. Thomas

About Your Group

72. Residents
73. City Staff

General Questions

- a. [Questioned not answered]

Economic Development / Small Business

74. Consider and strengthen linkages to the Transit Area – physical and economic linkages.
75. Need stronger, more convenient transit linkages between Main Street and other areas of the City.
76. Community Performing Arts Center on Main Street to serve as a community gathering space, the heartbeat of a community.
77. Main Street needs cafés, bookstores, micro-brewery, a wine store – places for informal gatherings.
78. Needs physical infrastructure to support new commercial uses: parking garage, patios, and pocket parks.
79. Needs consistent signage, lighting, landscaping, and street furniture. For example, entry signs, a consistent image, and banners.
80. Variety in stores and storefronts but consistency in public infrastructure.

Community Benefit / Amenities

81. Today, Main Street is run-down, rough-looking, and a hodgepodge.
82. Community needs to embrace and celebrate through community events and activities.
83. Examples of events: 4th of July parade, Art and Wine Festival; bring back traditions.
84. Celebrate history in culture and arts – drama, dance, sculpture, murals, art installations, and local artists.
85. Revolving displays by local artists.
86. Capitalize on the authenticity of Main Street as a central gathering place – historical context and use.
87. Ethnic restaurants.
88. The city should provide incentives for small restaurants, shops, and bakeries.
89. Musical performances could be a regional draw; amphitheater.
90. Area of intimacy: mix, eat, walk, share experiences, enjoy music and art, and have a conversation.
91. Paths, trails, small parks, and plazas (logistics and amenities) that are accessible to all.
92. Electric bikes and scooters make it fun; need places to park, “convenient parking makes walking possible”.
93. Central landing spot is needed – make it easy to walk.

Summary

94. Art – murals, permanent or short-term installations, and an art and wine walk.
95. Places to celebrate history through art.
96. Places to mix with others on a small-scale, slower pace, authentic, intimate; a place to meet and chat with friends.
97. Places to park then walk.

98. Festivals/celebrations.
99. Consistency.
100. Infrastructure needed to support a different Main Street, one focused on people rather than cars.

Group 5 (of 5), led by N. Inamine

About your group

101. Main Street is a second home to her; kids utilize the area. Wants to give feedback.
102. Dentist on Main Street; the barbershop and An-Jen are his places to visit on the way to Great Mall. Hopes it becomes more spruced up. Parking lots allow for more walking on Main Street, keep in mind. Wants it to be more attractive and wants more people in the area to enjoy it.
103. 40 yrs, part of the Pines Neighborhood group and the Technology Committee for the City. Visits An-Jen a lot and the library. Methodist church folded; space is still for sale. Hope it becomes a worship space again.
104. Traffic consultant works in Milpitas occasionally. Wants to hear what people think about traffic conditions in the City.

General Questions

105. In San Jose, there are redevelopments with themes, and everyone is connected through mixed-use development. More traffic in and out of the area; traffic can be improved. Visits doctors off of Corning Avenue, and goes to the Great Mall. Also goes to church on Main Street; is a member of the parish council. Wants a more unified theme and destination feel there. Revitalization happening in Sunnyvale.
106. Would like a more unified theme, destination feel.
107. Lacking restaurants, especially destination quality restaurants.
108. Drive-through city.
109. Limited amount of roadway.
110. Rundown hotels that aren't attractive.
111. Be able to walk around on Main Street, have coffee, shop at boutiques; that kind of feel.
112. More restaurants; a lot have left in recent years. Sit-down restaurants, like DishDash, or Black Angus, quality restaurants, will need more space. Need parking.
113. Expand every transportation option. You can walk, ride a bike, drive through Main Street. Have all of those options to make a place vibrant. Have all of these options to make a street active and fun. Huge potential there. Restaurants are great! Want to linger there and enjoy yourself.
114. Personal rapid transit demand-driven monorail.
115. Mini parks and fields where kids can play. Do not necessarily have to be large, but playgrounds and fun places to play.
116. Informal gatherings, unplanned and planned. Musicians, entertainment, and small parks to liven up and beautify the area.
117. Entertainment; Friday night events with bands, open mics, and outdoor events on the side streets so people can drop by and listen. Make the place more friendly, with events that are free and accessible to all ages.
118. Art deco storefronts for browsing the windows. Space for art displays and shows where people can drop by and see what artists have done.
119. Outdoor art is interesting and fun too.
120. Lighting would help brighten the area and make it look quaint, or whatever you want. A big consideration for safety and a good experience on the street.

121. Storefronts in Mountain View- lots of visibility from within businesses and storefronts with attractive storefronts that help people feel safer.
122. Want to feel safer.
123. Don't see it impacting traffic in the Pines; won't impact us but where will people park to accommodate the amenities we're talking about?
124. Need a parking garage. We need it in order to hold more events.
125. It's a hodgepodge now. And some areas feel safe while others don't. Need to make sure it's well policed and kept safe.
126. Avoid congested parking lots.

Economic Development / Small Business

127. Main Street has restaurants, An-Jan, and dental and medical offices. But most businesses are not restaurants, rather shops (tire shops, daycare centers).
128. Specific needs on Main Street include medical and personal care. There is an oddball combination of shops that are close together.
129. Destination-type restaurants and ice cream shops. Currently, there are a couple of old motels/inns that are "notorious" that they would like to redevelop into more attractive uses.
130. Felt like the new mixed-use units are right on the street; "utterly dominant" compared to anything else on Main St. Thought there would be more of a setback/transition from street to building.
131. Shops closer to the street help make pedestrians feel safer and are more attractive to customers; these are setbacks outlined in the plan.
132. A good breakfast place, complementary to churches.
133. Ask the businesses what they need. Some have been there a long time, not sure what they're facing.
134. Storefronts have to be changed. The signage and displays need to be more attractive and so more businesses will want to come in. Rundown buildings can be changed, but what about next door? Need to be redeveloped in a more unified way.
135. The bottom floor of Trader Joe's is parking, with commercial and residential above the ground floor. Mixed-use.
136. Placing more residential on Main Street brings more activity and helps those businesses have more customers.
137. Breakfast place with housing above, within walking distance of churches and other places. A real draw and wouldn't need the extra parking.
138. Lack of response is an indication there is no theme. No look and feel over throughout Main Street. A hodgepodge again.
139. No distinctive features.
140. Consistent lighting would help, even in stores, to tie things together.
141. Street trees, landscaping, and plants to add to the feel and create a consistent feel.

