



**San Dimas Downtown Specific Plan Community Meeting #1  
Feb. 23, 2022**

**Break-Out Discussion Group Meeting Notes**

**Discussion Group #1**

- 1) What are the best things about Downtown San Dimas today?
  - Have a current site – a real downtown, ownership of space
  - Don't have cavern type atmosphere – not claustrophobic
  - Scale of existing development
  - Space of sidewalks makes it inviting to walk
  - Events that we are holding – parades, Holiday Extravaganza, etc (community connection points) – business participate
  
- 2) What are some of the top challenges facing downtown?
  - Parking – access businesses, but prevent spillover into neighborhoods
  - Niche uses – people go for that purpose; otherwise pass through
  - Not a social gathering place or place to linger
  - Lack of nightlife
  - Lack of proactive economic development/lack of investment
  - Difficult to do business downtown
  - Gas station and tire shop on corner of SD Ave and Bonita
  - Lack of bike lanes on Bonita- large bike lanes on Bonita east of SD Canyon Road
  
- 3) What could be better about the downtown in the future?
  - Increased nightlife
  - Creation of a place to visit, stay, and linger
  - Restaurant row – more restaurants
  - Build around older buildings
  - Better use of restaurant space at Walker House – use outdoor space; more affordable option
  - A place for families to visit, a place for date night, a place to linger with friends and family – multiple options to visit, art, entertainment, etc.
  - Creation of an identity for greater downtown area-signage, landmarks

## **Discussion Group #2**

- 1) What are the best things about Downtown San Dimas today?
  - Convenience of having everything centrally located in the city - grocery store, few restaurants, banking, post office
  - Street furniture, diversity of use along the streets, all inclusive, the scale of the streets are good, not intimidating
  - Loved the wooden sidewalks that used to be in downtown
- 2) What are some of the top challenges facing downtown?
  - Will pedestrians be safe with the Gold Line development. Sometimes, it's difficult to cross - specifically near repair shop, just next to the post office, also near the museum. Need traffic lights for pedestrians
  - Parking can be an issue on the weekends
  - Improve night life on the street, when shops close and people go for walk, the lighting is very low so the streets do not feel safe
  - Better variety of options with stores, we have a lot of antique stores and hair salons - need more diversity of stores
  - Traffic, doesn't seem to flow well, need to sync traffic light with traffic flow. With Gold Line, traffic can be worse
- 3) What could be better about the downtown in the future?
  - Wider variety of shops to choose from. Look at Monrovia, Claremont as model downtowns
  - With mixed use, more parking can be needed

## **Discussion Group #3**

- 1) What are the best things about Downtown San Dimas today?
  - San Dimas park near City Hall
  - City Hall and Library in DT
  - Small town charm; equestrian country feel; slow growth
  - Walkable, well-lit at night, safe, food options
  - Historic buildings, small town charm (ex. Walker House)
  - Services like coffee, library
- 2) What are some of the top challenges facing Downtown?
  - New improvements could negate heritage
  - With light rail and RHNA, infrastructure needs (water, wifi, utilities) and lack of parking
  - More things downtown, hang out, more dining, more events
  - Concern about adding people, traffic
  - 400 parking spaces down to 300 spaces no parking structure makes no sense, park and ride was full before pandemic, empty commercial spaces will be filled in the future
- 3) What could be better about the downtown in the future (next 10-15 years)?
  - Traditions unique to San Dimas
  - Rodeo parade going forward (western theme from 1800s and embraced in 1950s) to maintain identity

- Cultural and community events, offering activities for local visitors (example: Claremont has 5k in downtown)
- Get local high schools performing in downtown
- Farmers market year round

#### **Discussion Group #4**

1) What are the best things about Downtown San Dimas today?

- Small town atmosphere
- Charming, historic factor
  - o E.g. Walker House
- Walkability (particularly between Cataract and San Dimas Aves.)
- Lots of potential to bring more people to Downtown and draw from neighboring communities

2) What are some of the top challenges facing Downtown?

- Lack of diverse retail/entertainment options
  - o Retail caters primarily to an older population
  - o Lots of salons
  - o Lack of restaurants
  - o Lack of evening activities (e.g. entertainment, community events)
    - Little reason to stay in Downtown San Dimas and the area tends to be quiet by 4 or 5pm. There is traffic going through Downtown after hours with people returning from work, but few actually stop in Downtown
- Transportation/Traffic issues
  - o Bonita Ave. has fast traffic that cuts through Downtown San Dimas
    - Dangerous for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers pulling out of driveways
    - Cyclists tend to avoid Bonita Ave. and take side streets
    - Parking is a major challenge in Downtown
  - o People drive eastbound through Downtown San Dimas when returning from work to avoid the 57/210 freeway interchange causing congestion from 5-6:30pm
- Transient behavior in alleys and certain streets in Downtown San Dimas

3) What could be better about the downtown in the future (next 10-15 years)?

