

# Downtown Village Streetscape Improvement Project Community Workshop No. 2 Summary June 29, 2009

## I. Introduction

On June 29, 2009, from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm in the La Mesa Community Center, the City of La Mesa held its second community-wide workshop to introduce the Downtown Village Streetscape Improvement Project. Over 60 participants attended this workshop to review and discuss the draft village concept plan.

## II. Workshop Overview

The workshop began with a short presentation on the project, including: history, project area, project goals, scope, and schedule. The project goals include:

- Revitalizing and beautifying La Mesa Village
- Enhancing the “sense of place”
- Improving La Mesa Village’s status as a destination
- Solidifying La Mesa Village as La Mesa’s city center
- Securing additional funding for implementation
- Minimizing construction impacts to downtown businesses
- **Establish long-term maintenance plan**



*Workshop participants listening to the presentation of the draft concept plan.*

Following the overview presentation, the project team provided a detailed overview of the draft concept plan. Key highlights of the plan include:

- Creates a strong district identity
- Wider sidewalks
- Traffic calming/ improved pedestrian crossing
- Marked crosswalks
- Gateway features/intersection enhancements

## Downtown Village Streetscape Improvement Project Community Workshop No. 2 Summary June 29, 2009

- Enhanced landscaping/tree coverage
- Pedestrian amenities (seating areas, trash receptacles)
- New and enhanced lighting with event infrastructure
- Overall increase in on-street parking on La Mesa Blvd (from Normal to Grant)

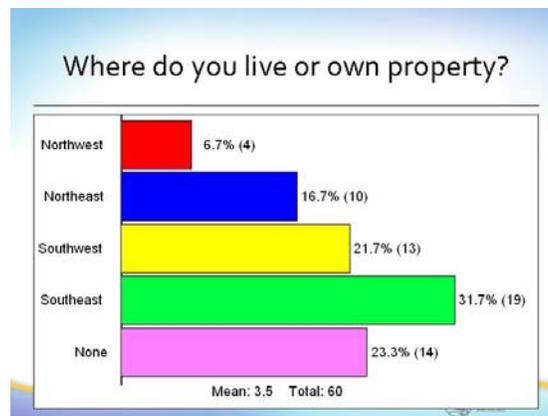
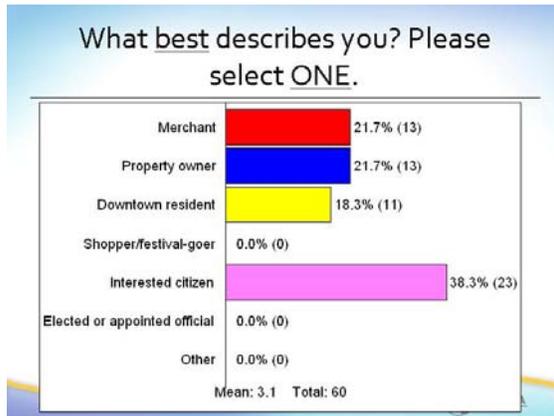


*Draft concept plan*

### III. Who's in the Room?

Following the presentation, participants were asked to answer a few questions about who they are, how long they've lived/owned business in La Mesa, using handheld voting units. The crowd was a good blend of longtime merchants, property owners and interested citizens. Following are the specific results:

## Downtown Village Streetscape Improvement Project Community Workshop No. 2 Summary June 29, 2009



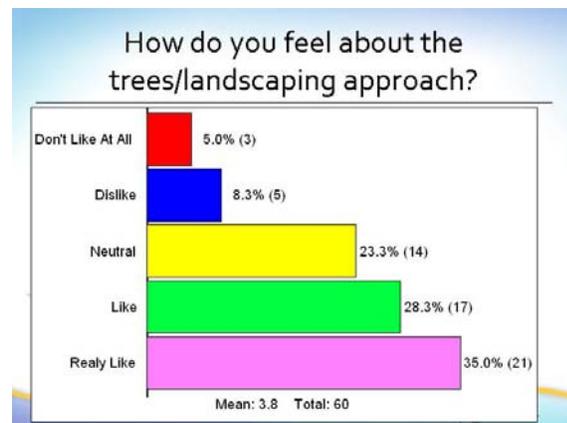
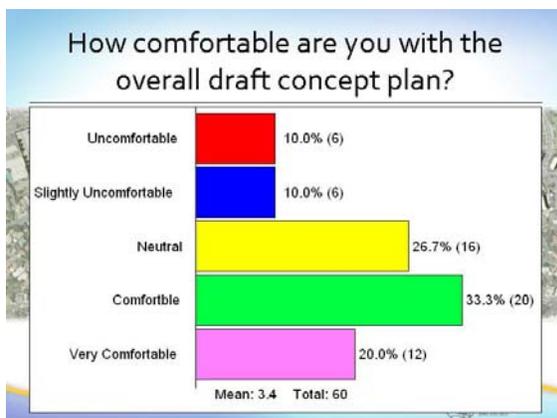
### IV. Feedback Exercise

Following the Who's In the Room exercise, participants were asked to provide their feedback on the draft concept plan using the handheld units to rate a variety of questions. Results were made available instantaneously and discussed as a group.

