



## Exhibit A. Public Engagement Summary



COUNTY OF  
**SAN DIEGO**

Planning and Development Services 5510 Overland Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92123 [sandiegocounty.gov](http://sandiegocounty.gov)

# EXHIBIT A. Public Engagement Summary

## Executive Summary

Between March and December 2024, the project team composed of County staff and a consultant team conducted Phase 2 and Phase 3<sup>1</sup> of outreach to engage residents, businesses, and community organizations to identify barriers to housing production and explore sustainable development opportunities within the four DFA areas. These efforts built upon the foundation established during Phase 1, which introduced the County staff, outlined the DFA effort, and sought input on engagement preferences and potential stakeholders. Feedback from Phase 1 emphasized the importance of a holistic approach, considering housing alongside access to services, and raised concerns about traffic, infrastructure capacity, affordability, and equitable outreach.

Over the course of these outreach phases, the project team, spoke with more than 900 community members and technical experts and heard a variety of experiences related to barriers to housing development and ideas to create opportunities for housing within Buena Creek, Valle de Oro/Casa de Oro, Lakeside, and Spring Valley.

Across meetings, focus groups, pop-ups events, and online engagement, staff heard different ideas, solutions, challenges, and considerations to address barriers to housing development for housing in the DFA areas. Community feedback from the outreach Phase 2 and Phase 3 informed the analyses and recommendations for the Development Feasibility Analysis (DFA). Key themes from outreach Phase 2 and Phase 3 are summarized below:

### Phase 2 Outreach Findings

#### Barriers to Development:

Building and development experts cited lengthy entitlement processes, high risks (e.g., uncertain project feasibility, escalating construction costs), unclear regulations, and difficult permitting processes as barriers to housing development. To address some of these challenges, the County has initiated efforts to streamline administrative review processes and accelerating project timelines, as directed in the May 23, 2023 Removing Barriers Board Letter (12).

#### Community Sentiments:

Community members expressed various opinions on housing development. Some supported additional affordable housing, recognizing its benefits. Others opposed further development, often citing concerns about accommodating new residents and the availability of vacant land for construction. Many community members questioned where new housing could be built given the existing development in their communities.

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<sup>1</sup> Phase 1 community engagement occurred prior to this Phase of the DFA Project, see the [December 6, 2023 Board Hearing](#). Outcomes of that earlier engagement informed the planning of development of Phase 2 and Phase 3 engagement.

#### Infrastructure Needs:

Community members and building and development experts alike highlighted the critical need for infrastructure improvements (e.g., roadway improvements, sidewalks, access for emergency vehicles), particularly in semi-rural areas like Lakeside and Buena Creek, to accommodate increased demand resulting from future development. Limited capacity and coordination challenges with water and sewer providers were seen as barriers to supporting development. Conversely, some viewed the lack of infrastructure as a way to limit unwanted growth.

#### Traffic and Transit:

The need for improved public transit and traffic management was a recurring theme. Participants expressed interest in creating more walkable spaces, while acknowledging the challenges of limited transit infrastructure.

#### Mixed-Use Development and Public Spaces:

Community members expressed interest in exploring opportunities for mixed-use developments (i.e., combination of different land uses like residential, commercial, and recreation within a single area) and public spaces, particularly in underutilized town centers. Participants emphasized the need to use infill space effectively and increase density in areas with access to transit, services, and infrastructure, while considering community preferences for low-density residential areas versus mixed-use development. The community also vocalized discontent with existing unsuitable commercial or industrial uses, which are perceived as hazardous to community health and undesirable to live near.

### **Phase 3 Outreach Findings**

#### Housing Needs and Preferences:

Participants emphasized a deficit in low- and very low-income housing, defined as housing affordable to households earning up to 80% and 50% of the area median income (AMI) respectively, within the county, underscoring the need for quality, higher-density housing to address this shortage. Developers favored General Plan land use designations that encourage townhouse developments with 10.5 to 15 units per acre. Additionally, mobile home parks were suggested by the building and development experts as a low-impact affordable housing solution.

#### Development and Density:

Community members and Environmental Coalition representatives noted that development in the DFA areas could offer benefits such as improved emergency service access and reduced urban sprawl. However, some participants, including representatives from fire services, raised concerns that increased density in these areas could also strain emergency response capabilities if not carefully planned. Locating housing within DFA areas is still generally preferred to reduce the negative impacts of sprawl (e.g., using existing infrastructure and preserving open space). Participants also emphasized incorporating greenbelts and pathways into development plans to accommodate wildlife movement and pedestrian connections.

#### Community and Infrastructure Improvements:

Community members, including Community Planning/Sponsor Groups (CPSG), and representatives from the building and development industry expressed the importance of developing communities that include sidewalks, parks, safe travel routes, and essential services, not just housing units (i.e., complete communities). They emphasized that public services, such as emergency services, transit, parks, and water/sewer services, should accompany densification. Infrastructure improvements, such as confirming sewer treatment capacity and addressing flooding issues, were identified as priorities.

#### Prioritize Development:

Developers emphasized aligning zoning with the General Plan and expanding ministerial processes to prioritize housing. To boost affordable housing, they recommended faster approvals, diverse funding, and streamlined regulations. They also stressed the need for collaboration, clear communication, and clear permitting guidelines.

#### Density and Feasibility:

Developers emphasized that simply increasing density is not realistic strategy in the DFA areas. They expressed support for aligning zoning with the General Plan but not for major zoning changes.

#### DFA area-Specific Feedback:

- Buena Creek: Recommendations included a comprehensive specific plan and support for mixed-use development around the Sprinter station.
- Valle de Oro/Casa de Oro: Residents sought immediate action for community revitalization, with opportunities for housing along Campo Road and support for increased density on one-acre lots
- Lakeside: Some community members noted that higher-density housing may be harder to introduce in Lakeside due to local preferences and market conditions.
- Spring Valley: Participants called for improved walkability, stricter code enforcement, and integrated mixed-use development on specific sites.

## Introduction

The DFA was directed by the Board on February 9, 2022, to identify barriers and opportunities to develop housing in Buena Creek, Valle de Oro/Casa de Oro, Lakeside, and Spring Valley, and consists of three phases of outreach. The first Phase of outreach conducted between winter 2022 and winter 2023 introduced the County staff, outlined the DFA effort, explained its alignment with other projects, and sought feedback on community engagement preferences (e.g., format, language, in-person or virtual) and potential stakeholders beyond community members and developers (e.g., private water and sewer districts, electric companies). The feedback received during this Phase included interest in supporting communities with abundant and affordable housing with access to services such as schools, emergency response, grocery stores, parks and supportive

infrastructure like roads, sidewalks, bike lanes, and water and sewer access as well as reducing car-dependency and traffic.

This summary focuses on Phase 2 and Phase 3 of outreach. Some of the feedback received from technical stakeholders and community members extends beyond the immediate scope of this project and cannot be directly addressed within the DFA. Feedback that can't be addressed through this project is valuable and will be shared with applicable project managers to inform other initiatives and future planning efforts. This approach ensures that community concerns are considered and addressed in a comprehensive manner.

This report presents the key themes heard during phases two and three of the public engagement process, as well as detailed summaries from each activity. Ideas and phrases reported in the feedback sections reflect those of the participants with minor edits for clarity. *The feedback summarized in this report represents the discussions and comments made by the community and other stakeholders and may or may not align with the technical analyses conducted in this project.*

In Phase 2 (spring 2024), staff gathered input on barriers, opportunities, and potential solutions for housing development. In Phase 3 (summer – winter 2024), staff shared the results and validated the findings of the DFA with technical experts and received feedback to inform the context of the findings with community members.

During Phase 2, staff hosted six small group discussions with developers, building industry, and community-based organizations (CBOs); fourteen listening sessions with technical audiences (e.g., environmental groups, land development professionals, building industry professionals), property owners, and bordering jurisdictions; attended nine community events; and presented at three CPSG meetings. To advertise these outreach activities, staff sent emails, provided DFA flyers in both English and Spanish, coordinated with CBOs, County Parks, County Libraries, the LiveWell SD, utilized social media (e.g., Nextdoor, Facebook, X, Instagram), and developed a website with a public question and answer section where the information can be accessed through various languages. Staff also mailed invitation letters to 520 property owners of vacant and underutilized parcels within the DFA area boundaries and 11,573 post cards in English and Spanish to properties within the DFA areas.

During Phase 3, County staff attended four CPSG meetings; hosted five meetings with developers; participated in 11 community events, including two virtual workshops; and facilitated nine technical working group meetings with professionals such as Environmental Coalition and Building Industry Association representatives. These engagement activities provided opportunities to share the draft DFA findings and recommendations, gather feedback, and refine the analysis based on input from both technical experts and community members.

