

# Stakeholder Interviews

April 2020 | Summary Notes



# Overview

From July - December 2019, the Consultant Team conducted 24 stakeholder interviews with community organizations, industry associations, council members, and with regional housing and health organizations to share information about and gather input related to the City for the South San Francisco General Plan Update. Topics covered at meetings included why the City is unique and different, important issues facing the City, and their vision for the future. Additional questions were asked to stakeholders based on their expertise (City Council, health, business, environmental, youth, housing, faith, and community/service groups). The full list of questions is included in appendix.

The following groups were interviewed:

- Biocom
- California Life Sciences Association
- Chamber of Commerce
- City Council
- Colliers International
- Friends of Caltrain
- HEART San Mateo County
- Hillside Church of God
- Home for All
- Housing Leadership Council
- Leo J. Ryan Child Development Center
- MidPen Housing
- Padres en Acción
- Penna Realty
- Samaritan House
- San Bruno Mountain Watch
- San Mateo County Health
- South San Francisco School District
- SSF Mothers Club
- SSF Youth Advisory Council
- YMCA

The following are the topics that were discussed and a summary of the feedback received.

## Unique, special, like best, and should stay the same

- **Everything** makes it unique and special
- **Great location** in the Bay Area and great weather. Proximity to airport, transit, hospital, schools, and other cities
- **Unique** local businesses and historical and current regional hub for blue-collar industrial businesses
- **Small-town feel** and sense of community
- **Diverse** population (race, multi-generational household, older adults), religions and strong family roots since the city's founding
- **More affordable** than other cities on peninsula for residents and businesses.
- **Great amenities, views and services** – San Bruno Mountains, Orange Park, schools, subsidized pre-school, first responders and free shuttle service
- **Revitalized Downtown Core** – main street improvements, connecting residential and business
- **City continues to problem solve** and adapt to needs of community – approved increase in minimum wage, City Council and Commission connected to citizens and listen to their concerns
- **Major center for the Life Sciences Industry** and bringing different types of employees (older with families) than the tech industry (young adults)

## Key Issues

- **Vulnerable Population** low-income, renters, teachers, and people of color (Latinos) are being priced out of the City (overcrowding, displacement or evictions) – but especially in Downtown
- **Increase Vulnerable Homeless Populations** Latinos, older adults, and people with disabilities in the City
- **Need more housing** in City to match up to increased jobs - running out of space to build and small housing developments are too expensive to build
- **Traffic congestion** and poor walkability, bikeability and pedestrian safety
- **Lack or need of increased services** – grocery stores, shelters, early childcare education, youth cultural programming, older adult population
- **Many residents work outside** the city or are retired older adults
- **Climate change** (Sea level rise, extreme heat, wildfire, drought) will impact our most vulnerable, particularly around Colma Creek
- **Lack Parks and Open Space** active play spaces, access to San Bruno Mountain and Colma Creek, and existing parks need maintenance
- **Disconnected City** East of 101 to the rest of City are disconnected
- **Schools losing student populations and quality** – closing schools and losing staff and teachers

## Vision for future (20 years from now)

- **Remain a diverse connected city** with strong immigrant roots and multiple community events
- **More housing options and support to balance increasing jobs**– Affordable, multi-family, tenant protections, and middle-class housing, homebuyer’s assistance
- **Jobs for residents** - Job training for residents and prioritize residential hires
- **Open Space** Access, maintenance, and creation of open spaces and play areas
- **Services and amenities for all stages of life** – grocery stores, entertainment, bars, restaurants, shelters, community day center, early childcare education, wellness center for youth and young adults, and wi-fi access throughout the city, livelier El Camino corridor
- **Expand mobility** (walk, bike, ped, public transit) options to support last mile (Samtrans east/west, free shuttle, frequency, subsidized parking, safety)
- **Preserve some industrial areas** to support other industries like high paying blue-collar jobs
- **Better support small businesses and start-ups** – frequent trainings and check-in, outreach, incubator, outreach in different languages, flexible workspaces, façade improvements funding support, reduce fees and permits
- **Improved schools** – Middle school Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) programs, STEM job training, health services (mental, dental, and medical) and better relationship between school district and City
- **Thriving local businesses** - Bring more commercial and industrial uses to city to increase revenue and support existing business – hotels, upscale dining, transportation, logistics, and data transference firms
- **Improve planning tools for more affordable and supportive housing development** – reducing fees, streamline development process, housing and zoning overlay allow for higher densities and flexible standards, incentivize housing, regional funds ready, technical assistance for accessory dwelling units, community benefits, partner with school district and transit agencies

## Partnership Opportunities

- **Preparing for Census 2020** planning and outreach
- **Provide additional shelter and services for persons who are homeless** – SamTrans day passes for all in shelter, hospice/medial respite shelter, and work with church to provide food
- **Work with larger medical institutions** to support mental health services for youth
- **Help low-income families** know about health exam and vaccination childcare requirements
- **Work with County Parks** to map access to trails
- **Create a childcare advisory committee** to work on increasing capacity
- **Opportunity to provide more STEM education** for children in schools with formalized partnerships – Internships, science awards, receive science equipment
- **Biotech industry associations and firms** continue to provide network opportunities and take part in roundtable discussions of city concerns like housing
- **Life sciences job training opportunities** and job connections for current residents through Life Science associations
- **City should engage with real estate associations** to keep pulse on trends