Community Benefits / Amenities

142. Lighting, landscaping, trees to start with. People will see something going on there.
143. Greenspaces.
144. Entertainment? Host the events like Parks & Recreation activities once a month. Music store needed in the area to show off the instruments. People can play what they have.
145. Address the areas that are really run down now. Strip malls. Motels should be closed down.
146. How to get more people into the area. Folks of all ages and abilities, different ethnicities and backgrounds.

- 147. Parks bring kids.
- 148. Ice cream shop!
- 149. Things people don't have to buy.
- 150. Playgrounds, different age groups.

Summary

- 151. Lighting and trees.
- 152. Parking.
- 153. LED lighting is very glaring. Should be the kind with decent light but not so bright.
- 154. Parks and mini-parks.
- 155. Restaurants.
- 156. Investment in storefronts.
- 157. Landscaping.
- 158. More food trucks.
- 159. Streetscape improvements.
- 160. Entertainment and lively spaces.
- 161. Destination-themed improvements.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION (May 27, 2021)

Themes from Small Group Discussions

Affordable Housing Development:

The city of Milpitas should invest in affordable housing development in the Main Street area. Milpitas has become increasingly expensive to live in; there is a significant lack of affordable rental units and houses on the market. Participants shared they would like to see affordable housing development included in the design for Main Street. The housing could support seniors in our community and members of the local workforce like teachers and first responders. Participants also suggested other ways to address affordable housing needs, including subsidizing housing and first-time homebuyer programs.

Mixed-Use Development:

Main Street's design should include mixed-use development. Participants across each group emphasized the benefits that mixed-use developments offer. Many cited that mixed-use development can help attract new and diverse businesses since it will create more office, including co-working space. Participants also discussed the design they would like to see for mixed-use developments. They hoped the City would maintain the bottom floors for restaurant and retail, while the top floors are reserved for housing.

Beautification & Revitalization:

The City of Milpitas should consider beautification as a component of the revitalization plan for Main Street. Currently, participants feel that the buildings located on Main Street are worn and weathered. Likewise, the vacant lots feel blighted and are not well-maintained. Together, they create an uninviting environment that can serve as a deterrence for visitors. Participants shared that they would like for the City to restore existing buildings and preserve those with historic architecture to help improve Main Street. People also shared they would like to see new and consistent signage indicating what businesses are located on Main Street. Other ideas participants had included adding landscaping design to the recommendations in the future Specific Plan for the area.

Alternative Modes of Transportation:

The City should use this opportunity to encourage alternative modes of transportation to and from Main Street. Main Street is located near many other destinations including the newest BART station. However, most areas are only easily accessible by car, lacking the infrastructure to keep bicyclists and pedestrians safe. Participants suggested creating a bike path that easily facilitates getting to Main Street and adding bike parking to the proposed design. Other participants suggested creating an overpass restricted for pedestrian and bicycle transit, to keep community members safe. Participants also cited concerns over public transit and suggested investing in more reliable transit to take people to and from Main Street.

Diverse Local Businesses:

The revitalization plan should include ways to encourage new businesses to establish locations on Main Street and should support existing businesses. Participants shared that they hoped to see more local businesses available on Main Street. Specifically, people wanted businesses where they enjoy time with friends and family like restaurants, coffee shops, and bars. Many also highlighted the importance of keeping businesses local, avoiding large chain stores. Other participants discussed the importance of food access on

Main Street, especially if the City is to build more housing. They suggested establishing grocery stores along Main Street.

Central Identity & Unique Draw:

The City of Milpitas should consider shaping Main Street around a key identity. Participants voiced that Main Street does not look cohesive in its design. Likewise, the businesses that are located on Main Street do not seem connected to each other. When recruiting new businesses, the City should consider how they will tie in with the culture of Main Street. In addition, participants shared that Main Street's identity should include an appreciation of Milpitas' history while meeting modern demands.

Parking:

As Milpitas considers adding more housing to Main Street, the City should also consider adding more parking spaces in the redevelopment. Main Street lacks sufficient parking to meet the current demand. With more families anticipated in the area and more local businesses, these parking challenges may be exacerbated. Having more parking would also allow for more events to be held on Main Street that people throughout Milpitas can attend.

Small Group Suggested Facilitator Questions

Milpitas Community Conversation #2

I. **About your group (5 mins)**

- What is your name and profession?
 - Are you a teacher, cook, business owner, engineer, public servant, parent?
- What are your goals in coming here today?
- Do you work, worship, shop, play, and/or live near Main Street?

II. **General Questions (5 mins)**

- What's your current experience with Main Street?
 - What do you like about it?
 - What do you not like about it?
- What would draw you more to live, work, play & stay on Main Street?
 - What do you want to experience here?
- What's your ideal version of Main Street & Milpitas?
- Do you have any fears or concerns with Main Street developing more?