## Community Engagement Approach

Housing development has the potential to change an area by altering its physical landscape, increasing quality of life, and influencing local economies. The DFA engagement strategy aimed to share information and collect input from people and groups who may be affected by changes. Throughout this process, the project team also met with technical stakeholders, including industry experts, developers, and other professionals to understand their experiences and solicit their analysis. It also supported relationship-building with the County, to support future outreach and collaboration efforts. The project team reached out to the community directly through various channels and collaborated with CBOs in the DFA areas to leverage their local connections and ensure the process was receptive to members of the DFA areas. Staff engaged with the following, herein referred to as “Participants”:

- Residents, businesses, and visitors in Buena Creek, Spring Valley, Valle de Oro/Casa de Oro, and Lakeside
- Developers
- Civic and community groups
- Neighborhood associations
- Community Planning/Sponsor Groups
- Property owners
- Bordering jurisdictions
- The County’s standard working groups (e.g., Building Industry Association, Environmental Coalition)

The project team conducted a series of engagement activities to learn about the perspectives, opinions, ideas, and experiences of different stakeholders. The project team implemented a variety of engagement techniques to capture stakeholder input and “meet people where they are.”

**Listening Sessions:** These sessions were focused group conversations, specific to the topic of the group or organization. Participants included the County’s standard working groups (e.g., Building Industry Association, Environmental Coalition), property owners of select parcels or interest, and representatives from bordering jurisdictions. These conversations were facilitated by the consultant team who prompted questions for participants to respond according to their own perspectives and expertise. The questions were designed to gather input on participants’ priorities, concerns and ideas, as well as gain insight into the professional expertise of development, housing, land use, environmental, and labor professionals.

**Small Group Interviews:** Interviews were conducted with developers (e.g., market-rate, affordable), building industry professionals, and relevant organizations (e.g., Spring Valley Community Alliance, Casa de Oro Alliance). The purpose was to gain insights into the perspectives and experiences of participants. The interviewer asked a series of prepared questions and interviewees responded accordingly.

**Community Planning/Sponsor Group Meetings:** The project team presented at and hosted discussions at standing CPSG meetings. The CPSGs are groups of local residents and community leaders who work with the County of San Diego to understand plans for new projects or developments within a community, provide a public forum where community input is welcomed, weigh public testimony against proposed benefits, enhancements, and costs associated with a project, and make recommendations that reflect the community's position to County decision makers. There are four CPSGs that cover the DFA areas: Spring Valley Community Planning Group, Valle de Oro Community Planning Group, Lakeside Community Planning Group, and Twin Oaks Valley Community Sponsor Group, which includes the area of Buena Creek. The project team was not able to meet with the Valle de Oro CPG during Phase 2 due to the CPG canceling its meeting.

**Community-based Events:** The project team partnered with local community organizations in each of the DFA areas to identify opportunities to meet with the local community "where they are." The project team attended community-based events, hosted informational tables at local gathering spots, and facilitated virtual community meetings.

**Community Meetings:** Community meetings create the opportunity for members of the public to learn about and ask questions about the recommendations that have emerged from the final analysis.

**Meetings with Developers:** The project team hosted meetings with developers not only to review the updated industry-specific recommendations, but also to build relationships and establish a shared understanding of existing conditions. Participants also had the opportunity to review technical documents and ground-truth market and financial feasibility, ensuring the recommendations support housing development. These conversations ensured the recommendations were informed by direct development experience and aligned with local opportunities and constraints.

**Project Website:** The project team created a project website to serve as a central hub for information and engagement throughout the DFA process. The website provided background on the DFA, outlined the goals and timeline of the project, and offered easy access to documents, meeting materials, and recordings. It also included opportunities for community members to get involved, such as signing up for updates, attending virtual meetings, or providing comments and questions. The website was designed to be user-friendly and accessible, helping ensure that information was available to a wide range of participants across the DFA areas.

During Phase 2, the project team conducted the following engagement activities:

- Listening sessions (12)
- Small Group Interviews (6)
- CPSG Meetings (3)
- Community events (5)

During Phase 3, the project team conducted outreach activities to inform participants and solicit feedback on the DFA market, financial, land use technical findings as well as input on the recommendations. Activities included the following:

- CPSG Meetings (4)
- Professional stakeholder meetings (9)
- Community events and presentations (11)
- Virtual workshops (2)
- Developer Meetings (5)

Highlights from Phase 2 engagement activities include the following (additional detail is provided in the next section, “Detail Summaries”):

- Building and development experts expressed the need for the County to reform entitlement processes. Participants cited long waits, high risks (e.g., uncertain project feasibility, escalating construction costs), unclear and ambiguous regulations, and difficult permitting processes as barriers to development. Notably, the County has ongoing efforts to amend codified administrative review processes, as identified in the May 23, 2023 Removing Barriers Board Letter (12). The County has made substantial progress toward hiring staff to accelerate review time and has initiated code amendments to streamline administrative review processes.
- Sentiment from community members varied widely, with some supportive of additional housing development and others in opposition of additional development. Some participants explicitly stated they did not want, “more people with low incomes, people experiencing homelessness, or people from the City of San Diego” to move to their town. Many others thought that additional affordable housing was necessary and would benefit the community. One common thread among most participants was the question, “where would new housing be built given the lack of vacant land?” Participants expressed doubt that additional housing could fit into already developed areas.
- **Some participants suggested the County should create more opportunities for housing – especially affordable housing.** Many comments were made regarding the historic lack of housing and lower-income residents who could not afford new or renovated developments in multiple communities. Some participants commented that there is a demand for mobile homes and shared a perception that the County has stopped considering this type of development. Other participants commented on the need for better employee housing, specifically for farmworkers.
- **Infrastructure needs were top of mind, especially in Lakeside and Buena Creek.** Participants stated that the lack of infrastructure, including wastewater infrastructure, keeps some rural areas from supporting development. Community members suggested that the County and developers are only interested in developing in more urban areas. Some participants suggested that the lack of infrastructure was a good thing because it limited development and they did not want to see their town grow or change. Others noted that lack of infrastructure, such as sidewalks, limited the mobility of people with disabilities.



- **Many participants raised the issue of traffic and the need for improved public transit service.** Some participants liked the idea of European cities, with more walkable spaces. Other participants noted the lack of proper transit infrastructure serving Spring Valley, Lakeside, and Buena Creek and the lack of safety and emergency preparedness which would also be impacted by added traffic. Several participants expressed concern that improved transit service could attract too many new residents to areas like Spring Valley, Lakeside, and Buena Creek. They also noted that existing issues with safety and emergency preparedness could be worsened by increased traffic and population growth.
- **Participants expressed a need for more mixed-use developments and public spaces.** There was a discussion about the need to utilize infill space in underdeveloped town centers and increase density in these areas. Some participants commented on the need for more accurate maps to portray if seemingly vacant parcels are actually available or part of someone's large single-family home site. Some participants were interested in keeping their towns as low-density residential areas, while others wanted to move toward mixed-use developments.
- **Some participants commented on habitat preservation.** A few participants believed that preservation efforts could completely halt and limit both development and economic growth of an area, noting that farmworkers are largely affected by policies on habitat preservation in areas like Buena Creek. Some participants stated that more safety and emergency preparedness was needed in their towns, especially those near protected habitats, which are susceptible to natural disasters like wildfires.

Community feedback from Phase 2 was summarized and integrated into the findings and recommendations that form the body of the DFA. In Phase 3, these findings and recommendations were shared out with the public and key stakeholders to keep them informed and solicit input.

During Phase 3, staff attended four CPSG meetings in the focus communities, five technical working group meetings, eleven community events, including two virtual workshops, and five meetings with developers to share and discuss the draft recommendations of the DFA. Input gathered during this Phase directly shaped and refined recommendations, particularly those related to streamlining permitting processes, aligning zoning with the General Plan, and continuing to implement affordable housing programs. Key themes from Phase 3 included the following (additional detail is provided in the next section, "Detail Summaries"):

- **Participants expressed the need for low and very low-income housing and discussed other preferences for housing types.** Participants highlighted a significant shortage of low- and very low-income housing in the county, stressing the importance of providing quality, higher-density housing to meet this demand. Some developers expressed a preference for General Plan land use designations that facilitate townhouse developments with 10.5 to 15 units per acre, which would encourage more construction of this type. Additionally, mobile home parks were suggested as a viable, low-impact solution for affordable housing, allowing residents to invest in their homes even if they do not own the land.

