



# **General Plan Visioning: Key Themes from Community Input**

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## **A. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

The community visioning comments received through various public engagement events and efforts are organized by theme and parenthetically reference the source event. Many comments include multiple themes. All components of each comment are considered if they address multiple topics; but for ease of review, each comment is assigned to one theme only. Some comments note a “+” and number following the event title to demonstrate the number of times that topic came up in an event.

The themes are:

1. Housing
2. Environmental Justice
3. Circulation
4. Land Use
5. Jobs and Economy
6. Community Life
7. Parks and Recreation
8. Other

### **1. HOUSING**

- What type of housing should the City focus on? (Hot Summer Days pop-up 7/8)
  - 20% of responses support rental apartments.
  - 16% of responses support single-family, detached homes.
  - 12% of responses support emergency shelters.
  - 12% of responses support mixed-use development.
  - 10% of responses support farmworker or employee housing.
  - 8% of responses support mobile home parks, but 0% of responses support mobile/manufactured homes.
  - 8% of responses support permanent supportive housing.
  - 8% of responses support tiny or micro homes.
  - 2% of responses support townhomes.

- 2% of responses support accessory dwelling units.
- 2% of responses support for-sale condominiums.
- 2% of responses support “other” types of housing.
- What group of people should the City focus housing on? (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up 7/8)
  - 17% of responses support housing for low-income households.
  - 13% of responses support housing for students.
  - 11% of responses support housing for people experiencing homelessness.
  - 10% of responses support housing for people who work in Soledad.
  - 10% of responses support housing for farmworkers.
  - 10% of responses support housing for persons with disabilities.
  - 8% of responses support housing for first-time homebuyers.
  - 8% of responses support housing for seniors, independent living.
  - 6% of responses support housing for seniors that require assisted living.
  - 6% of responses support housing for households with children k-12.
  - 1% of responses support housing for “other” category.
- There is concern regarding gentrification and a need for more housing for residents. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up, Dia de los Muertos event +1, Vision Survey +8)
- There is a need for more housing to attract more residents. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up)
- There is a need for more affordable housing for low-income and “blue collar” worker populations. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up +1, Dia de los Muertos event, National Night Out event)
- There is a need for more affordable moderate-income housing. (Dia de los Muertos event)
- There is a need for more family housing. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up)
- There is a need for apartments uptown. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up)
- There is a request for less “garage housing ADUs.” (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up)
- There is a need for more housing for seniors. (Dia de los Muertos event)
- There is a desire to keep the small town feel and prevent sprawl. (Dia de los Muertos event)
- What are the top three ways that the City can improve housing opportunities? (Dia de los Muertos event)
  - 20% partner with developers to build more affordable housing.
  - 14% educate residents on buying a home.
  - 13% preserve restrictions on affordable housing.

- 13% develop programs to help residents pay for ownership housing (down payment assistance, low interest loans, etc.).
- 10% provide supportive services and housing for unhoused residents.
- 7% incentivize the construction of multi-family rental housing.
- 7% provide rental assistance to keep residents housed.
- 6% support tenant and landlord education programs.
- 5% develop a housing rehabilitation program.
- 5% work with agriculture businesses to construct family farmworker housing.
- There is a need for better housing to serve the local k-12 workforce. (Economic Development Focus Groups)
- There is a lack of sufficient affordable for-sale and rental housing options to serve all segments of the local workforce, including both single-person households and families. (Economic Development Focus Groups)

## 2. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

- Which three issues do you think are the most important to ensure all neighborhoods have access to healthy living conditions and environments? (Dia de los Muertos event)
  - 28% of responses noted concern regarding health care access.
  - 24% of responses noted concern regarding access to healthy food and grocery stores.
  - 23% of responses noted problems with or lack of city infrastructure and facilities that support physical activity, including sidewalks, bicycle lanes, parks, and recreation centers as a major concern.
  - 14% of responses noted concerns about access to safe and healthy housing.
  - 6% of responses noted concern regarding air pollution caused by vehicles.
  - 5% of responses noted concern regarding air or chemical pollution from industrial businesses and activities.