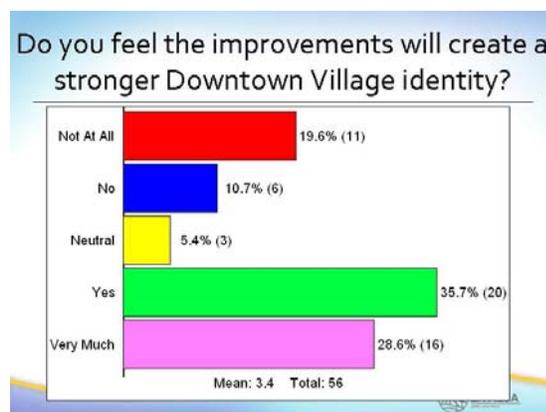
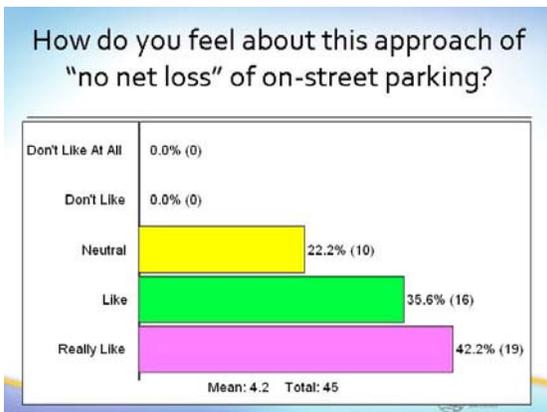
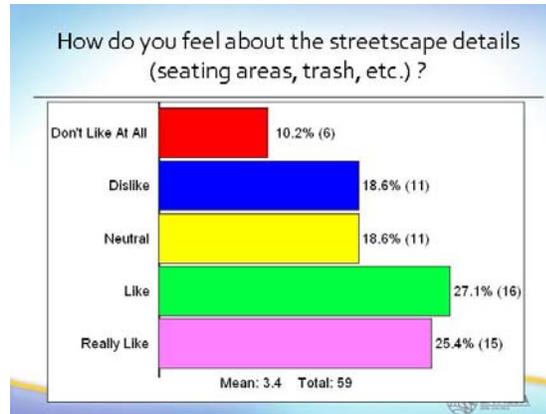
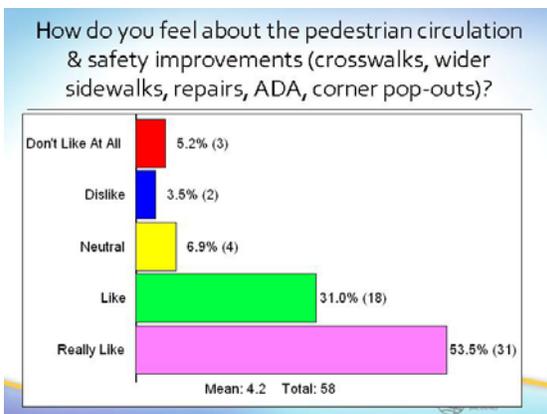
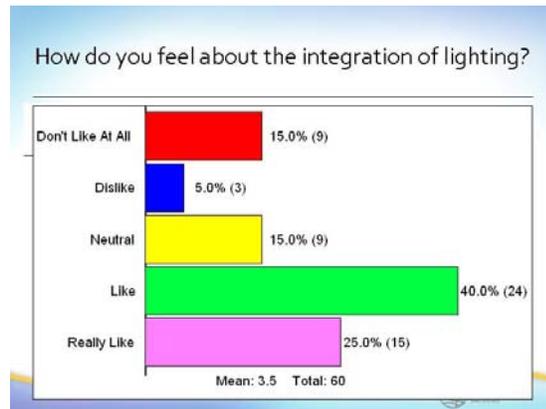
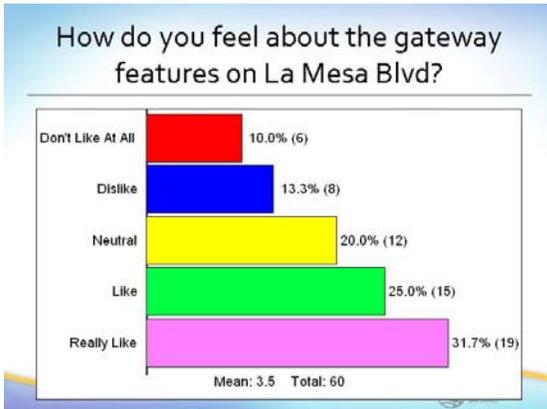
## Downtown Village Streetscape Improvement Project Community Workshop No. 2 Summary June 29, 2009



