

Results of Milpitas Community Engagements: Themes and Visions for the Future of the City Updated: September 3, 2014

Background

The following results were obtained from a series of community conversations between members of the Milpitas community and the Public Dialogue Consortium. They were conducted between November 2013 and June 2014. Different conversational formats were used, including group meetings with community organizations and City Commissions, face-to-face interviews at community events, and responses to an online survey. The table below provides a break down of the different conversational formats and the number of community members who participated.

Community organization meetings	37	12%
City Commission meetings	99	33%
Face-to-face interviews	118	39%
Online survey	49	16%
Total participants	303	

Appendix A provides demographic data of the participants, including gender, age, and race/ethnicity. Appendix B includes the questions were used to elicit input community input.

The results are organized into six themes or “community visions.” Each theme is described in terms of “appreciations:” and “concerns.” Based on the themes and visions that emerged from this analysis, a draft Community Vision statement is provided on page 5.

1. Close-Knit Community

Appreciations:

- Community members love that Milpitas is a close-knit community. Specifically, they enjoy being able to see familiar faces when they are out in public (“everybody knows everybody”), feeling welcome wherever they go, and having relatively easy access to all parts of the City.
- The close-knit community quality of life extends to the City Government. Community members appreciate knowing and having access to City Council members and City staff. “It’s easy to get a hold of people at the City,” one community said, “and they do a good job addressing my concerns.”
- While the close-knit community quality of life is clearly appreciated, community members also like that Milpitas has many of the amenities of a big city, and is also part of a dynamic metropolitan region. As one community member said, “If you need anything or want to go anywhere, it’s right here. You don’t have to

drive 50 miles.” Another community member put it this way, “Milpitas is a large city with small community atmosphere.”

Concerns:

- There is concern about losing the close-knit community quality of life as the population grows and commercial and residential development increases. When asked about their vision for the future of Milpitas, many community members said that they want to maintain the “small town feel” of the City.
- Community members expressed particular concerns about the negative impact of high-density housing on the City’s close-knit community quality of life.

2. Diversity and Culture

Appreciations:

- Milpitas is very diverse and takes pride in being one of the first racially integrated communities in the region and nation. One community member put it this way: “I like that Milpitas has a history of being inclusive and open to different cultures and races.”
- Living in a diverse City is a learning opportunity, according to community members, enabling them to acquire knowledge and gain understanding of other cultures. As one community member said, “It’s wonderful to meet people from all over the world here.” Another person said, “I appreciate getting to know people who are different from me.”
- Community members also enjoy the ethnically diverse restaurants and food, and markets and shops in Milpitas.

Concerns:

- Some community members said they would like to see even more diversity in Milpitas in terms of broader representation of different ethnic and cultural groups, and more availability of ethnically diverse restaurants, shops, etc.

3. Public Safety

Appreciations:

- Community members expressed strong approval for public safety in the City, saying that Milpitas is a safe place for residents and visitors. As one person said, “There is not a lot of violent crime in Milpitas. It feels safe here.”
- The Police and Fire Departments are viewed positively by the community for enhancing public safety and for being responsive and accessible to community members. One community member put it this way, “Our Police and Fire services are the envy of the Bay Area.”

Concerns:

- Community members voiced concern that public safety will be compromised as the City population increases and more people live and work in the City.

- Similarly, community members expressed concern that the new Bart Station and, to a lesser extent, the new 49er stadium will lead to more criminal activity in the City.
- There is also a perception that the Police Department is understaffed and that more police officers will need to be hired.

4. Smart Growth and Economic Development

Appreciations:

- Community members appreciate the new businesses moving into Milpitas, especially high-tech companies. They would like to see more of this in Milpitas. “We need to expand the business base,” one community member said, “to keep people here so they can live and work here.”
- The City is viewed as an affordable place to live, especially in terms of the “reasonable” housing costs.