- **Development and Density.** Community members and Environmental Coalition representatives noted that development in the DFA areas could offer benefits such as improved emergency service access and reduced urban sprawl. However, some participants, including representatives from fire services, raised concerns that increased density in these areas could also strain emergency response capabilities if not carefully planned. Locating housing within DFA areas is still generally preferred to reduce the negative impacts of sprawl (e.g., using existing infrastructure and preserving open space). Participants also emphasized incorporating greenbelts and pathways into development plans to accommodate wildlife movement and pedestrian connections.
- **Developers outlined key action items to prioritize development.** Developers emphasized the need for alignment between zoning and the General Plan and expanding ministerial processes to prioritize housing development. To boost affordable housing production, they suggested key actions such as expediting approvals, securing diverse funding sources, and simplifying regulations. Additionally, developers highlighted the importance of collaboration, clear communication, and well-defined permitting guidelines.
- **Infrastructure improvements were still top of mind among participants.** There was a strong emphasis on the need to develop complete communities rather than just housing units. This includes providing sidewalks, parks, safe travel routes, and essential services. As areas become denser and affordable housing is added, it is crucial to ensure that accompanying public services are not only provided but also managed with long-term maintenance in mind. Infrastructure improvements, such as confirming sewage treatment capacity and addressing flooding issues before new housing is built, were also identified as priorities.
- **Across the different meetings, there was some area-specific feedback related to the different communities.** In Spring Valley, participants called for enhanced walkability and stricter code enforcement. They suggested that integrated mixed-use development and affordable housing could be supported on specific commercial and industrial sites. In Buena Creek, there was a recommendation for a comprehensive mini-General Plan, along with support for mixed-use development around the Sprinter station and the provision of housing for college students. Valle de Oro/Casa de Oro residents expressed a desire for immediate action to revitalize their community, with opportunities for housing development along Campo Road and support for increasing housing density on one-acre lots.
- **Participants highlighted additional considerations for the project team.** Development plans should consider constraints such as high fire hazards and coordinate with parallel County efforts to encourage housing development. There is also a need for local businesses that provide good jobs for residents and for affordable housing options that maintain the character of the community. Additionally, participants raised concerns about the high cost of housing, questioning how to enable households to spend less than the federal target of 28 percent of their income on housing expenses, as many currently exceed this benchmark.
- **Prioritize development.** Developers emphasized aligning zoning with the General Plan and expanding ministerial processes to prioritize housing. To boost affordable housing, they

recommended faster approvals, diverse funding, and streamlined regulations. They also stressed the need for collaboration, clear communication, and clear permitting guidelines.

- **Density and Feasibility.** Developers emphasized that simply increasing density is not realistic strategy in the DFA areas. They expressed support for aligning zoning with the General Plan but not for major zoning changes.

The following sections are going to detail the types of engagement and feedback received:

## Phase 2: Detailed Summaries

### Listening Sessions

This summary is intended as an overall capture of key topics highlighted during the Phase 2 listening sessions for the DFA. A series of listening sessions were held to gauge major barriers and opportunities to housing in the four DFA areas of Buena Creek, Valle de Oro/Casa de Oro, Spring Valley, and Lakeside.

Listening sessions were held on the following dates with the following groups. The session with the Labor Union did not receive any participants and was therefore canceled.

- April 10, 2024: Environmental Coalition
- April 16, 2024: Farm Bureau
- April 17, 2024: Land Development Technical Working Group
- April 18, 2024: Labor Union (canceled due to no participants)
- April 19, 2024: BIA
- May 13, 2024: Property owners
- May 15, 2024: Property owners
- May 17, 2024: Property owners
- May 28, 2024: City of San Marcos
- May 30, 2024: City of Santee
- May 31, 2024: City of Vista
- June 4, 2024: City of La Mesa
- June 4, 2024: City of El Cajon

### Inputs

Statements and opinions below are representative of those expressed during the listening sessions. Colloquial language reflects language used by participants.

### Development and Approval Processes

#### Obstacles/Pain Point

- The State has tight regulations that take away decision-making from local planning.

- Housing is very regulated and litigated. Jurisdictions view themselves as regulators. There is not a mindset that “we need housing.” The system has become regulation for the sake of regulation. It is also dramatically expensive.
- Mobile home parks still have a market in San Diego County but the requirement to have a Major Use Permit makes it difficult to establish new ones.

#### Opportunities/Suggestions

- Make the process flexible enough so that developers can respond to the market.
- What can the County do to shorten and simplify entitlement processes? What can the County do right now to build the housing that is needed? What can have an immediate impact?
- Sometimes less is more. The rules should not be overly complicated; make them simple to read, accessible. Recognizing the audience is greater than the development community for how things should be written and structured. Provide incentives for all kinds of products (housing types, housing sizes, etc.).
- It is very hard to find labor; new young people are not coming into the trades. Lack of labor means prices go up. Time is also deadly to developers. “You don’t buy an old fish.” Capital gets charged interest. The baseline time for permitting is five years, which is not good. The regulatory process could be much improved. It should be objective, not subjective.
- Deadlines are never met (by County agencies), and this is common in our industry. Another main issue is fire insurance. We have properties that are adjacent to open space, and this is a problem. VMT requirements are killing development opportunities in the county villages. Wildlife agencies have too much control in the process.

#### *Time & Costs*

##### Obstacles/Pain Points

- Time is money. Try to make it cheaper to put a package together; lower the requirements of what needs to be submitted for review. Make designated times of review.
- We spent approximately three years amending an EIR and have been in plan check for over 18 months and now have to request another extension from the County. Staff do not respond quickly and deadlines are not clear. There is turnover with staff, and new staff means new comments. There is also new fee increases with EPA regulations (regarding HVAC equipment).
- From the developers’ perspective, the community was accommodating; they did not encounter “NIMBYs” (i.e., “Not in my Backyard”).
- For-sale housing requires a tentative map, which is supposed to receive comments in 30 days. Another difficulty is the multiple rounds of comments that conflict, add new direction, or are non-substantive (nit-picky). According to one developer, the process is “excruciating.”

#### *Land Use & Zoning*

Many land use professionals identified a mismatch between the General Plan land use designations and densities (and correlating zoning) and what the market and infrastructure can support.

#### Obstacles/Pain Points

- The land use designations are misaligned to the market and to the infrastructure.
- In the General Plan, planning the 4.3 land use designation next to 24 does not make sense. It should be higher.
- A lot of the designations are too low or too high in the areas of the DFA study. The City of San Diego maximizes on floor area ratio (as opposed to density).

#### Opportunities/Suggestions

- There is a trend for rural-suburban-urban. There is a missing middle. Some communities in San Diego have more mixed-use density. The European model is a good reference. We need to also focus on small local businesses: restaurants, supermarkets, etc.
- The areas where there can be mixed use should be prioritized, especially for low-income developments.
- Increase the density allowance for areas that have sewers. You should let the infrastructure drive the land use designation.
- There may be more opportunities to convert commercial to housing land uses.
- Compare North Park versus Mission Valley. North Park has small plots with many developers. Mission Valley has large project sites. The owners of smaller properties need incentives to develop.

#### *Housing Typologies & Density*

##### Obstacles/Pain Points

- Communities need to do better to accommodate density within villages; there is resistance within these communities to upzone, and a lot of new developments are under the density allowed in the villages.
- Obstacles include building something that looks decent. Low-income units should be built with every project (no in-lieu fees). In-lieu fees create an us-versus-them landscape.
- The ladder of growing up from a starter home is broken – we only have expensive houses or apartments. Create opportunities for starter homes.
- In for-sale single family detached developments, we are looking to build at 5 to 10 units per acre. With 2-story townhomes and duplexes, we are looking at 10 to 16 units per acre. With 3-story townhomes, about 20 to 22 per acre. For multi-family condos, we have walk-up 3-story buildings (30 units per acre, or 40 per acre if it is 4-story building). The denser products do not necessarily create more bedrooms than the townhomes; they just create more units for specific family types.
- Concern was expressed that the only product type that can be developed is infill development. That is what County land use policies push. It is also very difficult to get for-sale housing because it is infill. Single-family homes are desperately needed.

- In order to have more than 30 units per acre, that will need to be rental apartment. By having a minimum of 30 units per acre, you're disincentivizing for-sale housing.
- The rents need to justify a 30 units per acre development, which is expensive to build. The rents that can be asked in these communities out do not justify the high pricing of higher-density housing.

#### Opportunities/Suggestions

- A possible low-impact solution is through trailer parks. People in mobile homes do not own the land, they own the trailers. Could these areas be densified with green space added? This should be looked at as a creative solution.
- Participants in the Environmental Coalition expressed support for development in the proposed areas ("infill sites" that are already in areas with existing development) but opposed sprawl in the backcountry.
- It is important to look at the long-term and what direction the County is going. Make sure to keep the framework of County towns and villages and have growth within the villages.

#### *Farm/Farm Housing<sup>2</sup>*

##### Obstacles/Pain Points

- The Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan map raises the issue of showing agricultural land as valuable habitat land. If a farmer does not farm for three years, the land is considered habitat again but it has been "developed" and stopping agriculture does not return it to a high value habitat. There are infrastructure and opportunities if they are located close to sewer and infrastructure.
- Infrastructure and facilities also make an impact on housing development feasibility and unit realization.

##### Opportunities/Suggestions

- The concern of farmers is affordable housing for farm workers. One of the barriers to getting enough labor is proximity to work and affordable housing in rural areas is a big issue.
- The County Farm Worker Program allows you to add another home on the farm (if it meets septic requirement), but there are restrictions that the farmer needs to own the land and has to remove it if no one lives there. Creating stability by making it permanent or converting the use to non-farm worker use would be beneficial.
- If there were secure housing, there would be a strong working force.
- While septic will be the big limiting factor for farm worker housing, Colorado has an ordinance where you can be one house for every five acres of land, which would increase density in the back country without it being single houses.