## Define Success for the General Plan Update process

- Robust outreach to speak with underrepresented communities – Latinos, seniors, youth, and families
- Respecting community input
- Make General Plan easier to use
- Celebrating Diversity
- Plan for more affordable housing
- Plan for climate change impacts and a more sustainable city
- Review parking occupancy – large concern for community
- People’s satisfaction with the plan
- Measures Quality of life of the residents
- Creating nodes of activity in residential neighborhoods – stores, entertainment, jobs, access to transit

## Outreach to Underrepresented Groups

- Renters – outreach usually only reaches homeowners
- Asians – largest population in the City, Filipino and Chinese newspapers
- Latinos – high density in Oldtown, reach out to Pedro Gonzales
- Immigrant families have fear and pressure – children translate and navigate system
- Workers – not all live in City but spend most of their time here
- Youth – use technology
- Displaced residents who no longer live in City
- Difficult for some working-class families to attend important City meetings
- Facilities and Services for Spanish speaking population – Spanish speaking city staff, soccer fields, etc.

# Appendix

## Complete Stakeholder Interview Overview and Questions

### Introduction

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I work for \_\_\_\_\_. We are working with the City of South San Francisco on the General Plan update. The General Plan is the long-term policy document for the City and covers topics such as land use, transportation, parks, housing, sustainability, community health, and public safety.

You have been identified by the City as someone with extensive and important knowledge of the South San Francisco community that can help us understand more about the City. We are very interested in having you share thoughts and ideas about issues and opportunities related to the built environment, economic conditions, social conditions, etc. in South San Francisco. Your input will inform recommendations for the General Plan update.

This interview will take between 45 and 60 minutes. We will compile your responses with other interviewees, and we will not use your name or any other information to identify who you are.

Before we start talking about the specifics, I want to make sure you know that, during this interview:

- There is no right or wrong answer, just your ideas.
- It's ok if you don't have an answer or opinion about a particular question. It is just as important for us to know that too. "I don't know" is an ok thing to say. And finally,
- If at any time while we are talking you are not sure what I mean or have questions, do not hesitate to ask questions and let me know.

Before we begin, do you have any questions?

### Common Questions for All Meetings – *this set of questions will be asked at each meeting*

- What makes South San Francisco unique and special (e.g., industrial/blue collar history, diverse and inclusive community)?
- What are the things you like best about the City that you would like to stay the same (e.g., places, activities, people, etc.)?
- What are the things you like the least about South San Francisco that you would like to change (e.g., housing affordability, parking, traffic)?
- Imagine yourself living or working in South San Francisco in 20 years. What do you want to see?
  - Are there new services you want to see in 20 years?

### Specific Questions for Meetings with: City Council Members

- What is special and unique about your district?
  - Are there any specific issues or topics for emphasis in your district?
- How do you define success for this General Plan Update process?
- How do you currently use the General Plan? How can you better use the document in the future?
- Are there underrepresented groups / members of your district that we should pay special attention to getting engaged in the process?
  - If do how do you suggest we reach them?
  - Can you help get us connected?

## Questions for Meetings with: Faith-Based, Community, and Service Groups

- What types of groups or individuals do you serve?
- What services/programs are you currently providing?
  - Do you partner with the City or County on the programs?
  - How can you better partner with the City?
- Are there any major issues or gaps in services that affects your congregation/community group?
- How do you typically find out about community events?
- Are there underrepresented groups / members of the community that we should pay special attention to getting engaged in the process?
  - If do how do you suggest we reach them?
  - Can you help get us connected?

## Questions for Meetings with: Health Groups

- What are the most pressing health concerns within the City?
  - Do these differ by different populations/subpopulations/geographies? If so, how?
- What services/programs are you currently providing?
  - Do you partner with the City or County on the programs?
  - How can you better partner with the City?
- Are there any major issues or gaps in health services that affects the City?
- How would you define “healthy community” for South San Francisco?
- Are there current health issues you would like to better understand?
- Are there special sub groups, populations, communities, special interest groups, etc. with unique conditions or problems that we should acknowledge and address?

## Questions for Meetings with: Businesses

- What are the City’s greatest assets?
- How might South San Francisco continue to differentiate itself from other areas of the region?
- What trends are you seeing in the community? For business and retail?
- What’s missing in the City? From a business and retail standpoint.
- How can South San Francisco attract better diversity of businesses and retail?
- What are the needs of small and start-up businesses in the City? (e.g., incubator spaces, business skills training, and / or other resources needed by small businesses)
- Over 90% of the employees within the City live outside the City. How might the skills of existing residents better match the growing economic opportunities within the City?
- Are there existing peer-to-peer networks, formal or informal, that would be a way for the City to get feedback from the business (small) community?

## Questions for Meetings with: Environmental Groups

- What are the most pressing environmental concerns within the City?
- What programs are you currently providing?
  - Do you partner with the City or County on the programs?
  - How can you better partner with the City?

## Questions for Meetings with: Youth Organizations

- What are some of the issues that young people are concerned about related to the future?

- What are some of the most important types of services the City should continue to fund or consider funding to address the needs of young people in South San Francisco?
- What are some good ways to engage with young people in the City? (e.g., events, schools, etc.)

### Questions for Meetings with: Housing Groups

- What housing program or services are you currently providing?
  - Do you partner with the City or County on the programs?
  - How can you better partner with the City?
- What are the most pressing housing concerns within the City?
- What are some ways to better address these housing concerns in the City?

### Concluding Remarks

- Those are all the questions I have for you today. Do you have anything else you would like to add?
- Thank you for taking the time to have this conversation! The information that you provided will be very helpful for the General Plan update.