*Draft concept illustration*

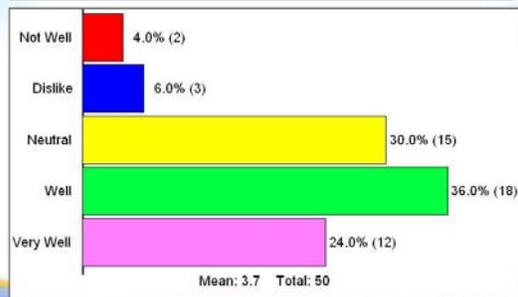


# Downtown Village Streetscape Improvement Project Community Workshop No. 2 Summary June 29, 2009

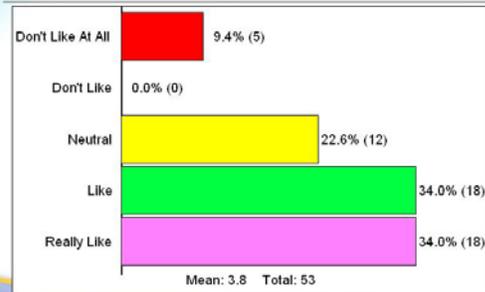


## Downtown Village Streetscape Improvement Project Community Workshop No. 2 Summary June 29, 2009

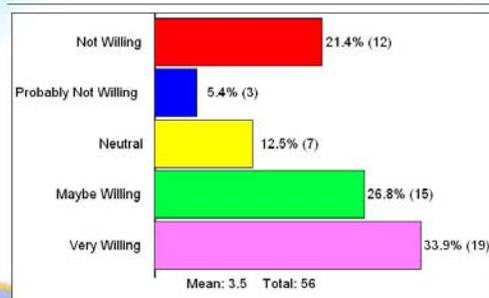
How well do you feel the draft concept plan responds to community input?



How do you feel about construction approach of maintaining one side of on-street parking with one-way circulation?



How willing are you to help develop a plan to pay for maintenance of the improvements?



## Downtown Village Streetscape Improvement Project Community Workshop No. 2 Summary June 29, 2009

### IV. Post-It Note Exercise

Participants were asked to identify ideas to make the Village Streetscape project unique to La Mesa. Participants recorded responses on Post-it Notes and placed them on a blank area of the wall. Some of the key ideas that emerged include the following:

- Unique sidewalk design/pattern (e.g. special paving, brick, etc.)
- Unique street lighting for Downtown La Mesa
- Addition of public art/volunteer projects
- Add a character-defining detail to the area
- Unique "Village" theme street furnishings
- Alternative seating (e.g. large rocks, short walls, etc.)
- Additional seating, not just on corners
- Variety of street trees
- Historic walk
- Unique street furnishings for La Mesa Village



*Workshop participant's Post-It Notes with ideas to improve the Downtown Village Streetscape concept plans.*

To see all participants' comments, please refer to the notes section of this summary.

### V. Next Steps

Based on the feedback and comments heard during this workshop, the project team will revise the Village concept plan prior to presenting it to the City Council. Following the City Council's approval of the plan, focused construction meetings with business and property owners will take place.

For more information about the Downtown Village Streetscape Improvement Project and informational about how to get involved, please contact Bill Chopyk, Director of Planning & Development Services, City of La Mesa at (619) 667-1187.

# Downtown Village Streetscape Improvement Project Community Workshop No. 2 Summary June 29, 2009

## WORKSHOP NOTES

### Comment Cards

#### First Card:

1. Who decided to use the stimulus money for this project? Was there any community input to consider other options, such as affordable housing, more green space, community gardens, etc.?
2. Will any advertising be allowed on the public benches? I hope not, as this will make them as ugly as benches in other places.
3. What incentives do you plan to encourage people to put their trash in the receptacles provided? This is a huge problem in La Mesa, as in all of California. :-(

#### Next Card:

The most important item that the majority of participants reflected was the arch.

Two arches on Spring Street and two on either end of La Mesa Blvd. Everything else is a secondary concept. After arches, everyone wants many more trees, then wider sidewalks, then lighting.

But the arch is by far the most important concept.

### Post it Notes

- We need more input as business owners.
- We need to retain as much parking as possible.
- The downtime for businesses is crucial.
- Do open trash cans increase flies and odor, and make it easier for dumpster diving? I prefer a closed receptacle.
- Lantern style lights along sidewalk
- The sidewalk areas need more design put into it.
- Hanging flower baskets from lighting along sidewalks.
- Community living room: Have community members design and maintain living rooms. Include teenagers to help and graffiti will go down.