III. **Housing (20 mins)**

- Would you like to live on Main Street? Why or why not?
- Who might want to live on Main Street? (singles, couples, families, age groups)
- What housing types do you think we need on Main Street?
- For those who do or would live on Main Street, what do they need near their home?
- What does affordable housing mean to you? [Facilitator: examples include workforce housing for first responders & teachers; housing for seniors or the disabled; permanent supportive housing for homeless]
- How important is affordable housing to you?
- What are the potential challenges to building housing/mixed-use on Main Street?

IV. **Community Benefits / Amenities (10 mins)**

- What is the City of Milpitas's responsibility to the community for Main Street?
- What amenities or community benefits should be considered during its revitalization?
 - Transportation: Transit/road improvements, transit passes, bike paths, VTA frequency, streetlight timing, bike storage, connected streets?
 - Public space improvements: Sidewalks, parks, open space, walking paths/trails, gathering areas, plazas?
 - Community gatherings: social/cultural events, holidays, nighttime activities, temporary markets, food trucks?
 - Others: Community room, community garden, community center, childcare?
- Is there anything Main Street's revitalization can do to make your life easier or better?

V. **Summary (5 mins)**

- Which aspects of the redevelopment are most important to you or most interest you?
- If there were 2 improvements to Main Street you would want, what would they be?

Small Group Discussion Notes

Group 1 (of 5), led by S. Goei

About Your Group:

162. In Milpitas for over 20 years. Came from Mountain View and Los Gatos. Seen transition in Mountain View and Los Gatos.
163. Associate Planner. See the largest connection as the Library, a wonderful asset.
164. Been in Milpitas for 25 years and has retired from high tech.
165. Retired from NASA Ames. Currently, on Homelessness Task Force and previously served on the Arts Commission. Lived in Milpitas for 35 years.
166. Graphic designer, web design. Moved from SoCal to Milpitas 34 years ago. Grew up in Milpitas, went to college.
167. Want to see something happen in Midtown.
168. Looking for a pedestrian destination.
169. Want Main Street to be nicer; have people shop there.
170. Participated in parades. Go to restaurants on Main Street. Also, use shops. Try to shop locally. Love to see it Turning it into a walking destination. Love the library. Seen transition. Want to add to a gem.
171. Like the shops. Want to see what Main Street could be. More safe, walking areas, more community activities.

General Questions

172. Main Street looks run-down right now.
173. When the lobster truck shows up, a lot of people show up. Best Sandwiches is a very cool restaurant; we lost Baja Cactus. Hoping to get a brewery.
174. Some places could have live entertainment.
175. Want to see character, not conformity. Needs to have a close linkage between Main Street and the Great Mall area. The opportunity to attract residents is important to stimulate the economy. If there is a Midtown plan, stick to it.
176. Video only showed half of Main Street; need to extend further.
177. Need to include the liquor store and the vacant space next to it.
178. Same people working on Main Street for years. Something to liven up Main Street. Not a carwash. Could be something really great.
179. Planning Commission did deny a carwash; they are doing their job.
180. History museums would be good.

Housing

181. Fan of mixed-use; first build commercial, then residential housing.
182. Affordable Housing Ordinance requires 15%. We should always build units and not allow for developers to pay in-lieu fees. Housing is needed everywhere.
183. Looking for all types of housing.
184. Want the City to assist first-time homebuyers and help school teachers.
185. Mixed-development housing; housing for seniors, others, young people too.
186. Mixed-age.
187. Need a corner store like Trader Joe's.

188. Want to see small retail, coffee shops, breweries, brick-and-mortar stores, and diverse restaurants; Main Street needs more restaurants, bars, and evening entertainment.

Community Benefits/Amenities

189. Food trucks, live entertainment.
190. History walk. Have an art theme, bring people to see outdoor artwork on Main Street.
191. Milpitas has silos, individual communities. Desire is to pull everyone together to share art and culture.
192. Art and Wine Walk, closing streets.
193. Relocate the farmers market to Main Street.
194. Can bike to places.
195. A lot of housing around BART, a shuttle for people to get to Main Street, and bike parking.
196. Agreed, we need bike parking.
197. Don't know how to get to Main Street on a bike; there is no bike path.
198. No protected bike path; cars are going fast. Community needs a safe bike path.
199. Widening Calaveras has been discussed in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP).
200. Don't see bicyclists on Main Street.
201. It's hard to get to Main Street on a bike. You really have to know which way to avoid traffic.
202. Include a pedestrian/bicycle overpass so that people can avoid going over major streets and over train tracks. It's a risk for people and kids to use the bike lane right now; it is too narrow.
203. Find ways for people to travel to Main Street.
204. Need to give attention to parking, too.
205. Main Street is used to get from one side of town to the other. Traffic.
206. Provide easier access to Main Street.
207. Provide signage so that we know what businesses are there.
208. Like the signpost on the cover of the Specific Plan. Traditional, charming town image. Would like a mix of things. Have a rich culture. Should find a way to share that. Restaurants to gather at. Opportunity to revitalize.
209. Would describe Milpitas as a little city between two large cities, something special and very welcoming.
210. Like that all schools are within one school district, unlike San Jose. Would like to embrace the beautiful hills. Like a little community. Just need to make it more special.
211. We have Sunnyhills.

Summary

212. The fact the City is trying to revitalize.
213. Make it happen.
214. Need young people to move to Milpitas.
215. Ideas for vacant lots. Park, gathering space.
216. Additional community space.
217. Had a problem that City Center is separated from the historical center on Main Street. Would be great to move City Center to Main Street to make it one place.
218. City Ventures. Built a mixed-use project on Main Street a few years ago. Developers have the options if the lots are large enough. The commercial units can be purchased. A good model, as some want to do tenant improvement and not worry about the lease. City wants to put parking in the back.
219. Can have community space in the development. HOA can allow public access.