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<sup>2</sup> There are no farms within the DFA areas.

- There are issues that arise living near farms with housing, farms that use pesticides, that have livestock. They also see problems with people who live near farms and go to the farm and illegally pick fruit without thinking about the livelihood of the farmer that they are taking from.

### *Infrastructure*

#### Gas and Electric

- SDGE is still weighing the new rules for refunds/allowances.
- In regards to the power grid, we need to discuss electric cars and the increased strain on the power grid this will cause. The recent Supreme Court decision regarding development fees will help developers.

#### Amenities

- Infrastructure is the largest barrier to developing housing in these communities, as well as industrial uses in residential land zoning.
- The spread of new housing development will also help the infrastructure impact. Distribute the density.
- Infrastructure questions are both “is it there?” and “is it good/sufficient?”.
- Densifying and adding affordable housing should be accompanied by public services. These services or public assets also must be managed; there can’t just be funding to put it in but also to take care of it.
- The impact that incorrect mapping can have on prospective properties is also relevant to amenities as well. Mapping issues is a barrier that they are facing.
- If you don’t have the infrastructure, you don’t get the development. The County needs to provide the infrastructure or get the funding together.

#### Emergency Response

- Emergency response (e.g., fire, floods): How to manage people in place. When thinking of those areas, it’s not just about the defensibility of the suburban areas but the planning for emergency response, evacuation, etc. for people.
- Emergency services and safety: The roads are also over capacity. Don’t expand the urban-wildland interface. This is where wildfire starts.

#### Environmental Concerns

- It is important to holistically look at development and development needs sidewalks, parks, safe travel, services, etc.
- Density needs to allow for habitat linkage and focus on those linkages during design. Consider “edge effects;” build soft edges. Also consider that people need open space, not only parks to play in, that need to be accessible but also manageable.

- The DFA areas are good places for additional development. In some developments like Buena Creek and Lakeside, there shouldn't be overarching development approaches. There are sensitive zones within these areas (e.g., hilltops, ecological corridors).
- There should be a management plan for these areas for protected land, undeveloped land, open space, etc.
- The planning process needs to look at access to those areas because of the topography; the issue of development is around infrastructure and fire.
- One developer has built in Malibu and noted that some of the more "ecologically sensitive houses" were the easiest to burn.
- If we continue on the same path, we will have half a billion climate refugees. We need to consider greenhouse gas emissions. We hear a lot about the housing crisis, but we also need to combine this with the climate crisis. We need a strong climate action plan.

#### Insurance

- Insurance is a major problem. When we build near open space, the homes are very fire hardened.

#### *Area-Specific Feedback*

##### General Comments

- Developers worry that community opposition is the largest barrier to developing housing in these communities. County Planning staff needs to demonstrate that there can be quality density that the community can be comfortable with. In terms of affordable housing, low-income and very low-income are in deficit in San Diego County.

##### Buena Creek

- Buena Creek needs to be developed with sensitivity. In terms of the General Plan, other factors could allow density increase, like SB10. In terms of infrastructure, the Buena Creek sewer system has limitations. Some of the identified infill areas currently lack utilities.
- In areas like Buena Creek where there is a big elevation change, it is important to take that into account when looking at the walkability of the site. There is concern about properties that are adjacent to properties set aside for open space. There is concern about properties that are adjacent to properties set aside for open space. There is concern about properties that are adjacent to properties set aside for open space.
- Community members were under the impression that there is no sewer infrastructure, which limits development opportunities. They also noted that Buena Creek Road is commonly used as a shortcut road for people going to Riverside and expressed concerns about traffic.
- Buena Creek has some opportunities on run-down commercial properties, as long as you have access to sewer.
- The area has a great large park in the north. Develop around that area, as there are schools there.



- On the nursery site in Buena Creek, the operations are profitable enough not to invite redevelopment. Also, the infrastructure isn't ideal for building, such as the train tracks. And the ownership is disjointed.

#### Spring Valley

- Spring Valley has a bit of everything; look at redeveloping underutilized parcels.
- The density of 15 units per acre in Spring Valley reflects development of the 1960s/70s, where density resulted in low-income, ugly apartments.
- The County is making a huge investment in Spring Valley (buying land for open space preservation, for parks, etc.).

#### Casa de Oro

- Casa de Oro areas need to be repurposed, such as the tennis facility that is converted to pickle ball (and wanted to be turned into a storage facility before that).

#### Lakeside

- The community is characterized by large, underutilized parcels and single-family homes on large lots. There is the opportunity to increase density and sewer already exists.
- You want a plan for downtown Lakeside for real density and walkable community.
- Several of the sites designated as suitable for affordable housing in Lakeside are small; there is a unit loss due to the land topography. It should be easier to transfer densities on a steep site.
- Lakeside may not have much sewer capacity remaining.

#### *Bordering Jurisdictions Feedback*

- Partnerships: Highlighted the need to build partnerships with organizations like North County Transit District, SDG&E, and business associations to achieve a whole-community perspective
- Regulatory Guidance: Emphasized the role of the Zoning Ordinance and other regulations in streamlining development, from simplifying permit processes to ensuring land use consistency.
- Development Priorities: Identified infrastructure and placemaking as top priorities to optimize development and create functional, appealing spaces.
- Funding mechanisms: Acknowledged that funding mechanisms are limited but noted that some areas utilize LLMDs, BIDs, or parking districts. Most jurisdictions rely on grants for planned improvements.

#### **Community Events**

Community based events to meet people where they are were held at locations within the DFA area communities during already-planned events. Activities were designed to engage residents quickly and gather their feedback on concerns and opportunities for increased development. Participants were asked to identify locations on a large map for potential housing development/redevelopment and to provide feedback related to their priorities and concerns. Project team staff recorded feedback using sticky notes and dots to place on the

engagement boards to keep a record of comments and discussions. Each dot represents the preferences/suggestions from a member of the community and notes were added to provide additional context. The most frequent comment from participants in the map activity was, “Where would you put it? It’s already full.” Participants were encouraged to think creatively and try to identify areas that were perhaps underutilized or could have a different use. Key takeaways from intercept events are listed below, by community.

Table A-1. Phase 2 Community Events			
Event	Date	Number of Attendees	Summary of Comments
Casa de Oro Alliance “Feel Good Fest”	4/14/2024	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents desired more walkability and green spaces and felt these amenities should be incorporated in new developments.</li> <li>Some concern about construction impacts based on recent projects that have led to issues.</li> <li>Concern about the quality of life impacts with increased density.</li> </ul>
Buena Creek Shopping Center & Hannalei Elementary School Open House	4/25/2024	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High priority on increasing the supply of affordable housing.</li> <li>Desire for children to have opportunities to afford homes and remain in the community.</li> <li>Preserving the character of the town was equally as important as increasing affordable housing.</li> <li>Traffic congestion was a top concern.</li> </ul>
Spring Valley Day	4/27/2024	60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support for mixed-use developments and filling existing vacancies.</li> <li>Traffic congestion and safety issues were top concerns.</li> <li>Providing additional support for those facing homelessness</li> </ul>
Lakeside Western Days Parade	4/27/2024	60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preserving the feel of the community was paramount.</li> <li>Need for improved infrastructure such as sidewalks and ADA accessibility.</li> <li>Ensuring open spaces and wildlands are preserved.</li> </ul>

### *Buena Creek Intercept*

**Events:** Buena Creek Shopping Center Pop-up & Hannalei Elementary School Open House.

\*Buena Creek hosted two pop-up events: during the Hannalei Elementary School open house and next to the Target store.

**Date:** April 25, 2024; 3 – 4:45pm & 5:30 – 7pm

**Attendance:** approximately 35 people

Top priorities (each dot represents the preference expressed by a community member):

- Increasing affordable housing supply (10 dots)
- My children will be able to live here in the future (6 dots)
- Keeping the character of the town (10 dots)

Top concerns:

- Increased traffic (13 dots)
- Parking burdens (7 dots)

Input from Pop-Up:

- Need a grocery store in the area.
- Traffic is already bad, and you cannot widen the street. More development would increase the traffic.
- Use vacant properties (e.g., Walgreens ) as opportunities for retail and housing.
- The SPRINTER is not heavily used because it does not go to the right places and where people need it to go.
- This area is used as a shortcut by drivers, another factor that contributes to traffic.
- Worry about emergency vehicles being able to reach certain places because of the road. Also worried about evacuation and fires, does not want to shelter in place but be able to evacuate.
- Event time and place should have been more accessible to people.
- The County has already gone through community engagement and brought developers to the table in 2020 – why are they changing what was agreed on then?
- Does not see this area as feasible for more development.

From Open House

- Need more affordable housing, which means more density.
- Feels that there is affordable housing but everyone they know is waiting 2 to 3 years on the waitlist. Why is that? What is the process of selection?
- Want their children to have the ability to buy here.
- Their son and his family have to live with them because housing prices are too high.
- Need more sidewalks, especially ADA sidewalks.
- The intersection in front of the school to access the SPRINTER is dangerous. The cars do not stop for pedestrians; need a sidewalk flashing light.