## Downtown Village Streetscape Improvement Project Community Workshop No. 2 Summary June 29, 2009

- Recycling and trash should be near benches to avoid having to walk too far to toss trash.
- Would like to see this process slow down and include more workshops and opportunities for input by merchants, residents, and property owners.
- A stop is necessary at 3<sup>rd</sup> and La Mesa because traffic seems to pick up momentum between Palm and 4<sup>th</sup>. Traffic often challenges pedestrians.
- Trash and recycling containers should be located near restaurants, bars, and places where food and drinks are sold.
- When designing street median and street widths, consider that we have a parade with trucks, floats, and other large vehicles.
- It would be nice to have several fountains with water falls at some of the main entrances to create a sense of calm.
- Shop owners need to be successful. Maybe during construction, their landlords could pro-rate some rent relief?
- Lighting should be all the way down La Mesa Blvd., from University Avenue up through the village.
- Will access to Farmers' Market be enhanced?
- Creative lighting, not so bland, work 24 hours per day.
- Are the street lights solar powered?
- Consideration needed for safety in parking space re-design.
- Will this area be wi-fi connected?
- Any provision for public art? (space allotment)
- Will the area be wired for music? (P. A.)
- Extend new lighting all the way down to University.
- La Mesa's centennial is 2012 - any space for a monument?
- Incorporate plan for traffic control so that cars do not speed (>25 MPH) down La Mesa Blvd.
- Need to be more creative. Not a cookie cutter - more seating.
- How is the "string" lighting going to be maintained? When are the spent bulbs/lights vandalized/shot at/broken lights going to be replaced? Has serious thought been given to this? Think this idea is cheap and corny!
- Need different paving surfaces (colors, textures) for sidewalks and streets.

## Downtown Village Streetscape Improvement Project Community Workshop No. 2 Summary June 29, 2009

- Will merchants be charged extra for the use of sidewalk space?
- Let's put a little more character into our details for lighting fixtures, street lights, node signage, sidewalks (historic walk-of-fame).
- Add mural to Pac Bell building if possible.
- What about entering downtown area from the south, on Spring Street?
- Bulletin board of 3 x 5 cards for casual labor to/for community.
- Perhaps one "character-defining" detail to go with one standard detail.
- More texture and color in the sidewalk in the form of brick, tile, and the use of natural product, a. k. a. wood (the sidewalk design that now exists is good, why not keep?)
- Seating spaced along the street not just at pop-outs, randomly spaced.
- How are "flowers in planters" mounted on poles to be maintained? Watered? Automatic irrigation? Did not see the development of this so couldn't truly respond to the workshop question "How willing are you to help develop a plan to pay for maintenance of the improvements?"
- Not so many shrubs.
- Mature trees even if you have to install less trees.
- Wrought iron street light standards with a lantern look - even the same globe that is proposed, but look like an old lantern like now.
- Get funding for a living and loving La Mesa, CA button.
- How can traffic calming be part of the plan? There is no/very limited space to do this.
- Replace black benches and trash receptacles with concrete earth tone colors.
- Have a landscape company volunteer to do all the landscape maintenance in return for free advertising.
- Improve interest in lighting.
- Scatter recycling cans and trash cans. Put near seating.
- I know blue is a standard recycling container color, but perhaps green can be considered. The blue detracts from the village feel. I think the black is fine for the trash cans.
- Need more unique "Village" theme street furnishings, not using "standards" typical of utility type designs. The character is what is also important - what truly makes the downtown area old La Mesa?
- No black benches and trash receptacles. Very boring and will be extremely not during the summer (lawsuits for burns).

## Downtown Village Streetscape Improvement Project Community Workshop No. 2 Summary June 29, 2009

- Agreed with the comment from the audience that the proposed streetscape with simple furnishings dotted here and there without a “flavor” or characteristic of “downtown” - looks very boring. Can’t more ideas be researched, more visual simulations produced?
- Lots of flowers.
- Pedestrian crossings, enhanced pavement, etc., more area for pedestrians (less for vehicles) does make much sense in redeveloping the streetscape. We are too attached to walking too little that we need to encourage it more so!
- Volunteers to wear an apron with a logo while trimming the plants, etc.
- Can we improve the entries from 8? We do appear very “industrial.”
- For ideas of street improvements, little Italy is a great example of how a street should look. Also, their sign is the nicest. Also keep in consideration the importance of improvement of outdoor dining. It will greatly attract people to downtown La Mesa.
- Is there any way to get people who are at Grossmont Center to come over to us?
- The area needs art to give it soul.
- Key areas with flags and pennants on tall poles, clustered areas of color, lots of seating - consider large rocks and low walls as well as benches.
- Moderate to extensive use of fragrant trees.
- Much, much more use of ground level flower beds. Color!!
- Volunteer (individual) community involvement to help maintain the plantings.
- Succulents and water-frugal plants
- Needs bigger, more extensive planting areas - use of rocks as landscaping tools - use of . . . consider the use of pergolas (overhead, wooden trellis works) for shade, vines
- Glad to see you are improving “the village.” Please encourage more antique stores, more novelty shops. Like the plan overall.
- Rats love palm trees - they make nests in them. May increase rats!
- Is saw tooth pattern more of a trip hazard? People don’t expect unusual patterns when hurrying by.
- Somehow encourage shop owners to maintain pleasant decorative store fronts. Perhaps a friendly competition?
- Prefer a flat sidewalk. Don’t like the cobblestone squares.
- Arch over street more appealing. One string of lights looks a bit tacky - maybe make fewer archways and do them more artistically.