- 220. Retain businesses, encourage brick-and-mortar. Keep Main Street the same width all the way.
- 221. Keep Main Street the same width all the way.
- 222. Want to be able to walk from business to business, not drive. Current businesses don't tie together.
- 223. Invite a famous chef to open a restaurant (Yan can cook).
- 224. Facilitator, Derek – 2 key themes from group:
 - a. Make Main St a creative space: Wine walk, restaurants, entertainment, gathering place
 - b. Make Main St more accessible: By bike; Improve access.

Group 2 of (5), led by J. Lee

About Your Group

- 225. Long-time resident (near Milpitas HS); interested in seeing more shopping & local businesses on Main Street.
- 226. Financial planner (former military) and CFO of Chamber of Commerce; interested in seeing Main Street become a destination.
- 227. Business owner of Bombay Chaat House.

General Questions

- 228. Try to shop and eat in Milpitas (library, Fosters Freeze, coffee shops, etc.); want to see it become a destination.
- 229. Visits Best Sandwiches, KFC, and animal feed store.
- 230. Blighted area; used to be a real Main Street but shops are gone, and there are vacant sites.
- 231. Needs to be more attractive ("spruced up") and have more mom and pop shops.
- 232. Need a consistent style/theme/design; prefer a more neighborhood/homey feel.
- 233. Developers get what they want; violate plans and policies.
- 234. Looks run down and uninviting; parking is an issue too.
- 235. Would like to see special events, but not enough parking.
- 236. More restaurants and necessary businesses/services

Housing

- 237. Would like to see more businesses, but need mixed-use development.
- 238. Buildable areas are too small.
- 239. Need more parking on the south end.
- 240. Maybe focus on businesses along Main Street.
- 241. Need housing above retail for retail to be viable, but no more than 3 stories, like Santana Row.
- 242. Not too clustered or high-density housing due to parking issues.
- 243. Some housing on select sites or areas, but not everywhere.
- 244. Would like to see affordable housing for seniors, teachers, and first responders.
- 245. Would like to see condos but as part of mixed-use development with larger retail areas to attract businesses.
- 246. Prefers local businesses over malls and regional shopping centers.
- 247. Convenience is key: parking, neighborhood commercial, services, etc.
- 248. Homes with historic architectural styles.

Community Benefits / Amenities

- 249. Cultural center (theater, entertainment, etc.) or something else that would attract people.
- 250. Complementary uses (museum, community center, etc.).
- 251. Parks and bicycle/pedestrian facilities.

- 252. Walkable areas (wide sidewalks, outdoor dining, patios, landscaping, and smaller building setbacks).
- 253. Maintain vacant sites better.
- 254. Incentives to attract businesses.
- 255. Branding and signs (welcome signs, etc.).

Summary

- 256. Clean it up in simple but effective ways (color and other inviting elements) to help existing businesses.
- 257. It needs to be more attractive (planters, appealing sidewalks, streetscape elements, the historic theme for buildings, etc.).
- 258. Outdoor dining and special events.
- 259. Affordable housing in a careful way.
- 260. Commercial nightlife district but a safe place for people to live like Santana Row.
- 261. Mixed-income community, including ownership and rental condo, duplexes, and townhome units, while understanding the need for high-density.
- 262. Walkable areas.
- 263. Need for balance (housing types, density levels, income levels, land uses, etc.).
- 264. Commercial areas for shopping and jobs.
- 265. Diverse design and architectural styles.
- 266. Gathering spaces for outdoor music and dining, pocket parks, and seating.

Group 3 (of 5), led by J. Garner

About Your Group

- 267. Works with Realtors and represents them in the city.
- 268. MUSD, part of the homeless task force.
- 269. Works at SAP Labs, has lived in the Pines for 40 yrs, does business on Main St, part of the homeowner's association, and serves on the Science & Tech Commission.
- 270. Director of land acquisitions at CitiVentures and has done work in Milpitas; missing a downtown in Milpitas and is working on mixed-use zoning.

General Questions

- 271. Restore what's there
- 272. Looks old, scary to walk by yourself at night; after the bridge, there are homeless people and hotels that are scary. Buildings are old; want them to change.
- 273. Not a lot of experience with Main Street but experience with redeveloping areas like this. There's a way to revitalize and modernize it, making it walkable, with ground-floor retail, a mini-city of its own.
- 274. Gaps in businesses down there; want to see the museum north of the library.
- 275. Don't have a lot of experience here.
- 276. Be mindful of traffic, it's getting bad here.
- 277. Live in an urban center, walkable to uses, transit oriented development in the same area, and create a downtown culture.
- 278. Charging stations, wifi stations, parks and recreation, where kids can play and parents can do work on the go.

Housing

279. More homeowners, vertical condos, and townhomes would decrease the wealth gap and revitalize the area.
280. Agree with creating a variety of places for people to purchase, and townhomes are dense, \$150/sf, condos are more expensive to build, etc.
281. Don't know what's available for families in the city; they're leaving due to high costs. How does this information get presented to target homebuyers?
282. Parking; need places for vehicles.
283. More people in a household, more cars.
284. Want to see affordable housing built as a part of the picture, not rent control.
285. Mixed demographic makes for a good community.
286. Building onsite affordable housing with market rate housing is better than separate.
287. Permanent supportive housing for families struggling in the city; consider them first.
288. Workforce housing is often forgotten and important.
289. Density bonuses, expedited processes.
290. Can we subsidize costs for teachers?
291. Affordable groups struggle to get funding, can the City help with this? Partner with market-rate developers.
292. Parking.
293. Normal to not own a car in other places around the Bay, but not here, and hard to make the shift. It's a huge deal; however, the cost of construction is very high and could affect the ability to build it.
294. Water is also an issue.
295. Live on Main street, need groceries and smaller grocery stores.
296. Not convenient for older people.
297. Security and safety, especially around BART.
298. Kids walking long distances; what about buses?
299. Lighting at night.