- Many participants cited traffic as a main concern.
- The new housing on the hill is “single family” so the price tag is higher, but they are so close to one another; would rather have condos that are a little cheaper.
- Discussion about magnet schools and school closing because the neighborhood population is getting older.
- Does not see where new development would be built.

### *Spring Valley Day*

**Event:** Spring Valley Day

**Date:** April 27, 2024, from 10am-3pm

**Attendance:** approximately 60 people

#### Top priorities:

- Increasing affordable housing supply (9 dots)
- Keeping the character of the town (5 dots)
- My children will be able to live here in the future (4 dots)
- Housing for the homeless (3 dots)
- Increasing housing density (2 dots)
- Density is needed to support infrastructure. Put it near transit and shopping centers. (2 dots)

#### Top concerns:

- Increased traffic (11 dots)
- Not enough public transportation (7 dots)
- Parking burdens (3 dots)
- Water supply (3 dots)
- Changing the character of the town (3 dots)
- Overcrowded schools (1 dot)
- Quality of schools (1 dot)

#### Opportunities for housing:

- The plan for Cascade Oro housing next to the commercial center is nice.
- Spring Valley has a lot of potential.
- Use the swap meet site for townhomes and apartments, but flooding is a problem, plus swap meet is popular.
- Only build multi-story (3+ stories) in certain areas, like above retail.
- Rent control now!
- Incentive for homeowners to build up (add more stories), similar to the incentives to add ADUs.
- Spring Valley Elementary is closed. Use some of the excess property for multifamily housing.
- Reuse of strip malls, especially on Jamacha Road west of SR 125, adjacent to recycling center mixed use would work.

- Fill existing building vacancies rather than build new housing.
- PDS adds \$150- 200K per unit; need to make it easier for property owners to build.

Concerns for housing:

- Encampments and safety.
- High insurance costs (cancellations).
- Against tiny homes for the homeless; want to see affordable housing instead.
- If you're going to build more, please maintain our infrastructure better, i.e. clean debris from drain channels.
- Need housing but also need to support/incentivize business in these areas. Taxes can't only come from residents. Need business taxes, jobs, reasons to attract and retain young workers and business owners.
- Address homeless population as we do refugees. Find them a sponsor and help them reassimilate, preferably with their families.
- Need affordable housing for single people.
- We need student housing and housing for refugees.

Other comments:

- Increase the number of stable income jobs so people can afford homes.
- More Section 8 style housing.
- No space for new housing.
- Homeowners are skirting rules – building illegal units, including trailers, garage conversions.
- Not enough apartments; waiting lists now.
- Safety issues and crime in low-income complexes.
- Fire and disaster risk.
- Strain on emergency responder resources.
- Sewer trash.
- Flooding in the drainage ditch is dangerous.
- One way or another, housing can be built.
- Need for-sale housing, not apartments.
- Insurance is leaving the state.
- Improve enforcement of housing goals.
- Improve and increase mental health services.
- Need more trees! Better landscaping in new buildings.
- Appropriate locations for homeless shelters.
- Partner with local school districts (on housing).
- Restore the Elkelton bus line.
- Minibuses for better transportation.

- Reform PDS – no us vs. them; one plan checker per project, not different with every visit; eliminate special inspectors; give inspectors authority to approve plan amendments on-site; reduce fees; consolidate multiple plan check jurisdictions.

### *Casa de Oro Intercept*

**Event:** Casa de Oro Alliance “Feel Good Fest”

**Date:** April 14, 2024; 12pm – 2pm

**Attendance:** around 25 people

#### Top priorities:

- Increasing affordable housing supply (10 dots)
- My children will be able to live here in the future (10 dots)
- Keeping the character of the town (10 dots)

#### Top concerns:

- Changing the character of the town (11 dots)
- Increased traffic (10 dots)
- Not enough public transportation (10 dots)

#### Opportunities for housing:

- Convert gas stations to mixed use.
- Interested in seeing more mixed use.
- A lot of lots are vacant or can’t retain ownership, opportunity for townhomes
- Importance for creating generational wealth and the opportunity for children to stay in the areas and not be priced out.
- Currently there are a lot of individuals living in large houses, opportunities to increase the density.

#### Concerns for housing:

- Character of the town.
- This is where they grew up, they have been going to the same church, pharmacy, etc.; want to see those places stay.
- Sad that some businesses are closing (talking about Ranas that closed a week ago).
- Traffic/transportation.
- Bring the trolley to Casa de Oro.
- Include more frequent bus routes.
- Improve the quality of the roads.

#### Other comments:

- Want to see Casa de Oro be more walkable.

- New apartments built over open space took away any view of the lake; the small park that replaced it with has no view.
- Flooding is a big issue, is recent because new construction has reduced permeability and caused flooding in new areas (such as intersection of Campo Road and Kenwood Drive).
- Apartments around Fred Finch Youth Center not maintained.
- Issues surrounding traffic on Bancroft Drive and Martin Luther King Jr. freeway.
- A new library is coming in 2026; looking forward to it.
- Does not want to see more dense housing, is already surrounded by neighbors who do not maintain their properties. ADUs: if they are not too big (height) so that they look into other's yards, could be an avenue for increasing density.
- Too many massage parlors in a very short area.
- Lighting is an issue; lights are not directed down and illuminate too much.
- Want to see more green spaces/parks/open spaces.
- The population in Casa de Oro is aging.
- Want to see growth that is holistic and considers the current characteristics of the neighborhood.
- Schools: Some schools are overcrowded while others are not because people choose which school to send their children to.

### *Lakeside*

**Event:** Western Days Parade

**Date:** April 27, 2024; 8am – 10am

**Attendance:** around 60 people

#### Top priorities:

- Increasing affordable housing supply.
- Preserve the views of the mountains and open space.

#### Top concerns:

- Need sidewalks and make sure that they are ADA accessible.
- Increase the infrastructure.
- Increased traffic.
- Home insurance and fire insurance.

#### Housing:

- Afraid of gentrification.
- Section 8 housing where there is space.
- Lakeside is already packed, does not know where you would put it.
- No more housing, too crowded.
- The politics and the costs associated with new housing make the homes unaffordable.

- Affordable housing is impossible.
- Does not want it to become Santee; no more housing.
- More affordable housing should be focused in North County.
- People are moving away and there are a lot of empty houses/apartments.
- Going up might be the only solution.
- No more housing; keep it small.
- Places on Main Street need to be addressed.
- No more development; keep open space.
- If people own property where the zone allows for more density and they want to build, they should be allowed without having to go through years of review.
- No more market-rate and housing.
- Taxes are too high and are passed on to the tenants, which makes housing pricing too high.
- Afraid of what affordable housing could also bring to the community.
- Does not want to see more apartments but rather more single-family housing or duplexes.
- Out of space in Lakeside.

#### Amenities:

- Like the new library.
- The road foundation is not being taken care of by the County, as a result the road to their house that they (residents) pay to upkeep always gets damaged due to water coming up from the creek. If there were better foundation and roads, could support more housing in certain areas.
- Preserve open space.
- Does not want the trolley unless it can be very reliant. It takes too long to commute to work with the current trolley and would not use it. Would also want to see it go to places like the airport.
- The Senior Center on the hill already has concerns about traffic, speeding, and the lack of sidewalk.
- Keep the view of the mountain.
- Want to retain this area as a small town.
- Stay off the mountains.
- Money should go to the dams.
- Need to address traffic around school, maybe a school drop-off shuttle.
- The new library does not have sidewalks and overall, it is hard to move around Lakeside if you are a wheelchair user; I have fallen multiple times.
- Parking is an issue for apartment complexes. Tenants have to park in the commercial parking lot.
- Schools are underfunded.
- The library is too small for the need of the community.

#### Tallies from the event:

- Increasing affordable housing supply (6 tallies)



- Increasing housing density (3 tallies)
- Keeping the character of the town
- My children will be able to live here in the future
- Other: Fire insurance
- Parking burdens (3 tallies)
- Increased traffic (4 tallies)
- Overcrowded schools (3 tallies)
- Water supply
- Changing the character of the town (4 tallies)
- Not enough public transportation
- Infrastructure (2 tallies)
- Sidewalk (5 tallies)

## **Small Group Interviews**

### *Introduction*

This summary is intended as an overall capture of key topics highlighted during interviews for the County of San Diego DFA Project. A series of interviews were held with building industry professionals, market rate housing developers, affordable housing developers, and other technical experts to gauge major barriers and opportunities to housing in the DFA areas of Buena Creek, Valle de Oro/Casa De Oro, Spring Valley, and Lakeside.

Interviews were attended by County staff and facilitated by the consultant team. Interviews consisted of small groups ranging from two to six attendees who received similar baseline questions for conversational continuity. Notes taken during the interviews have informed this summary. Statements and opinions below are representative of those expressed during the interviews. Colloquial language reflects language used by participants.