## Downtown Village Streetscape Improvement Project Community Workshop No. 2 Summary June 29, 2009

- Keep on shop owners regarding leaving up holiday décor. Christmas tree ornaments are still hanging from the tree across from Cosmo's - that Italian restaurant.
- Don't like all the palms. Prefer trees that don't drop palm fronds.
- Invite businesses to use music to filter outdoors.
- Use Tivoli lights and let the entry light strands hang naturally.
- Re-think the standard street acorn lights.
- Move the business signs down off the building to the pedestrian level - use symbolic shapes.
- Let the canopy trees grow and don't prune or crown the tops. Let them get as big as possible.
- Curved gateways are more like the special unique Village we are. Need a better way to access trash, but conceal the obvious identity of alley trash.
- Straight poles and strings of lights are no different than a spontaneous back yard party.
- Love more lighting, but need more creative. Need to start at GIO.
- What consideration has been given to the bicyclist traveling into or through downtown La Mesa? Parking areas? This is something not touched on in this workshop.
- I know the budget is tight, but lots not values - engineer before we create a solid vision plan.
- Avoid bright yellow handicapped ramps at intersection if possible.
- More aesthetically appealing sidewalk and light fixtures. Needs to reflect the charm of our village.
- I still feel we need a public restroom.
- More uniquely designed trash cans, re: Santa Monica.
- Re-think the hanging baskets - way too boring and water intensive.
- Unique, village-style lighting.
- Has consideration been given with vehicular parking interfacing with pedestrian zone - head in without wheel stops? Overhang of vehicular bumpers onto sidewalk/street furnishings?
- Do something with strips along Spring Street from 8 or ramp up till Lin Blvd.
- Scatter seating a bit - not all just on corners.

## Downtown Village Streetscape Improvement Project Community Workshop No. 2 Summary June 29, 2009

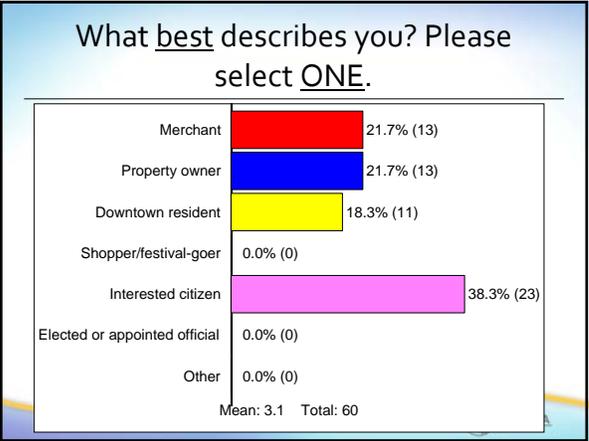
- Didn't get into plants/species except palm trees. Don't think palms make the cut for La Mesa streetscape. We don't need Beverly Hills theme, convoy drive feeling, "corridor us in" feeling! Even with existing palms around.
- Susan Harden - commentator - did an excellent job of moving through the issues; direct, articulate - as many flowers as possible.
- Although the grey scored concrete works fine in front of the library and fire station, I don't think it needs to be the same in the village where the style of buildings is completely different.
- I know the budget is still being tweaked, but is brick or some other type of enhanced paving an option for the sidewalks? The standard grey scored concrete doesn't have a very "village" feel. Perhaps even some integral color would warm it up. Brick would be better, of course, but perhaps it is outside of the budget?
- Has consideration been given for street trees (not palm trees in particular) for a healthy-sized rooting area? Have there been any who see the Laurel leaved fig (or fig) tree at the southeast corner of Spring Street and La Mesa Blvd. In that concrete planter like to see trees crammed into the streetscape scene? Has someone looked into ideas such as "Silva cells?" Some more thought to be put to this hopefully . . .
- Incorporate colorful, water-wise plantings similar to State Street in Santa Barbara.
- Incorporate some pavers to soften hardscape.
- Limit magazine and junk boxes on street.
- Scatter trees around; not just at corners.
- Meet with the merchants.
- Use a similar design for the signs, trash cans, and lamps.
- East Village and West Village
- The arches are most important. Two on Spring Street, and two on La Mesa Blvd.
- Add colored cement to sidewalks.
- Have enough \$ to do something more interesting. Larger trees, banding in concrete, color, etc. More charm. Not enough \$ in budget as is.
- Potted plants.
- Lights in trees.
- Green trees and shrubs (flowering) are important. Palm trees with age produces only trunks no greenery.
- Lighting should be unique - village atmosphere is important. Choices should be presented for voting.