Community Benefits / Amenities

300. Green spaces and parks, public art, and bike trails.
301. Bike shares, scooters, car shares, bigger bike paths with greater separation, dedicated bike lanes with bollards, and safety concerns. Lighting at night will help, but not over bright LEDs, not like those in a fluorescent mall. Invest in buses and use public transportation more so it gets more funding.

Summary

302. Safety, improving the visual quality, the streets are breaking, more bike lanes
303. Well-built mixed-use housing and affordable ownership opportunities.
304. Develop a downtown space where people gather and recreate.
305. Parking, there's a perception that it's a problem.
306. Keep people in the city when they're leaving the city to have fun.
307. Theme for development to make it more attractive and improve frontage and facades of older stores.
308. Displays in the storefronts; nice for people shopping on the streets.
309. Greenery; shade and trees on Main Street.
310. Increase sidewalk widths.
311. Trash cans on the street, especially for people walking dogs.
312. Shoe stores; stores with small footprints.

Group 4 (of 5), led by A. Marcus**About Your Group**

- 313. Founder of creative spaces, south bay tech center, and looking to expand. Film studio and event center.
- 314. Live and work in Milpitas, work at FLEX. Live near the Great Mall. Vice-Chair for Economic Development and Trade Commission.
- 315. SCC Association of Realtors; Tim Beaubien covers the Milpitas area. The mission is to promote homeownership.
- 316. AJ Elias
- 317. Works in construction; own bar on the G, adding 8 more community nights.
- 318. City officials

General Questions

- 319. Good thing, lots of traffic goes through there.
- 320. Could be good for nightlife.
- 321. Variety of businesses, eclectic
- 322. Visually not great, Hodgepodge of stuff, cut off.
- 323. Traffic is good for business
- 324. Like making it a walking street, park and walk-in.
- 325. Seeing the sign brings people into businesses
- 326. Gateway portion, Fairway, and Main Street; look at Santana Row type development to bring people together. It's close to 880, a straight shot, and a huge plus for money and jobs.
- 327. Combine living, working together; have storefronts and businesses, and office and living above.
- 328. Nightlife but safety.

Housing

- 329. I would like to live where there is nightlife, yet appealing.
- 330. Needs to be a place to park.
- 331. Want to see more for sale opportunities that are affordable (Realtors)
- 332. Can housing fit in historic areas?
- 333. Can housing jive with nightlife?
- 334. Need affordable housing.
- 335. Lots of opportunities.
- 336. Having studios can reduce the cost and bring in younger people and money into the area. I see it more as a Sunnyvale or Willow Glen scale, 4-6 stories high, 3-bedrooms, and studios to attract younger people.
- 337. Modern vs town historic design?
- 338. More people, more business can be done there.
- 339. Train tracks behind Main Street. Good area for nightlife, there aren't many single-family homes there; the more you bring in that group, whole families, then it creates issues with nightlife. Also, there are lots of homeless around there, which needs to be addressed; will affect everything. We own a business and we deal with the homeless situation. There is the potential to have festivals, shut the street down while other streets can still be accessed. Lots of potential.
- 340. Parking. Parking on the north side of the district. Delivery, Main Street is not a big street and the street gets blocked for deliveries.
- 341. Obstacles; neighborhood opposition; how does the local community feel?

342. Is there a program to let the public know? I haven't seen any big advertisements, billboards about how to get involved. I don't see any ads for that. The city is planning a big holiday event in December, with an ice rink, and food trucks.
343. Our businesses (Able and Main/Sera) built a big patio hoping to get more gatherings; happy to help with festivals and happy to support.
344. Affordable family housing vs. nightlife...incompatible uses? Yes, but it will take some thinking.

Community Benefits / Amenities

345. Missing that Milpitas feel, downtown area to gather, we need that. Housing should represent the City. I hope city leaders are looking at the past and future.
346. Leaders, new housing opportunities, and homeownership and rental opportunities.
347. Address the homeless issue. Fencing and access to the train tracks; it is a highway for the homeless. Abandoned cars. Don't run them out of there, but find a way to help them. Have them engage or be helpful somehow rather than just wandering around, standing on corners on 237. The vacant church just got broken into, walls were busted, and was ransacked two weeks ago. Address that. That has to happen before people will bring their families there.
348. Grew up in Milpitas in the Pines, like the old town feel. Needs attention, but people don't want it to be replaced with a Santana Row (clean bright pretty) and don't want to lose that small-town history; it is hard. Since COVID, hotels are empty, it seems scarier now. We need to have families feel safe and for businesses to want to invest in that area. Need to address somehow.
349. Lots of parks but they are hidden by other stuff. We have a two-year-old, well taken care of. There is a park near the fire department. You miss them when you drive by. Wayfinding would help people find amenities and attractions.
350. Amphitheater in the park area.

Summary

351. Blend old and new
352. We need a place to gather to enjoy the culture.
353. Figure out how to make it work for nightlife and for housing including rental and ownership. Will it work to build housing above retail? Will nightlife be compatible with housing?
354. Figure out a way to balance the preservation of history while also looking toward the future.
355. Safety needs to be considered; there is crime in the area now.
356. Having affordable housing on the edges but not in the center may help large projects. Affordable housing might be hard to attract business into the core.
357. Keep that historic look and think about the future.
358. Preservation is expensive; They just tore down the Los Gatos movie theater and then made it look vintage. Rebuilding.
359. Add art and sculptures on Main Street in the main part or the town square. It helps tell the history. That intersection was called crossroads, keeps the longtime residents interested and feeling like they are still at home. It also introduces new people to the history of the area. Art is a good way to do that.