### *Summary of Feedback*

Interviewees expressed the general sentiment that the County is overly cautious – with process, with studies, with approvals – which creates slowdowns in the development process. There is a lack of a “can do” attitude from the County, from the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), and from special districts and private utility providers that results in a positioning against developers, instead of aligning objectives and working together. Furthermore, there is the perception that County leaders seem inclined not to move things too quickly due to resident pushback against density and change.

### *Development and Approval Processes*

The review and approval processes were highlighted repeatedly as major barriers for development in county areas. Specific pain points include long processing times which cost time and money, and complicated procedures which yield too much financial risk.

Most developers voiced discontent with the level of discretionary review for County housing projects. Some developers stated their refusal to work on sites that require a discretionary process and only proceed with by-right projects via ministerial review. However, it is important to note that all subdivision applications would be required to process a map, which triggers discretionary review under the Subdivision Map Act. This is important because many subdivision projects result in for-sale housing.

#### Obstacles/Pain Points

- Too much time is spent “corralling” County staff for answers or updates. The departments seem disconnected, and information can vary.
- Turnaround time is not consistent or reliable. One participant stated, “We believe the County is a no-go development zone. The approval process will be long and painful and will end in failure.”
- Design Guidelines seem to be led by local design groups, which have caused building defects.
- There are too many technical studies needed for County areas, which cost time and money. For example, it is not time-efficient for developers to be conducting sewage studies for individual projects.
- A discretionary process is not desired by many developers. It is considered too risky and time-consuming.

#### Opportunities/Suggestions

- Self-certification should be considered.
- Programmatic EIRs should be considered.
- The County should have a regular code review and updating process to target problems and inefficiencies.
- The process to change the provisions of a specific plan is confusing. A designated County staff should exist to clarify and facilitate the provisions of the specific plan.
- Ministerial procedures, like those in the City of San Diego, are well received and appreciated by developers.
- The County needs to make development easier for small- and medium-scale developers to get small-scale projects done. Almost everything requires discretionary approval, which is bad for small- and medium-scale developers.

#### *Time and Costs*

##### Overall Takeaway

- Key challenges are time, costs, and risk. Banks that offer capital financing for development projects want to see internal rate of returns (IRR), and if the return is not appealing, that capital will go elsewhere. The County is losing opportunity for development by having slow, inefficient systems.

#### Obstacles/Pain Points

- Fee structures are not transparent and make budgeting difficult.
- Development costs have skyrocketed because of increased fees.
- The time it takes to process building permits is too long. There have also been cases of overlooked components, which result in double permitting.
- The real estate market in the unincorporated county is tougher than coastal communities, and when fees rise, there is less budgetary flexibility for buyers/renters to absorb those costs.
- Participants presume in the county, we will be sued by the environmental groups, the NIMBYs (“Not-in-my-Backyard”), etc. This is a huge deterrent to non-California developers.
- Much of the litigation in the county is for people to make a profit off the development.
- Large developers have a rigorous capital approval process, with significant investment partners. Capital chases yield (including certainty and time). “Sooner is better than later, and later is dead.” Capital investors do not have to invest in these southern California projects that may be riskier – they can go to safer / more attractive projects anywhere in the world.
- State-level resources for achieving the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) are becoming scarcer.

#### Opportunities/Suggestions

- The County should reference the City of San Diego’s expedited process.
- The County could consider hiring a third party to review the plans. Fees would still be paid to the County, but the process would be expedited.
- The City of San Diego appoints one person to each project, which has worked well. Developers would like to see that in the County. Currently, communication gets lost and muddled, which creates lengthy and challenging entitlement processes.
- Modular construction has been used to decrease risk and control costs, to a degree.

#### *Land Use and Zoning*

##### Overall Takeaway

- The current zoning code is outdated and needs revisions based on present-day need, context, and conditions. Many of these areas are no longer “rural” but are urban-adjacent and should therefore be treated differently for new housing development potential.

##### Obstacles/Pain Points

- The zoning regulations are very antiquated. Dictating the product type is an outdated approach.
- In the current code of some areas, the zoning and the product type don’t align with the adjacencies and the context. A lot of other jurisdictions do not regulate product types.
- The County’s zoning/land use designation system is overly prescriptive and too detailed. It does not allow for market forces to make decisions about what should go where (best and highest use).
- Developers feel they understand better the “best and highest use” but are being put in a box by County restrictions on land use and zoning.

- Parcel consolidation is difficult in the unincorporated communities.

#### Opportunities/Suggestions

- Regulations in the zoning code should be reviewed and updated to today's standards, context, and needs. The housing need is so great, and the unincorporated parts of county don't necessarily mean "rural." This view of certain county areas is creating barriers to development based on outdated and incorrect contextual realities.

#### *Housing Typologies and Density*

##### Overall Takeaway

- Developers find that density is too tightly controlled. Simultaneously, zoning does not allow developers to build to the optimal rate. Low unit density also does not yield enough buyers to spread across infrastructure costs, nor does it appeal to certain amenities that require many users (such as grocery stores and bus stops).
- In terms of building, some developers do not want areas upzoned because they are using State density bonuses to waive some of the requirements. These waivers are necessary for the projects to pencil. Projects that are too dense are too expensive for the value of what is being produced. The most affordable housing is a 2- to 3-story townhouse over parking with all wood (no steel) and no underground parking. It was suggested by one developer that 24 units/acre is a target that makes sense for most sites.
- Affordable housing presents a specific set of challenges and should have more support and communications on available grants, bonuses, etc.

##### Obstacles/Pain Points

- It is common to not reach zoned unit maximums due to factors like stormwater and flood channels, parking, usable/developable land, habitat, setbacks, etc.
- Requiring additional quality of life amenities (such as parks, libraries, etc.) results in more fees which are passed to the buyers/renters. We are so starved for housing that if housing is built in a decent location, people will buy it. Participants want ideal quality of life conditions but at the end of the day, people will prioritize safe/stable housing over other amenities.
- For-sale and rental units have different density appeals. RHNA sites that push 30 units/acre are not aligned with for-sale and will yield rental.
- Minimum densities are too restrictive and are not responsive to the market.
- The County is too focused on "units," but we should be focused on bedroom count or "how many people we want to house".
- There needs to be better County communication about what the density benefits are and how they can be leveraged to induce development. County staff does not appear to fully understand density bonus law.
- Density and floor area ratio (FAR) are key to creating affordable housing.

### Opportunities/Suggestions

- Consider options for smaller units, shared spaces, co-living, and other alternate housing typologies. Houses do not need to follow the traditional large suburban lot model, especially for some demographics like seniors and young people.
- The County and developers need to think strategically about which population they are aiming to serve with new housing, including needs and desires, budgets, compromises, etc.
- Reframe what density can offer in terms of benefits. Communities in these areas may have an outdated view on density and the resulting problems.
- The City of San Diego is attempting to lobby to change the Subdivision Map Act. The County should reach out to the City to join them in this effort.
- Density is vital for projects to pencil.
- Density is also needed for certain grants, such as Infill Infrastructure Grant (IIG) funds.
- The City of San Diego's Complete Communities policy is a great model.
- Density is good for nearby businesses, which are not currently being supported enough because there are not enough patrons in the area.
- The County must figure out how to get market rate housing in these areas.

### Affordable Housing

- To see more affordable housing, the County needs to help find or provide subsidy funding (e.g. notice of funding availability).
- The recent affordable housing project in Fallbrook represents a good example of County/nonprofit partnership.
- For affordable housing there are low-income housing tax credits, but these are not feasible for smaller projects. Off-site compliance may be an option.
- For affordable housing, it is imperative to be near amenities, especially schools.

### *Infrastructure*

#### Overall Takeaway

- Infrastructure is a very expensive part of any project, possibly 30 to 40 percent, and will be higher in rural areas. Developers can connect to nearby infrastructure but cannot connect to distant infrastructure due to costs. By installing infrastructure, the County can signal to the public that change is coming, and for the good.

#### Infrastructure Costs and Financing

- The County should pay for and facilitate the infrastructure improvements with advanced work. The developer is not going to want to pay for the infrastructure for the entire region. Shared costs could be helpful.
- Unless there are more housing units where these costs can be distributed, one developer will not want to solve the entire infrastructure problem. We need a pathway to first provide the housing before any of the infrastructure/amenity costs start to make sense.

- Mid- to small-size projects are difficult because there is less scale and therefore more prohibitive. Infrastructure costs have fewer units to be spread across. And the “last developer in” is looked at to pay for infrastructure that is far beyond the reach of the project.
- The question about “infrastructure changes” should be rephrased for “infrastructure financing”. The “what” is easily calculated; the “how” is much more important to figure out. How are we going to build things off the property, and what’s the reasonable assurance? If the County is serious, then they need to provide assurances for legal and financing and give flexibility for FAR to build what the market is indicating.
- Public infrastructure financing would help.

#### Gas and Electric

- SDGE is very difficult to liaise with in terms of response time, communication protocols, etc.