## 3. CIRCULATION

- There is a desire for safer streets and routes through the community, which includes protected bike lanes and improving crosswalks and signals near schools. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up; Dia de los Muertos event)
- There is a need for another entrance/exit to and from Soledad to improve accessibility in and out of the city (+6), especially in case of emergencies and evacuations. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up; Dia de los Muertos event, National Night Out, Vision Survey +2)
- There is a request to connect Nestles Rd to Metz Rd. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up, Dia de los Muertos event)
- There is a need for expanded bus coverage. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up)

- There is concern regarding traffic on 3<sup>rd</sup> St./Orchard Ln. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up)
- There is a request for thirty-minute parking along Front St. in front of businesses. (+ 1, Dia de los Muertos event)
- There is a need to improve the quality of roads and sidewalks (+1), specifically on Andalucia Dr., Walker, and Monterey St. (Dia de los Muertos event)
- There is concern regarding an increase in traffic accidents and a request to improve road safety. (Dia de los Muertos event)
- There is concern that traffic moves too fast along San Vicente Rd. (Dia de los Muertos event)
- There is a request for a train station near Morsoli Rd, southeast of the city. (Dia de los Muertos event)
- Traffic improvements are needed to improve the freeway ramp at Front St and 101 as it is hard to maneuver for semitrucks. (Dia de los Muertos event)
- There is a need for a better connection between the south and north side of the city for bicycles and cars. (Dia de los Muertos event +1, Vision Survey +1)
- There is a request for speed bumps at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Metz as well as at North St. and Orchard Ln. (Dia de los Muertos event)
- There is a need for a better connection between the shopping center in the southern part of the city (Nestles Rd. and Los Coches Rd.) and the neighborhood to the north. (+ 1, Dia de los Muertos event)
- There is a request for police presence and traffic control at San Vicente and Front St. (Dia de los Muertos event)
- There is a request to fix damaged roads to improve safety. (+1, Vision Survey)
- There is a need for more traffic signals instead of stop signs. (Vision Survey)
- There is a request for a train station with service to the Bay Area. (Vision Survey)
- There is a need for alternative arterial roadways other than Main St. to reduce traffic impacts of growth. (Vision Survey)
- Vision Survey: What transit options are important to you? (in order of ranking)
  - Public transit to and from nearby cities.
  - Public transit to Downtown Soledad.
  - Transit to healthcare and retail facilities.
  - Regional transit service.
  - Transit to City events.

## 4. LAND USE

- There is a need for more shopping centers and stores, including coffee shops, sporting goods stores, clothing and shoe stores, and a pet supplies store. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up, Vision Survey)
- There is a need for more restaurants and grocery stores, specifically a request for Safeway and an organic supermarket. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up, Dia de los Muertos event)
- Community members would like to see more big-box retailers like Target, Walmart, and/or Costco. (+ 6 for Walmart/Costco specifically) (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up, Dia de los Muertos event). There was a request for Walmart because it has a pharmacy as well. (Vision Survey)
- There is a need for a hospital (+5) and more healthcare facilities, specifically a lab, urgent care clinics, dentists, and veterans' care. Residents say they must travel to Salinas in case of emergency. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up, Dia de los Muertos, Vision Survey)
- Community members would like spaces for indoor physical recreational activities like a gym, gymnastics facility, bowling alley (+2), skating rink, soccer field, and dance studio. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up, Dia de los Muertos event, Vision Survey)
- Community members would like spaces for outdoor physical recreational activities like a water park, mini petting zoo, or go-kart track. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up)
- There is a desire for In-N-Out, a donut shop, or bowling alley in the southern industrial portion of the city. (Dia de los Muertos event)
- There is a need for more places for people to receive services related to food, housing, etc. in town that do not require extensive driving. (Dia de los Muertos event)
- There is a need for more event venues. (Dia de los Muertos event)
- There is a request for more mixed-use properties (commercial on bottom, residential on top) in the Neighborhood Commercial zoning district. (Dia de los Muertos event)
- There is a request for more stores at the neighborhood commercial site at Orchard Ln and Gabilan Dr. (Dia de los Muertos event)
- There is a request for a CSU Monterey Bay satellite campus in South County, particularly one that offers a master's in social work. This would bring more services to the area if there were more people here with this type of training. +1 (Dia de los Muertos event)
- There is a request for a commercial area and shopping center in the west side of town, just east of 101. + 1 (Dia de los Muertos event)
- There is a desire for a more active downtown. + 1 (Dia de los Muertos event)
- There is a desire for controlled commercial development with proper traffic flow management. (Vision Survey)
- There is a desire for more national businesses, chain stores, restaurants, and banks. +7 (Vision Survey)
- Community members want a walkable city with more public plazas. (Vision Survey)