Group 5 (of 5), led by N. Thomas

About Your Group

360. Residents
361. City Staff

General Questions

- a. [Section not answered]

Housing

- 362. Main St. mix of uses to include retail stores, offices, multi-family housing, restaurants, sidewalk cafés, childcare centers, public facilities, churches, etc.
- 363. Some participants said they would like to live on a revitalized Main Street while others would not; the likely demographic would be young single people, small families, commuters.
- 364. Housing types should be diverse (type, size) and inclusionary - low income, hourly workers, retirees
- 365. Opportunities to help the unhoused population.
- 366. Housing is needed to meet the needs of the local workforce – workers can live and work in the same area.
- 367. Need to recognize high construction costs; the key question is not whether we like it but can it be built.
- 368. What rents are needed vs what rents are realistic? Can vertical development fit?
- 369. Other cities renovate or re-use old buildings. It allows for cheaper rent; Milpitas Main Street would be starting from scratch.
- 370. The high cost of materials and labor makes housing construction difficult or infeasible.
- 371. Lot depth is an issue on Main Street. There are smaller parcels; so we need tools to incentivize lot assemblage.
- 372. Vibrant community needs a variety of different housing types, price points, and visual interests.

Community Benefits / Amenities

- 373. City serves as a go-between in balancing the desires of developers and the community.
- 374. Revitalization connotes trying to heal the area – make Main Street welcoming and “convivial”.
- 375. Developers have not accomplished this on their own. How can the City set policies to help?
- 376. City should be more aggressive in working with developers.
- 377. City should watch out for existing small businesses and help avoid displacement.
- 378. New housing will need new or better transportation connections to the rest of the City.
- 379. Mini-parks, micro-parks, gathering spaces – not playgrounds or playfields – neighborhood parks.
- 380. Need consistent design, consistent lighting, and continuity along Main Street to address safety concerns.
- 381. Performing arts center or gathering space; coordinate housing and entertainment venues.
- 382. Need a variety of community meeting rooms that are small, medium, and large.

Summary

- 383. At the end, each participant used one word to describe what they would like Main Street to be:
 - a. Fun place
 - b. Convivial
 - c. Attractive
 - d. Useful
 - e. Destination/Home

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION (June 24, 2021)

Themes from Small Group Discussions

Historical Importance:

The design for Main Street should include opportunities to highlight Milpitas's history. The City of Milpitas has a wonderfully rich history. Stakeholders shared that they would like to see different methods of honoring that history. They offered ideas like establishing a museum where the next generation can learn about the City's history. Other ideas participants shared included establishing a history walk that has signage throughout Main Street indicating historical landmarks. The City should continue to uncover its history. As community members contemplated how to uplift history, they also expressed how uplifting the history could serve as a focal point for Main Street, drawing in visitors.

Beautification & Revitalization:

Main Street's infrastructure needs revitalization to create a welcoming atmosphere that fosters community, enhances local business, and creates a sense of safety. Stakeholders noted that many of the buildings and structures on Main Street look weathered. Existing businesses lack appealing storefronts to drive in other businesses. Some of the changes participants aim to see include landscaping projects that would add flowers and greenery to the area, incorporating unique and modern storefronts, and restoring existing buildings. Community members also expressed that art, like murals and public art pieces, could help revitalize Main Street.

Central Identity & Unique Draw:

Rebranding Main Street around a key identity or focal point will help generate a sense of community and bolster the local economy. Community members shared how Main Street feels like a "stopping point" versus a "destination." They would like to see a defined reason for people to come and visit Main Street. Many shared that Main Street could become the City's center, citing downtowns in neighboring cities that have successfully established businesses and entertainment that draw in many people. Participants maintained that they would like to create an identity that is unique to the Milpitas area.

Family-Friendly Entertainment & Nightlife:

Community members would like for the City of Milpitas to incorporate spaces for events, entertainment, or nightlife that would allow for individuals and families to celebrate together. Participants cited that they are aware of events hosted on Main Street, like Pumpkins at the Park, but would like to see a larger variety, including pop-up events around food. Others shared that they would like to create a venue where residents can enjoy music, dance, or local theatre. Across the groups, many participants shared that the City of Milpitas could capitalize on the vacant lots as opportunities of establishing these types of events or venues. Participants also explored establishing a cultural entertainment center on Main Street. The cultural entertainment center would operate programming that elevates arts and culture for all ages and bridges communities.

Art:

In each of the small groups, participants indicated the importance of art in the proposed design for Main Street. Art was cited as a crucial way of improving the physical appearance of buildings, adding uniqueness and character to Main Street, and highlighting the history of the city. Beyond this, participants also shared other key ways the City of Milpitas could foster arts and culture. Participants shared that they would like to see designated spaces for

art including adding a gallery on Main Street or creating a community space for young artists. Milpitas could consider shaping Main Street as an arts district.

Diverse Local Business:

The proposed design should help bolster existing business and encourage the establishment of new business on Main Street. Participants felt that there lacked significant local businesses on Main Street when compared to downtowns in neighboring cities, where one can shop, eat, and access services in the same locale. Some of the proposed local businesses people wished to see include restaurants, bars, and retail stores. In addition, participants shared that the current establishments on Main Street are not frequented enough. The City could better support existing businesses by investing in their infrastructure, ensuring that they are a part of Main Street's future.

Alternative Transportation Options:

The future of Main Street should promote alternative modes of transportation. The perception of Main Street is that it is not very pedestrian or bicycle-friendly. It lacks the robust infrastructure needed to support bicyclists and improve their safety, like defined bike lanes and updated bike facilities. Participants suggested creating portions of Main Street that are "car-free" to protect pedestrians and bicyclists. Other participants noted that Main Street is not well connected like other city centers, where you can travel throughout the street to shop. Creating a more well-connected Main Street would encourage more people to walk through, instead of drive. Furthermore, Main Street's redesign serves as an optimal opportunity to improve the connection between the destinations like the new BART station.