## Downtown Village Streetscape Improvement Project Community Workshop No. 2 Summary June 29, 2009

- Some kind of interesting lighting and not the common lights proposed.
- Change northeast “entry” to village to Memorial/University Avenue. Flag day parade event starts there, etc. Ties in community center. Change west “entry” to Village on La Mesa Blvd., and university (by new civic center/fire department/library.)
- Current trees are seasonal, increasing attractive colors in spring, summer and fall. Not palm trees!
- Lighting fixtures - “lamplighter” themes historic to La Mesa - don’t mimic Balboa Park.
- It would be a shame if El Cajon looked better.
- Gray sidewalks do not give Village a warm feeling. They should have some color or should be brick or have brick enhancement.
- “Before” sidewalks look better than “after” sidewalks. Do like the expansion, but generic concrete no good.
- I think there should be bike racks!
- Although expensive, I feel having a part of all of the sidewalk be brick or other more decorative stone would add charm to the downtown area.
- Blue recycle receptacles should be OUT! People will be going through them day and night looking for cans, etc., to turn in for money.
- Street lights should be more old-fashioned, lantern style - no generic.
- Palms are attractive; however, they require more maintenance and do less to reduce the heat island effect.
- Seating should be dispersed, offering separate areas - not communally forced/concentrated at intersections and corners.
- “Saw tooth” jagged sidewalk edges are trip hazards.
- Set theme for Spring Street as main entrance.
- Hanging baskets high enough to not provide accidents head injury claims, etc.
- Arts alliance propose unique features, local artisans
- Provide color and texture to soften stark gray color of sidewalk.

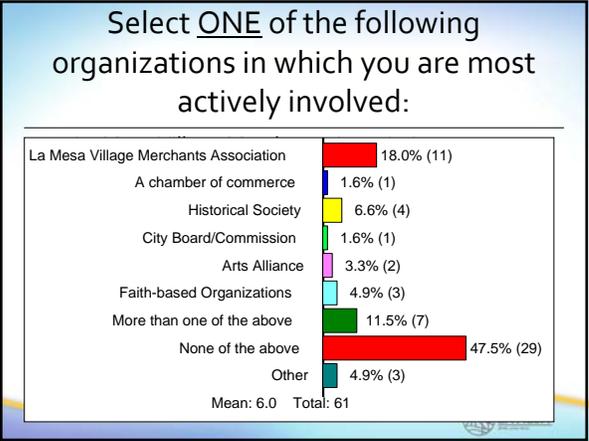
What best describes you? Please select ONE.

1. Merchant
2. Property owner
3. Downtown resident
4. Shopper/festival-goer
5. Interested citizen
6. Elected or appointed official
7. Other



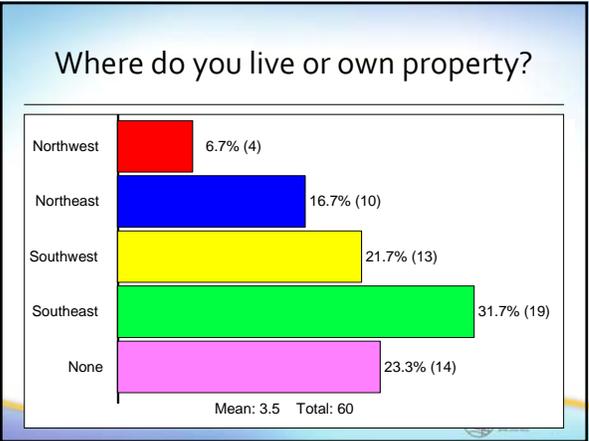
Select ONE of the following organizations in which you are most actively involved:

1. La Mesa Village Merchants Association
2. A chamber of commerce
3. Historical Society
4. City Board/Commission
5. Arts Alliance
6. Faith-based Organizations
7. More than one of the above
8. None of the above
9. Other



Where do you live or own property?

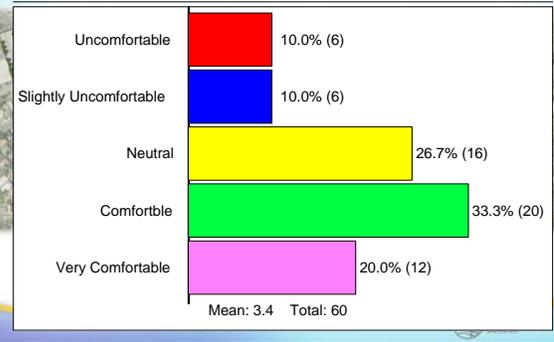
1. Northwest
2. Northeast
3. Southwest
4. Southeast
5. None



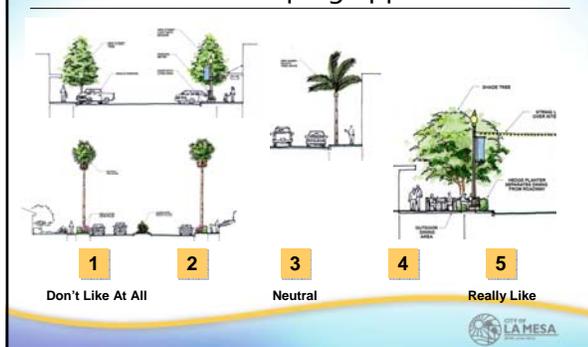
### How comfortable are you with the overall draft concept plan?