Concerns:

- Community members expressed concerns about high-density housing and the influx of new residents moving to the City. Specifically, the concerns focused on increased traffic and congestion, increased demand for City services, overcrowding in the public schools, and the potential threat that a higher population level poses to the small town quality of life that community members value.
- Changing industrial and commercial properties to high-density housing is a concern for many community members. As one person said, “We saw business come in and now they are torn down and there is lots of high density housing taking its place. That will cause problems in the future.”
- Milpitas needs to attract more businesses to simulate the economy, “I would suggest more focus on income generating business in the city,” one community member said. Other community members said that the City should focus on bringing high tech companies and start-ups to Milpitas in order to take advantage of the City’s Silicon Valley location.
- While community members appreciate the variety of ethnic restaurants and markets, others said that they would like to have more restaurant and retail options (e.g. upscale restaurants, a Trader Joe’s, Whole Foods, etc.).

5. Environmental Well Being

Appreciations:

- Community members appreciate the open spaces in Milpitas, particularly the foothills and mountains and all the parks located in the City.
- The city is clean and well kept with “beautiful neighborhoods.” As one community said, “I appreciate how clean the City is. It looks good.”

- Milpitas is well located, with relatively easy access to nearby cities, attractions, and environmental areas. As one community said, “It’s a great jumping off place because it’s close to everything.”

Concerns:

- Community members said that the “odor” is a concern; it negatively impacts the environmental well being of residents and visitors, and gives Milpitas a bad reputation.
- There is strong desire to retain and expand open spaces and parks in the City. As one community member said, “We need to keep the open space for future generations, and avoid developing the hills at all costs.”
- Traffic is a major concern for many community members, both on Calaveras and nearby freeways, with spill over to neighborhood surface streets. “Calaveras especially is bumper to bumper every day,” one community member said. “It’s difficult to get to where you need to be.”
- There is a need for more public transportation that is accessible, convenient, and inter-connected.
- Community members would like to see Milpitas become a greener city, with more bike paths, landscaping, walking trails, and connections between parks.
- While community members appreciate the cleanliness of the City, they also expressed a desire for new city “beautification efforts” to make Milpitas even more attractive.

6. Family and Community Connections

Appreciations:

- Milpitas is seen as a great place to raise a family. “It’s a family friendly community,” one person said, “a great place to raise kids.”
- There is appreciation for the sense of community that people experience in the City. As one person said, “There is a real sense of community in Milpitas. It’s a place where you know your neighbors, where you feel comfortable, where you feel at home.”
- Another way that people experience community in Milpitas is through community events and activities, such as the annual tree lighting ceremony.
- Community members also appreciate the library, community center, senior center, sports center, and other public facilities. As one community member said, “We are fortunate to have high quality public buildings and spaces, such as the park and the library.”

Concerns:

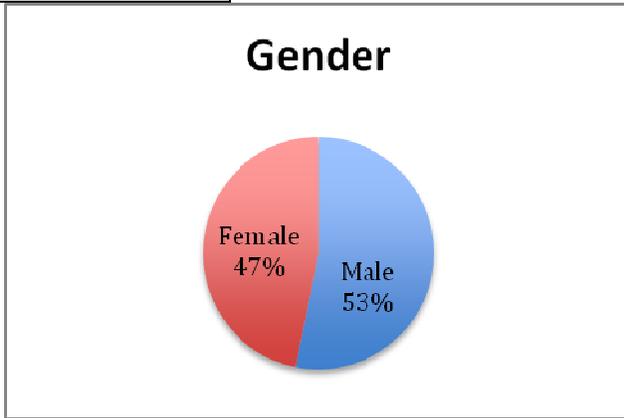
- There is widespread concern that there are not enough schools to accommodate the population, which is heightened when people consider future population growth. Mentioned most often was the need for a second high school.
- Community members said they would like to have a clearly identifiable downtown area, a central place for people to gather.

- While people expressed appreciation for the community events that are held in the City, there is a desire to have more. Some community members said they would like to see more events designed specifically for youth.
- While people appreciate the community connections in Milpitas, they also see a need for the public to be more engaged in the civic life of the City. As one person commented, “The City does not have a good infrastructure for community engagement.”