#### Water and Sewer

- The different sewer and water districts cause complications.
- Water and sewer districts are their own entities, and some districts see themselves as growth-inhibitors. The water and sewer districts are important deciders in what happens in County land, so they should be asked if they are willing to “play ball.”

#### Environmental Concerns

- Fire is a real concern in the county.
- Flooding is a real concern to housing development. Businesses are challenged by flooding. Given the storm that hit Southern California in January, there is evidence that the infrastructure is in bad shape.
- Adjacency to habitat is a concern. This can cause major headache (time and cost) and unit loss to a developer. The County Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP) program is in the south but not in the north and east, so every project is case by case if you have enlisted species, which costs a lot.

#### Parks

- There are parks, but people say there is not enough open space. Spring Valley has a reservoir, but it is entirely fenced off to the public. It took 37 years to make a trail just to go around the fence.

#### Stormwater

- Ten percent of the land on a project is going to be used for stormwater, and it is usable land because for a stormwater basin, the land has to be flat.
- It helps tremendously if you have off-site stormwater measures so you do not have to do it all on your usable land.
- The County requires frontage on the project, and the developer must mitigate the water from that frontage. It is rudimentary to have to replace the frontage of the project if inadequate.

Consider frontage that can accommodate water supply treatment and the needed technology to do so. It does not make sense to have to replace existing hard surface with the same but additionally must treat the water; the technology is not there to make it work. Examples: Hydromodification in the City of San Diego, shared compliance systems in Lakeside.

#### Amenities

- Requiring amenities for development is a concern for building. It creates a chicken-and-egg situation in which you are not going to get more community amenities unless you have more people to access those services.
- Developers are only going to look at sites they think are marketable. The market will control for certain types of amenities (like good schools, nearby parks, etc.). Having more amenities is an added benefit but it is not the driving factor of whether you are going to proceed with a development or not proceed with a development. Those amenities are indicative overall of the vibrancy of the community.
- People would prefer lower mortgage payments rather than more public amenities. We have changed what we mean by amenities and quality of life. Amenities also require maintenance. We have this idea that we need tremendous amenities, but people just want a house.
- Amenities should also include better wrap-around services, such as computer access, healthcare, etc. It is not only the “physical stuff” that people need.
- The amenities that most impact property prices are the quality of the nearby school/school district and public transit access.

#### Public Transportation and Parking

- These county areas are too sparse to support certain nearby amenities/infrastructure like bus stops. This means everyone needs a car to get to work, get groceries, etc.
- At least 2 parking spaces need to be provided in for-sale housing; otherwise, it is not marketable.
- Vehicle charging stations are costly and may not be utilized in the county.
- County areas are often not flat lands, so even with nearby bus/trolley stops, people can’t always easily walk there, especially if they are elderly, disabled, carrying children or groceries, etc. In this way, transit amenities cannot only be seen as the stop location itself but the surrounding avenues to reach it.
- Even with existing transit stops, there is a lack of arrival frequency (especially on weekends).
- Public transit takes significantly longer than making the drive in a private vehicle. Transit is just an implausible option for most people.
- A more connected trolley system would be ideal, especially if it could have shops and housing as a transit-oriented development.
- Lack of transit is a huge deterrent. Many of the DFA communities have the closest the County can get and, as one participant put it, “it’s still pathetic.”

### Traffic and Traffic Patterns

- Traffic can be considered, such as a traffic study. Information should be more readily available to the public.
- It is important to find sites that have easy freeway access so new residents and additional traffic don't clog up the local streets.
- Highway 52 has a lot of traffic.

### *Area-Specific Feedback*

The comments below reflect feedback from the building industry.

### General Comments

- These areas have more opportunity for vacant and underutilized land. The problem of no housing development is a created problem; it is not a problem associated with lack of land.
- In DFA areas, the parcels are too small and too scattered to lend themselves to development.
- Do a specific plan for these 4 areas; this would provide the opportunity to re-write ministerial procedure plans for these specific areas.
- Now that the County is focusing on these areas, the prices are going up and pricing out certain people. Property values for homebuilders are going up due to the possibility of ministerial processes.

### Buena Creek

- The infrastructure is disastrous.
- The area is very rural.
- Buena Creek is a good example of the high cost of developing in rural areas. Buena Creek has an RHNA allocation of 1,600 units, and many of the units on lots are under common ownership.
- Infrastructure is a main challenge. Buena Creek Road has to be realigned, straightened, and widened to four lanes, but that would affect the creek. The dead-end sewer line that leads to Vista needs to be extended and enlarged.
- Buena Creek (under City of Vista) has a major problem with sewers. When we have cross-divides, it is very difficult to make those projects work.

### Spring Valley

- It is unclear if the market in Spring Valley can support dense housing, partly due to community resistance. The community tends to want to keep this area semi-rural.
- This developer has experience providing more dense projects in Spring Valley: a small-lot subdivisions at 8 units/acre, also townhomes at 16 units/acre and 27 units/acre.
- In terms of infrastructure, parking is a huge problem. For-sale housing has a higher parking ratio than for-rent housing. Inflation and costs, including interest rates, are huge challenges.
- An asset of Spring Valley is the proximity to the freeway – but means you need a car.
- Vacant lots abound and it is not clear why these sit empty.



- The hilly topography makes it hard to develop and/or get emergency services to access certain areas.
- A lot of industrial areas could be rezoned for residential use. It would be nice to rezone this and not have them so close to homes.
- Affordability is a concern everywhere, not just in Spring Valley.
- More housing would mean more people, and the public transit is not sufficient. Some public transit does not run on the weekends. SANDAG does not want to build a trolley to Spring Valley; there are only buses. The new port of entry (at the border) via SR125 is causing more traffic and impacting the SR 94/SR 125 interchange in particular.
- To create more housing, there needs to be more/better public transit.
- For necessities, people have to drive a good distance. We are in a food desert/food swamp.
- Home purchase prices in Spring Valley are a major draw to the area.
- Spring Valley has always had flooding problems. They put in infrastructure in the 1980s, but there are still low-lying areas that accumulate water. There is good sewer, water, and electrical infrastructure but poor stormwater drainage infrastructure.
- 8868 Valencia Street is a new multi-unit development. This is being built right next to the storm drain. Garages are on the first floor, but residents may use the garage for living, for storage, etc. They are trying to cram too much in and maxing out the site with ADUs.

#### Casa de Oro

- Flooding is a big issue in Casa de Oro.
- There are a few halfway houses and transitional housing types, and the community sometimes has resistance against this.
- A recent project came before our community meeting to build a mixed-use structure with water infrastructure built in (boardwalk of sorts).

#### Lakeside

- It is unclear if the market here can support dense housing, partly due to community resistance.

#### *Models/Examples*

- The Eco-village in Los Angeles, where there are no cars but mobility hubs instead.
- The City of Del Mar, where operations are regarded as relatively smooth.
- The City of Chula Vista, where urban-adjacent areas are more lenient/accepting of density and change.
- Multiple participants mentioned the City of San Diego as a model, including for:
  - Streamlining: CPIOZ-A, B Community Plan Implementing Overlay Zone Area A, Area B. The County could use specific plans to the same effect.
  - The “complete communities” program has a 30-day review. This has streamlined the process for affordable housing projects, and the mayor is now expanding this expedited review timeline for more types of projects.

- ADU bonus program.
- Visibility and positive change: The City of San Diego is making noticeable improvements.

## **Community Planning/Sponsor Group Meetings**

The project team met and presented at standing CPSGs on the following dates:

- Lakeside: May 1, 2024
- Twin Oaks: May 8, 2024
- Spring Valley: May 28, 2024

This summary is intended to provide an overall capture of key topics highlighted during the meetings.

### *Lakeside*

#### Overall Takeaway

- Affordable housing options should be comparable in quality to the housing available in the area. There should be a focus on transportation infrastructure construction and maintenance.

#### Obstacles/Pain Points

- El Monte Basin provides 15 to 20% of local groundwater. Concern that too many people are on septic systems (on a particular property) that cannot be supported; this will compromise groundwater quality.
- Trolleys are empty and a waste of money.
- Provide affordable housing commensurate with salaries people earn.
- Concern that fire hazards are too intense to put more people in the area.
- The State has made it hard to build and manage rental properties.
- Communities are looking for housing consistent with housing that is here today.
- Affordability comes at scale.
- Sidewalks are not a priority. They hinder horses. Multi Use trails instead. (But one person said her neighborhood needs sidewalks.)
- Trolleys don't go directly to where people are located.

#### Opportunities and Suggestions

- The County needs to coordinate with adjacent cities, especially on infrastructure issues.
- There County should focus more on conducting analysis in North County, instead of Lakeside.
- How does the State mandate for electric vehicles jive with Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) reduction goals? Is it just about pollution?
- Dedicate resources to hiring planning staff.
- The state should restructure CEQA to limit lawsuits.

### *Twin Oaks*

#### Overall Takeaway

- Better transportation and infrastructure for housing are needed to better the living situations of residents in the area.