## 5. JOBS AND ECONOMY

- Have an emphasis on a tourist attraction day trip. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up)
- There is a need for more living-wage/higher-paying jobs and affordable childcare. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up)
- There is a need for day care for middle-income families as many do not qualify for childcare subsidized for lower-income families. +3 (Dia de los Muertos)
- There is a need for more jobs in Soledad. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up, Vision Survey)
- Not bringing tourist attractions, which can raise home prices. (Vision Survey)
- More work opportunities and economic growth to encourage people to make and spend their money in Soledad. +2 (Vision Survey)
- There is a need for more local jobs for young residents graduating from local high schools and colleges. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up, National Night Out)
- There is a request for a local DMV branch. (Dia de los Muertos)
- What are the top three priorities you think are most important to bring to economic development to Soledad? (Dia de los Muertos event)
  - 20% of responses promote the development of new retail establishments such as clothing stores, restaurants, major grocery stores, office spaces, etc.
  - 16% of responses support revitalizing Front Street by supporting existing and encouraging new businesses.
  - 12% of responses support investing in high quality childcare.
  - 12% of responses support expanding youth employment opportunities.
  - 10% of responses support increasing access to government services like DMV and County Court Services.
  - 9% of responses support attracting new industries to Soledad that produce jobs.
  - 7% of responses support increasing access to job training programs and access to higher education.
  - 6% of responses support the development of the Shipping Container Village.
  - 4% of responses support Soledad as a tourist destination and building more tourist-serving businesses, such as hotels.
  - 3% of responses supported expanding resources and technical assistance for small business owners.
- Soledad's rich history and cultural heritage is a major economic asset, as well as the city's proximity to Pinnacles National Park. (Economic Development Focus Groups)
- Key potential economic growth sectors include tourism; value-added food and wine businesses building on the City's existing strength in agriculture (for example, a new wine trail

and related services); and additional local and regional serving retail and food and beverage uses. (Economic Development Focus Groups)

- Hartnell College is an important opportunity for providing a bridge to local residents seeking a four-year college degree. (Economic Development Focus Groups)
- There is a lack of infrastructure (roads, signage, reliable utilities) to support food and wine businesses. (Economic Development Focus Groups)
- Business owners appreciate the Economic Development Department’s ongoing collaboration and assistance for small business owners as represented by monthly “Cafecito” meetings and new grant opportunities. (Economic Development Focus Groups)
- Business owners appreciate new and growing local and regional-serving retail centers such as the Marketplace. (Economic Development Focus Groups)
- Business owners expressed concern about retail vacancies and a lack of regional awareness of Soledad’s retail offerings. (Economic Development Focus Groups)
- Attracting new retailers and other businesses is a challenge and often based on market and cost constraints which are driven by trends in the broader economy. (Economic Development Focus Groups)
- The limited supply of new and refurbished commercial spaces, including smaller spaces for services, co-working and new types of space needed for local entrepreneurs is a challenge. (Economic Development Focus Groups)
- Current lodging options are limited and the existing two hotels within the city boundaries are often at “full” occupancy. There is a need for new lodging products to accommodate a wider range of recreational visitors. (Economic Development Focus Groups)

## 6. COMMUNITY LIFE

- Community members would like to see more family and community events, like a kite festival. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up)
- The City should have special events for the Latino community, such as Day of the Dead. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up)
- Would like to see more after-school activities. +1 (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up; Dia de los Muertos)
- Would like a farmer’s market with local fruits and vegetables. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up 7/8)
- Native American history museum. (Dia de los Muertos event)
- There is a desire for a youth center and/or a Boys and Girls Club, as well as more resources for young people like art and dance classes. (National Night Out)
- There is a desire for more schools at all levels (elementary school, high school and middle school). (Dia de los Muertos event, National Night Out, Vision Survey)