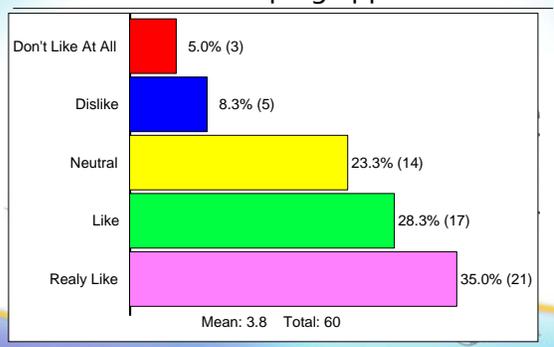
### How comfortable are you with the overall draft concept plan?



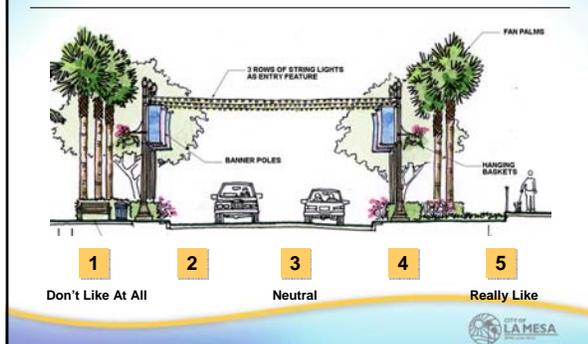
### How do you feel about the trees/landscaping approach?



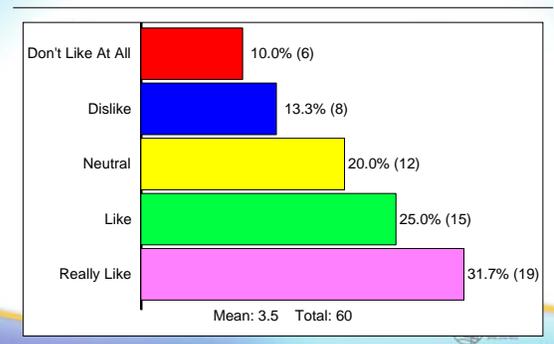
### How do you feel about the trees/landscaping approach?



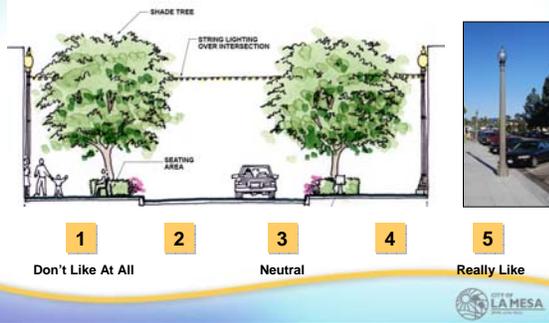
### How do you feel about the gateway features on La Mesa Blvd?



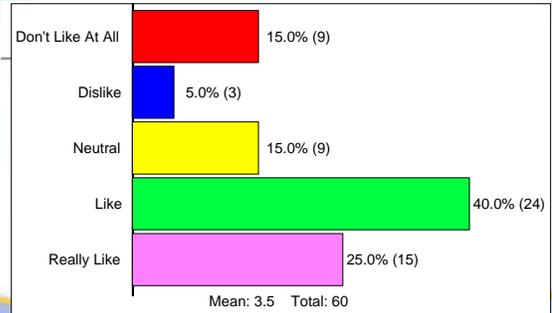
### How do you feel about the gateway features on La Mesa Blvd?



### How do you feel about the integration of lighting?



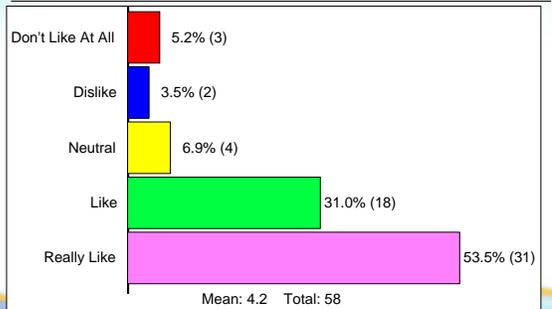
### How do you feel about the integration of lighting?



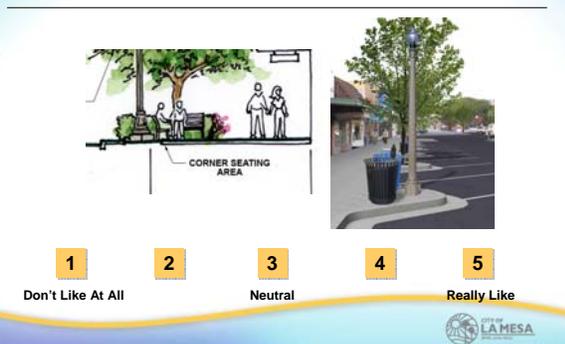
### How do you feel about the pedestrian circulation & safety improvements (crosswalks, wider sidewalks, repairs, ADA, corner pop-outs)?