Appendix A: Demographic Data

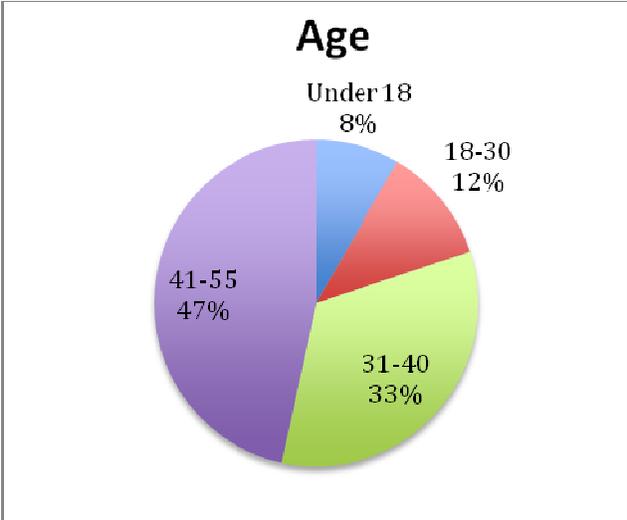
Gender of participants

Male	160	53%
Female	143	47%



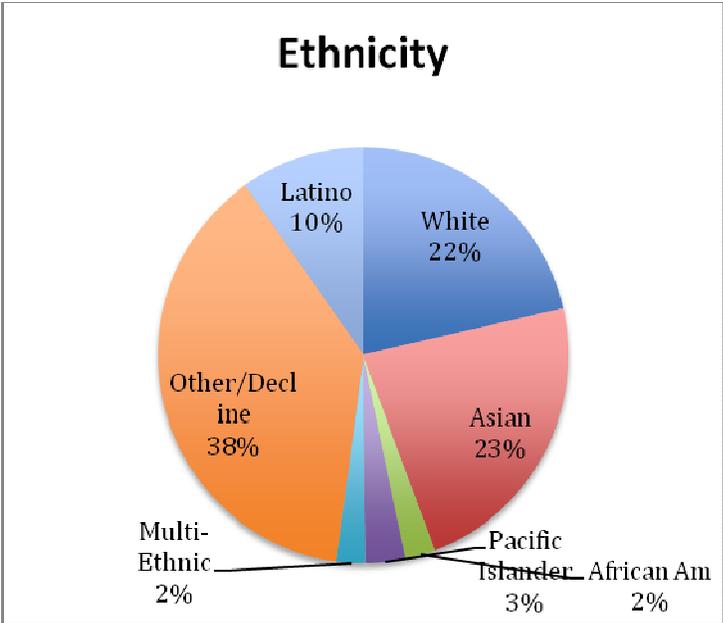
Age's represented

Under 18	18	6%
18 - 30	24	8%
31 - 40	73	24%
41 - 55	103	34%
Over 55	85	28%



Race/Ethnicities represented

White	64	21%
Asian	71	23%
African American	7	2%
Hispanic/Latino	30	10%
Pacific Islander	9	3%
Multi-ethnic	7	2%
Other/decline to state	115	38%



Appendix B: Community Conversations Questions

1. What are some of things that you like most about the City of Milpitas?
 - Can you tell us more about why you like the things you mentioned?

2. Looking to the future, what kind of city and community do you want Milpitas to be?
 - Can you tell us more about why having that kind of city/community is important to you?

3. How is the Milpitas city of the future different from the way Milpitas is today?

4. What are some of the things that need to happen to create the kind of city/community you want Milpitas to be?

City of Milpitas Organizational Values

Updated: September 3, 2013

The six organizational values described below were developed from employee discussion groups that the Milpitas Employee Engagement Team facilitated in March and April 2014, and from individual employees who provided input on the online survey. Approximately 125 employees participated in the discussion groups. Ten employees completed the online survey.

These values describe the actions, behaviors, and attitudes that *should* guide the organization and all of the employees.