Small Group Suggested Facilitator Questions

Milpitas Community Conversation #3

I. About your group (5 mins)

- What is your name and profession?
 - Are you a teacher, cook, business owner, engineer, public servant, parent?
- What are your goals in coming here today?
- Do you work, worship, shop, play, and/or live near Main Street?

II. General Questions (5 mins)

- What's your current experience with Main Street?
 - [optional follow-up questions] What do you like about it? What do you not like about it?
- What would draw you more to live, work, play & stay on Main Street?
 - [optional follow-up question] What do you want to experience here?
- What's your ideal version of Main Street & Milpitas?
- Do you have any fears or concerns with Main Street developing more?

III. Historical Resources (20 mins)

[This section is to talk about how to present Main Street's history. Please respectfully ask people not to present history lessons for the group]

- Milpitas's residents have changed a lot over the years. As an individual, how would you like to experience Main Street's history?
 - [optional follow-up question] How do we make Milpitas history relevant to new residents?
- As a city & community, how would you like to celebrate Main Street?
- How can we marry the past, present & future on Main Street?
 - [optional follow-up questions] What aspects of Main Street history should we keep? What chapters are we ready to finish?
- How do we incorporate Main Street's cultural diversity into its future?
- Are there other cities you've visited that have celebrated their history or culture in a way you like?
- To summarize, share with us your top 2 aspects of Main Street history and/or culture.

IV. Community Benefits / Amenities (10 mins)

- What is the City of Milpitas's responsibility to the community for Main Street?
- What amenities or community benefits should be considered during its revitalization?
 - Transportation: Transit/road improvements, transit passes, bike paths, VTA frequency, streetlight timing, bike storage, connected streets?
 - Public space improvements: Sidewalks, parks, open space, walking paths/trails, gathering areas, plazas?
 - Community gatherings: social/cultural events, holidays, nighttime activities, temporary markets, food trucks?
 - Others: Community room, community garden, community center, childcare?
- Is there anything Main Street's revitalization can do to make your life easier or better?

V. Summary (5 mins)

- Which aspects of the redevelopment are most important to you or most interest you?
- If there were 2 improvements to Main Street you would want, what would they be?

Small Group Discussion Notes

Conversation 3, Group 1 (of 3), led by T. McLane

About Your Group

384. 23-year resident, president Sunnyhills Neighborhood Association, active in Milpitas Renters Association, and member of the Milpitas Historical Society.
385. 11-year resident moved from Boston.
386. Moved here in '89 with their parents and grew up in Milpitas. Got into history by playing a phone game called Ingress which uses art and historical landmarks.
387. Has been here since '64, went to school here. Grandfather was a migrant farmworker who brought his kids (Carmen's dad) to the area. Carmen's dad liked the area and came back and settled here to raise his family.
388. Moved here in '67 working at Stanford Research Institute in Menlo Park. Serves on board of Milpitas Historical Society, where duties include serving as the head of the docent program that provides history presentations for 3rd-grade classes. Alternate on the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Commission.

Historical Resources

389. A main street means everything about a town. It's how you present yourself to the world, who we are and how we care for our community. Current experience is I walk or drive on Main Street and see the changes that are beginning to happen. Our town is about diversity. Hope we will turn Main Street into something beautiful – more trees, flowers, parking, storefronts. Renovating and making it much better. Beautiful storefronts that look unique and artsy and Parking!
390. Main Street is not connected! It's different plazas and areas. You go to your destination and you're done. I worry about parking. A lot of it is now in front of the plaza. It impacts your desire to walk from place to place. My favorite business is An-Jan, with old-timey scenes painted on the windows and sides. I'm old enough to remember when stores had paintings in the windows. I lived in a small town (not Milpitas, in Canada) as a child, and my favorite memories are going to the main street to the candy store, post office, and farm implement dealer. I think about where my peers want to go out to eat. Milpitas has a few restaurants but not a "scene." My concept of downtown is, there isn't one there. My son likes the comic book store.

Community Benefits/Amenities

391. Main Street is historically important. We have competing areas – Main Street, Milpitas Boulevard, Park Victoria. We have cultural resources markers at the southwest corner of Main and Carlo, the oldest buildings are 100 years old. If you put a gazebo up as a focal center its interior walls could have interpretive historical signage. It would become the starting point of a historical tour. This used to be Old Mission Road. This is the oldest section of Milpitas. It has a big history. It was super-important in the 17- 1800s. Main Street is not really tied together. I'd like to see the creative bridging of how people could appreciate it. The road itself is older; it was the main highway before 880.
392. I'm reminded of areas like California Avenue in Mountain View and University Avenue in Palo Alto. It's walkable. You can meander through the whole 2 or 3 blocks. If I park at one end, and I see something interesting at the other end. I go for one thing, but there are other things to see. I want there to be something else to hang out for.

393. We don't have a special area like Castro Street or Murphy in Sunnyvale. Many little towns are beginning to develop modern, yet unique, aspects about their town. I want a place to take family and friends. Eating international food. We don't have a small theater, museum, or an awesome park. Residents know about Pumpkins in the Park, but I want to have something people come for. How can we make it an intentional city center space?
394. Niles in Fremont just popped into my head. They have historic buildings, bars, pizzeria, ice cream stores. It's a fun place to go, and it recognizes their unique history. It would be great if Milpitas could get more of that vibe going. I have friends in Niles, but I also have friends from Hayward and we meet there because it's in the middle.
395. I'd like to see a water fountain, tree lighting, banners, murals, tile art benches, (signs) with art (restored) a huge arch sign, and flowerpots. It's really important. We need to give incentives to businesses.
396. I love the idea of storefront flowers. Seems like the businesses are struggling to stay in business because Main Street isn't a unique downtown.