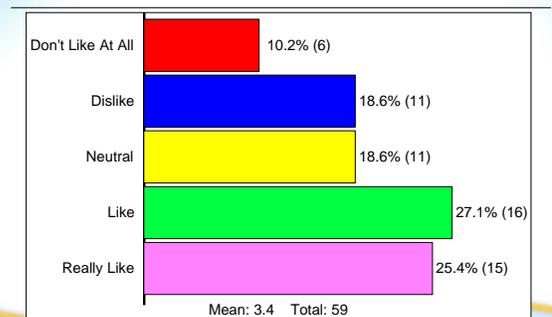
### How do you feel about the pedestrian circulation & safety improvements (crosswalks, wider sidewalks, repairs, ADA, corner pop-outs)?



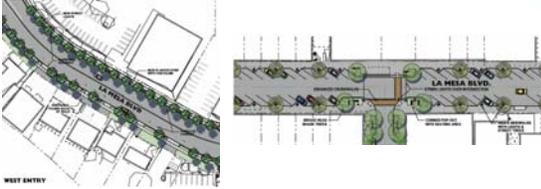
### How do you feel about the streetscape details (seating areas, trash, etc.)?



### How do you feel about the streetscape details (seating areas, trash, etc.)?



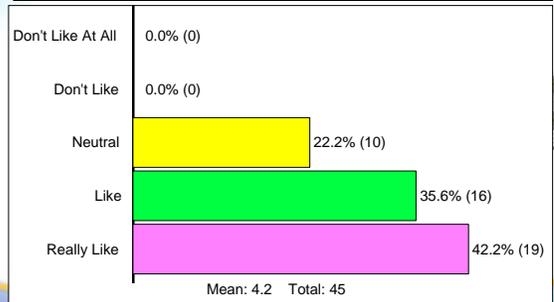
### How do you feel about this approach of "no net loss" of on-street parking?



1 Don't Like At All      2      3 Neutral      4      5 Really Like



### How do you feel about this approach of "no net loss" of on-street parking?



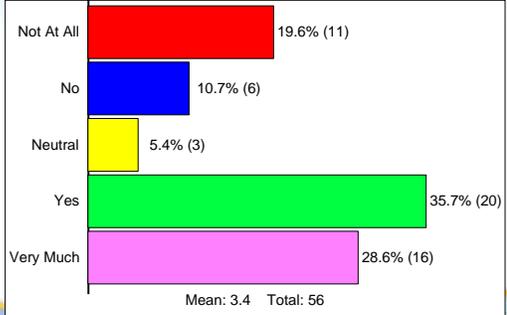
### Do you feel the improvements will create a stronger Downtown Village identity?



1 Don't Like At All      2      3 Neutral      4      5 Very Much



### Do you feel the improvements will create a stronger Downtown Village identity?



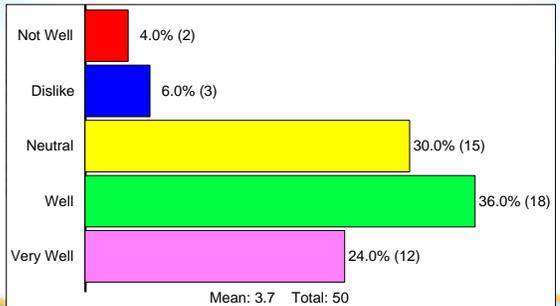
### How well do you feel the draft concept plan responds to community input?



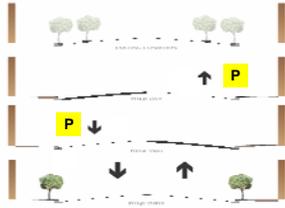
1 Not Well      2      3 Neutral      4      5 Very Well



### How well do you feel the draft concept plan responds to community input?



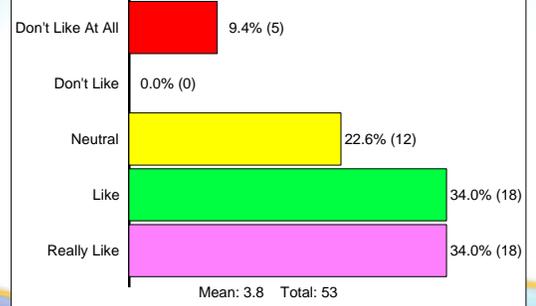
How do you feel about construction approach of maintaining one side of on-street parking with one-way circulation?



1 2 3 4 5  
Don't Like At All Neutral Really Like



How do you feel about construction approach of maintaining one side of on-street parking with one-way circulation?



How willing are you to help develop a plan to pay for maintenance of the improvements?



1 2 3 4 5  
Not willing Neutral Very willing



How willing are you to help develop a plan to pay for maintenance of the improvements?