Superior Services

Develop the knowledge and skills, and secure the resources and tools to provide superior services to the community • Be innovative and open to change • Seek out efficiencies and streamlining efforts • Stay current and adopt best practices

Suggested actions for delivering Superior Services

- Employees go above and beyond standard expectations to ensure that community members are satisfied
 - Provide staff training in technology, software, customer service, and provide cross training opportunities and succession planning before retirement
 - Identify criteria and targets to evaluate service
 - Employees know who is responsible for specific questions and concerns, and can direct community members to them
 - Employees demonstrate through words and actions that they care about community members
 - Update website regularly with timely and relevant information
 - Develop and distribute a Citywide event calendar
 - Ensure adequate staffing levels and employee compensation Return phone calls by the end of the day, even if the employee does not have answer yet. Let the community member know that staff is working on it.
 - Provide time and support for professional development opportunities (e.g. to go a training class, to take a certification test, etc.)
 - Go above and beyond providing superior services to internal customers, in addition to external community members
 - Acknowledge and recognize superior service (e.g. HR newsletter includes a regular “recognizing superior service” item)
-

Open Communication

Listen openly and speak candidly when interacting with others • Promote two-way communication at all levels of the organization, between management and staff, across departments, and with the community • Ensure that employees are informed and have access to important information

Suggested actions for Open Communication

- Quarterly citywide meetings
 - Open forums (Q&A)
 - City Manager gives update on current projects
 - Each Department takes turns giving presentations on current projects, successes, and challenges
- HR newsletter to include new employees names and photos
- Intranet for easy communication – readily available information to keep everyone informed.
 - Post notes from citywide meetings (recordings/archives)
 - Departmental Projects List
 - Volunteer opportunities
 - Online Suggestion Box including cost-saving suggestions.
 - Post city newsletters for easy access
- Periodic Lunch Sessions with the City Manager and Employees
 - Small groups to have an opportunity to communication
 - Promotes interaction with City Manager
- Email messages from City Managers office: “From the Office of City Manager”
- Communication training

Integrity and Accountability

Be honest, ethical, and transparent when dealing with others • Take responsibility and be accountable for your actions • Establish expectations and adhere to standards of conduct for yourself and others

Suggested actions for Integrity and Accountability

- Each department establishes the goals they want to achieve
- There are clear expectations for what employees are accountable for, and everyone adheres to them on a daily basis
- Employees are committed to “saying what they mean, and meaning what they say.”
- Have ethics conversations in each department, about the citywide, organizational values and the professional standards that are relevant to the department
- Lead by example, demonstrating integrity and accountability in your words and actions
- Encourage and support employee input, ideas, and decision making (i.e. employees are empowered and accountable)

Trust and Respect

Treat everyone fairly • Foster mutual respect at all levels of the organization • Embrace diverse views and experiences

Suggested actions for Trust and Respect

- Recognize that trust and respect is a “two-way street;” give trust and respect to get trust and respect
- Practice good listening – take the time to let people speak freely
- Have confidence in the expertise and experience of employees; provide them with opportunities to offer suggestions, make decisions, and implement ideas
- Respond to mistakes as opportunities for learning
- Conduct meetings that enable employees to work collaboratively to solve problems together
- Develop a mentoring program that pairs more experienced employees with newer employees

Recognition and Celebration

Acknowledge contributions • Celebrate accomplishments • Make Milpitas an enjoyable and fun place to work • Show support and care for all employees

Suggested actions for Recognition and Celebration

- Have citywide meetings and recognition events more frequently
- Expand monthly newsletter; recognize individual employees and employee teams, include pictures, and highlight their accomplishments; include kudos from the community in the newsletter
- Create City memorabilia for employees and the community (e.g. t-shirts, stickers, posters, tattoos, etc.)
- Have more employee social activities (e.g. BBQ, softball, volleyball, basketball, bowling, Holiday party, etc.), perhaps coordinated by a newly formed “social committee”
- Institute flex schedules and telecommuting – be understanding of changing schedules
- Recognize an employee of the month; rotating by department monthly; perhaps nominated by peers
- Give plenty of “thank yous” to employees
- Give awards for years of service. Could be something small like watch or pin, by category.
- Provide a tour for new employees when hired – meet and greet with entire City
- Have a new employee award
- Bring back the holiday party