Summary

397. A local flower or plant shop. Light art. Chalk art.
398. We need a cultural district, a First Friday, like San Jose's SOFA district.
399. Attract like-minded, similar-themed businesses. It facilitates people going and staying there. Bike and pedestrian safety through the full length.
400. A museum run by the City. A park by the Library.
401. An Old Town area. A Town Square, a place where people could linger.
402. Streetscape improvements. Street performances and events.

Conversation 3, Group 2 (of 3), led by A. Smith

General Questions

403. Looks "dumpy", "rundown", needs "sprucing up", and needs landscaping.
404. Too much traffic, so traffic control is needed. Parking is an issue, there isn't enough.
405. A large parking structure is needed.
406. Doesn't like the recent approvals for the adult daycare and the car wash.
407. Would like to see a consistent width of Main Street and improved pedestrian and bike infrastructure. Consider a no-car or pedestrian-only stretch of Main Street. Consider making Main Street a one-way street.
408. The biggest opportunity is the BART station and we need to think about how to effectively connect to it.
409. Consider art galleries to honor history.

Historical Resources

410. Need a "centerpiece venue", maybe a place for dancing. Can start small by encouraging/supporting artists to set up in vacant spaces, creating that "kernel of activity", and celebrate the city's history through art and culture.
411. Engage "Local Color" or "SV Creates" and search for local tenants to build it.
412. Build a museum on the vacant land next to Abel Street.
413. 6,200 sq ft warehouse at 27 Winsor has excellent rooftop exposure for advertising and could make good gallery space.
414. What is Milpitas' cultural background? Portuguese, Indian, Hispanic, Italian
415. Tap into religious uses – a lot of active populations that rally around religion.

416. Add physical color to Main Street – people are drawn to attractive things (ex. Murals and roadway art).
417. What we currently have is a patchwork and we want a tapestry.

Community Benefits / Amenities

418. What community benefits are we looking for?
 - a. More inviting Main Street, better-managed traffic, landscaping, murals, things that attract foot traffic.
 - b. Mixed-use: Restaurants, shops on the ground floor, and office and coworking use upstairs.
 - c. Make Milpitas a destination, not just a “sleepover town”.
419. A centrally located main venue like a cinema, theater, or amphitheater, similar to Bob McGuire Park
420. Pop up events, open-air activity on vacant parcels; the pop up flea market in SJ that brings a very diverse population together.
 - a. Venues that community organizations can use
421. Centralization is a struggle for Milpitas; we don't have a central core place for an active nightlife.
422. Feels like a fragmented city, Main Street can become the central meeting place.
423. Historically Serra at Main Street used to be “The Place” everyone traveled through during the Gold Rush; Milpitas could reclaim its role as a nexus.

Conversation 3, Group 3 (of 3), led by J. Lee

About your group

424. President of the Milpitas Historical Society, longtime resident and frequent visitor, Assistant City Manager, and Planning Commission Chair and commercial real estate.

General Questions

425. Concerned about traffic during commute times.
426. Need better bike facilities and connections to the Great Mall.
427. Main Street is still being used for vehicular travel.
428. Need to be sensitive to small and shallow lots to facilitate redevelopment.
429. Historically, Main Street is more functional than beautiful.
430. There have been a dozen versions of Main Street.
431. Determine the overall plan for Main Street and establish a regional draw, one that isn't a big anchor store. Instead, the Main Street plan could be more of a cultural/entertainment venue or could include nice restaurants.
432. Include mixed-use in select areas/nodes, not necessarily everywhere.

Historical Resources

433. Include historic markers, throughout, to add context to streetscapes.
434. Protect historic resources and identify what resources have been here.
435. History walk-through using QR codes.
436. There are many repurposed buildings with blank walls. The older buildings have lost some of their beauty. They may be hard to restore, architecturally, but it is possible through public art.
437. Identify what we want to preserve and highlight traditional architectural features in new or renovated buildings
438. Performance/entertainment venue.
439. Repurpose existing buildings (churches, old city hall, and firehouse, etc.) in a way that celebrates history (gathering spaces).

Community Benefits / Amenities

- 440. Implement wayfinding systems to address the lack of access; people need to know what resources are available.
- 441. Public ROW, infrastructure, and utilities are underserved.
- 442. Need to brainstorm how to attract people (also through celebrating history).
- 443. Creating a hub for studying history, by incorporating an outdoor pavilion with a walking tour.
- 444. Educational programs and historic preservation.
- 445. Need to balance nostalgia and emotional connection with reality and practical needs looking forward.
- 446. For history to be relevant, visual representation is needed (memorialization).
- 447. People aren't going to come to Milpitas and Main Street just to see old buildings. So we need more housing, mixed-use development, and businesses.

Summary

- 448. Milpitas doesn't have a city center for diverse cultural communities (gathering places, special events, etc.), so Main Street could become this hub.
- 449. Connect to historical and cultural ties to the larger area; create a cohesive place to allow visitors to access different parts.
- 450. Parking and access concerns (encourage foot traffic).
- 451. Beautification is important; the architectural presence isn't quite there yet.
- 452. Encourage a diverse Main St. with diverse businesses
- 453. Celebrate history with public art.
- 454. Establish some consistency (patchwork to tapestry).
- 455. There are many vacant lots, which are opportunities for creating destinations (cultural venues, amphitheaters, etc.) to establish an identity.

APPENDIX A

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City of Milpitas Commissioners Planning Commission; Economic Development and Trade Commission;
Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Commission

Community Conversation Registrants Everyone who registered for at least one of the Conversations