- Local flavor is key
  - o City has added many national chains, but residents would like to see more local mom and pop shops – less mainstream (neighboring cities have this)
- Restaurants
  - o Offer range of dining options (e.g. outdoor dining, tablecloth restaurant, family restaurants)
- Community
  - o Increase community events
  - o Utilize western and equestrian heritage to create unique, nostalgic, and exciting events that will draw more visitors to the Downtown (give people a reason to stay, shop, and dine)

- o Potentially close Bonita Ave. or other side streets for larger community events (goal to increase foot traffic downtown and create a more walkable area)
  - Consider closing streets for quarterly, not annual events

### **Discussion Group #5**

- 1) What are the best things about Downtown San Dimas today?
  - Easy freeway access
- 2) What are some of the top challenges facing downtown today?
  - Would like to see more amenities available in the downtown – usually go for the barber shops or to eat, but there is not much else to do.
  - Lack of entertainment options for different times of the day – would like to see more areas for live music, bars, etc. This would help attract a nightlife, younger people, students.
  - Parking is a challenge, especially during events.
- 3) What could be better about the downtown in the future (next 10-15 years)?
  - Improvements to the parking options, especially with the new L Line station generating new parking needs and more visitors
  - Improvements to network connectivity – make it easily walkable and connected from one end to the other without the need to get into a car. Enhancements that make it clear that it is walkable.
  - Incentivize development in the area – waiving fees, streamlining permit processes for people who are willing to spend money to develop there. Current processes take too long from developer’s point of view.
  - Placemaking to make it attractive to visitors, especially at the ends of downtown. Tire store and gas station on San Dimas Avenue do not represent a clear entry point/welcome into the downtown area.
  - Diversity of businesses/services available in the area, especially those that invite repeat business and encourage people to spend their dollar in their hometown. There are a lot of antique stores that do not generate repeated trips to the downtown.

### **Discussion Group #6**

- 1) What are the best things about Downtown San Dimas today?
  - Unique city and downtown
  - Need to maintain unique quality
  - Equestrian background
- 2) What are some of the top challenges facing downtown?
  - Downtown is “dead”
  - Little variety / too many hair salons
  - No more brand names / no big brand stores
  - Attract people from outside San Dimas vs. maintain downtown for locals
  - New housing that is appropriate to the community / not too much density
  - Gold Line will bring homeless / need to address in the plan

3) What could be better about the downtown in the future (next 10-15 years)?

- Maintain the unique identity, but add variety
- More and better restaurants
- Smaller “Mom & Pop” business / grow local business
- Address daily needs of locals / more options for locals
- Kid-friendly places
- More artsy
- More events to draw people
- Senior and affordable housing are OK / ADUs are acceptable
- Housing to attract young families and students / introduce a younger vibe
- Reuse of vacant upstairs space in commercial buildings for housing

**Discussion Group #7**

1) What are the best things about Downtown San Dimas today?

- Walkable downtown especially from San Dimas Avenue to Eucla Avenue
- Old town charm with many of the buildings in downtown that are over 40 years old
- Like that we don’t have a huge mall
- Great place to raise a family
- Western downtown area especially the Popeye’s, Taco Bell, KFC, McDonald’s lining Arrow Hwy has a consistent architectural theme.

2) What are some of the top challenges facing downtown?

- Retaining the walkability; lack of uniform sidewalks
- Bicycle access and safety along Bonita Avenue and with the Gold Linen coming; should direct drivers away from Bonita and reduce driving speed
- Too many hair salons and antique shops
- Not enough open spaces such as open courtyards
- Housing affordability; millennials can’t afford existing housing

3) What could be better about the downtown in the future (next 10-15 years)?

- Better lighting for safety in open spaces areas i.e. Pioneer Park
- Maintain small town feel by utilizing appropriate architectural design for new developments
- We’re missing things that attract young families; the fitness area in civic center park is nice, but we lost the playground.
- Not a fan of large multi-family housing right up against the sidewalk, but would be more acceptable if it was designed to blend in better with existing architectural styles of the area
- 2028 Olympic Games is coming to Bonelli Park; what can we look at in order to entice people to come back to San Dimas to spend money, etc.
- We should look at places like downtown Monrovia that’s more in scale with San Dimas than Pasadena for ideas

## **Discussion Group # 8**

1) What are the best things about Downtown San Dimas today?

- Walkable downtown
- Form, character and historic look of the downtown; should be preserved
- Centrally located and easily accessed from anywhere in the city and freeways
- Feeling of safety while in the downtown

2) What are some of the top challenges facing downtown?

- Not enough variety of uses in the downtown
- Need to attract various uses similar to Claremont and Pasadena
- Nothing in the downtown to attract visitors after 5:00 PM
- Vacancies in San Dimas Station are concerning. Need to have mechanisms to attract businesses
- Lack of vibrancy in the downtown
- Need more landscaping (green walls, trees, etc.)

3) What could be better about the downtown in the future (next 10-15 years)?

- Downtown needs places to congregate
- Downtown should have more than just commercial uses; art spaces, amenities, places that provide an experience
- Tie downtown to civic uses
- Proposed building should complement existing town core architecture and downtown's "small-town" feeling
- Need more mixed-use developments to bring in additional commercial and residential
- Need uses that will attract all age groups