- There is a request for improved lighting throughout the community, especially more streetlights along Palm Ave, San Vicente Rd., and Monterey. (Dia de los Muertos event)
- Programs to help those dealing with substance-abuse, mental health, family and individual counseling that is affordable or no cost. (Vision Survey)
- Youth programs with law-enforcement, elementary through high school, to break down stigmas and create unity and understanding. (Vision Survey)
- Youth engagement programs to encourage civic involvement. (Vision Survey)
- Events that support small businesses. (Vision Survey)
- More police and crime prevention. +1 (Vision Survey)
- More resident involvement in government decisions. There were specific complaints regarding resident power to choose the mayor and corruption in city council). +2 (Vision Survey)
- More social and nightlife options, such as concerts and cinemas. +1(Vision Survey)
- More retail and entertainment options for young people, such as a boba shop, clothing stores, an arcade/mini golf business. (Vision Survey)
- A cleaner Front St free of debris and litter. (Vision Survey)
- What are the top three ways the City can enhance public safety in Soledad? (Dia de los Muertos event)
  - 19% of responses support investing in the Soledad Explorer Program and other youth violence prevention programs.
  - 15% of responses support supporting and expanding animal control services.
  - 14% of responses support investing in adequate street lighting for pedestrian and vehicular travel.
  - 13% of responses support expanding domestic violence/social and mental health services.
  - 13% of responses support implementing and strengthening traffic calming measures in and around schools.
  - 12% of responses support identifying unsafe pedestrian environments and support health and safety revitalization.
  - 11% of responses support increasing access to disaster relief/emergency shelters (schools, City Hall, Soledad Community Center, and other public facilities are currently listed).
  - 3% of responses support promoting code enforcement/elimination of blight in neighborhoods.



## 7. PARKS AND RECREATION

- There is a need for additional dog parks. Potential locations for new dog parks are near McDonalds and near the Tesla station. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up)
- There is a need for more parks, playgrounds, and recreation areas for families and children. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up, National Night Out, Dia de los Muertos event)
- There is a desire for more soccer fields, including an indoor soccer field. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up, Vision Survey)
- There is a need for more shade in parks. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up; Dia de los Muertos event)
- There is a request to open the pool earlier than 7:00am. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up)
- There is a need for bike lanes through parks. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up)
- There is a request for space to ride off-road bikes. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up)
- There is a request for more lighting at Veteran’s Park. (Dia de los Muertos event)
- There is a desire for community gardens and accompanying education opportunities. (National Night Out)
- Community sports for young adults and adults. (Vision Survey)
- Activities for seniors. (Vision Survey)
- There is a desire to maintain existing park and recreation facilities and equipment. (Vision Survey)
- There is a desire for grassroots organized community programs for kids and teens. +1 (Vision Survey)

## 8. OTHER

- There is a need for more public restrooms and waste bins. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up)
- There is a need for more English-as-a-second-language (ESL) classes. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up, National Night Out)
- There is a need for more social services and code enforcement. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up)
- There is a suggestion for a social services center. (National Night Out). There is also a suggestion for more social services at City Hall (Vision Survey)
- There is a need for more security in schools. (Hot Summer Days Pop-Up)
- There is a need for improved/faster internet. +1 (Vision Survey)
- There is a desire for renewable energy. (Vision Survey)

## Visioning Survey Results

- Which of the following should be the City's priority for the next five years? (score out of 5 noted in parentheses)
  - Expand and encourage community revitalization efforts (2.8)
  - Work to enhance the economic development environment through business assistance and development (2.6).
  - Provide crisis assistance for those suffering from mental health illness, addiction and/or lacking shelter (2.5).
  - Expand opportunities for positive police and youth interactions (2.1).
- What would you like to see in your neighborhood? (all responses scored between 3 and 5)
  - Top 3:
    - Parks and trails
    - Improvements (sidewalks, lighting, street landscape)
    - Grocery or convenient stores
  - Second three:
    - Shade trees
    - Healthy food choices
    - Increased safety
  - Lowest:
    - Transit options