#### Obstacles/Pain Points

- SPRINTER light rail is neither successful nor popular.
- Fire/evacuation are concerns.
- More development means more traffic.
- Buena Creek/Santa Fe intersection needs fixing. SPRINTER impacts the intersection.
- Concern about sewer impacts.
- Transit (train) doesn't go north-south.
- The County hasn't done any complete community planning. For example, build transit and amenities first.
- Infrastructure is always way behind. Need to meet the needs of current residents first.
- Will existing property owners be assessed for any infrastructure investments?

#### Opportunities and Suggestions

- Need green spaces to go with housing.
- Need mechanisms to force landlords to maintain their properties. Stop blight.
- Maybe inclusionary housing ordinance could have provisions for acquisition/rehabilitation of units as a way of creating affordable units.
- Having units for a mix of incomes is best.
- Maintain the character of the area.
- More communication to property owners and tenants.
- Use NextDoor to reach people.
- The County's pending Inclusionary ordinance and the proposed ability of developers to put affordable units off-site is of concern and could result in overconcentration of affordable housing. The Twin Oaks/Buena Creek area could be targeted negatively.

### *Spring Valley*

#### Overall Takeaway

- The project team presented at the May 20, 2024 meeting of the Spring Valley CPG.
- Local residents and businesses are at risk of being displaced; the planning and permitting process makes it difficult to develop effectively; and improvements are needed to local infrastructure and amenities in order to support additional housing.

#### Obstacles/Pain Points

- Zoning is wacky and needs to be better planned and clearer.
  - There is a zoning map that is incorrect or unclear.
- Need to coordinate Design Guidelines of the CPG with PDS. There is no communication between the different parties (comment by Harriet Taylor, co-chair of Bonita CPG).

- Insurance and fire safety is a concern
  - However, there are other factors at play with fire safety. Fire stations make money from more residents, so they will support residential growth.
- Housing development in the County area is challenging
  - There is an “Us vs. Them” mentality with PDS.
  - The process is difficult and cost prohibitive.
  - There are things that PDS can do to make the landscape more amenable to developers and property owners-developers.
  - PDS can make internal changes to avoid repetition and overlap, and improve speed and efficiency.
- Parking is a concern, and is already bad especially near apartment buildings.

#### Opportunities and Suggestions

- Affordable housing needs to be truly affordable for the community members.
- Housing types should include for sale, rental, transitional, and variations of density.
- Local businesses are important and should not be pushed out.
  - These businesses also help pay area taxes; taxes shouldn’t only rest on property owners.
- We need a “vision” of Spring Valley, like they did for Casa de Oro Specific Plan.
  - It’s important to keep the character of the town.
- We should be reusing vacant or underused sites.
  - Can blighted commercial corridors be redeveloped and/or upzoned?
  - Code infractions are plentiful in the area, but no one enforces this.
  - May need a zoning inspector.
  - There are a lot of absentee landlords (property in trust or otherwise).
- We need more and better infrastructure
  - More trees.
  - More parks and rec amenities.
  - More bus lines.
  - More sidewalks.
  - More smart street development.
  - Better “last mile” transit options.
  - Broadband infrastructure is poor in many county areas (see CPUC Broadband Map for coverage information).
  - Traffic is bad and freeway onramps and offramps are inadequate and dangerous. The 94-125 interchange is a mess.
  - Connectivity is an issue in Spring Valley. We need more trails. Social trails are everywhere.

## Phase 3: Detailed Summaries

During Phase 3, preliminary DFA findings and recommendations were presented at a series of regularly scheduled CPSGs and technical working group meetings, community pop-up events, online workshops, and meeting with developers. The CPSG and technical working group meetings, virtual workshops and developer meetings were held on these dates:

- July 9, 2024: Spring Valley Community Planning Group
- July 9, 2024: Valle de Oro Community Planning Group
- July 17, 2024: Twin Oaks Community Planning Group
- July 18, 2024: Land Development Technical Working Group
- July 19, 2024: BIA Technical Working Group
- July 19, 2024: Environmental Coalition Technical Working Group
- July 30, 2024: Labor Union Technical Working Group
- September 3, 2024: Farm Bureau Technical Working Group
- September 4, 2024: Lakeside Community Planning Group
- September 17, 2024: Virtual Industry Workshop
- September 24, 2024: Virtual Community Workshop
- December 5, 2024: Developer Meetings
- December 6, 2024: Developer Meetings
- December 10, 2024: Developer Meetings
- March 20, 2025: Land Development Technical Working Group
- April 18, 2025: BIA Technical Working Group
- May 6, 2025: Farm Bureau Technical Working Group
- May 16, 2025: Environmental Coalition Technical Working Group

### Professional Stakeholder Meetings with Technical Working Groups

Each group was asked three specific questions:

1. Do the findings align with your experiences in our focus areas? Are we contextualizing them appropriately?
2. What community-serving and “placemaking” improvements would enhance specific DFA communities? (for example: new parks, park upgrades, improved transit service, sidewalks, streetscapes enhancements, public art or destination signage, etc.)
3. What are your thoughts on specific locations where new housing might be located, including on sites now developed with aging commercial or industrial uses?

### Alignment of Findings with Experience

- Low- and very low-income housing are in deficit in the County. It is important to provide quality higher-density housing.
- Density in targeted areas is a good thing because emergency services can reach these places easier without having the sprawl of housing.

- Regarding townhouse developments, developers prefer a General Plan land use designation targeted at 10.5 to 15 units per acre. These designations would encourage more of this type of development.
- Sewer service capacity in Lakeside may need further study.

#### Needed Community-Serving and Placemaking Improvements

- It is important to build communities, not just roofs. Development needs sidewalks, parks, safe travel, services, etc.
- Densifying and adding affordable housing should be accompanied by public services. These services or public assets also must be managed. There can't just be funding to put it in, but to take care of it.

#### Ideas Regarding Housing and Housing Sites

- Putting housing in the DFA areas reduces sprawl, which is beneficial.
- One possible low-impact solution is additional mobile home parks in which residents can invest in their homes but not the land.

#### Other Comments

- Developments and development patterns need to accommodate wildlife movement. Include greenbelts and pathways for wildlife.
- Acknowledge in the report that high fire hazards are a constraint to development.
- The DFA effort should be coordinated with other parallel County efforts to encourage housing development.

### **Community Planning/Sponsor Groups**

The project team met with the CPSGs on the following dates:

- Spring Valley on July 9, 2024
- Valle de Oro on July 9, 2024
- Twin Oaks, which covers the area of Buena Creek, on July 17, 2024
- Lakeside on September 4, 2024

Each group was asked four specific questions:

1. What community improvements would enhance your community?
2. Can you identify any infrastructure improvements that need addressing?
3. What are your thoughts on locations where new housing might be located, including on sites now developed with aging commercial or industrial uses?
4. What type of additional placemaking would you like to see in your community (for example: new parks, park upgrades, improved transit service, sidewalks, streetscapes enhancements, public art or destination signage, etc.)?

### *Needed Community Improvements*

#### Spring Valley

- Do something to improve walkability.
- Be more rigorous about code enforcement.

#### Twin Oaks (Buena Creek)

- Do a specific plan for the area to plan it comprehensively.

#### Valle de Oro/Casa de Oro

- Residents would like to see real immediate action to revitalize the community after decades-long County promises.

#### Lakeside

- Affordable housing
- More effective public transit

### *Infrastructure Improvements*

#### Spring Valley

- Please confirm that sewage treatment capacity is available for additional growth.
- Address flooding problems before building any new housing.

#### Twin Oaks (Buena Creek)

- Sewage collection and treatment capacity might not be able to support growth beyond that currently planned.
- Buena Creek Road is already crowded; additional traffic would impact the community and further discourage growth.
- Combine green open space with stormwater control.
- Provide sidewalks as part of a comprehensive effort; piecemeal doesn't work.

#### Valle de Oro/Casa de Oro

- The Agua Dulce/Sweetwater Springs intersection needs additional lanes.
- The Casa de Oro Specific Plan proposes narrowing Campo Road. How will it support more traffic?

#### Lakeside

- Improve public transit. However, if electric buses are used, the roads will be affected (e-buses tear up the roads).
- Improved stormwater management for better water quality

### *Ideas Regarding Housing and Housing Sites*

#### Spring Valley

- Allow for integrated mixed-use development (rather than the patchwork of zoning that exists) that supports home ownership.

- The Spring Valley Center (commercial site) could support housing development.
- The following industrial and commercial sites could be converted to housing:
  - Both sides of Grand Avenue between Jamacha Road and Jamacha Boulevard
  - Spring Valley Swap Meet site
  - Spring Valley and Smart & Final Shopping Centers, plus the strip malls in the area
  - The heavy industrial blighted corridors along Jamacha Road and Jamacha Boulevard, in addition to pockets throughout the area, like Harness
  - Caltrans and government-owned sites
  - Existing self-storage sites and mobile home parks
- Affordable housing partners like the San Diego Housing Authority, MTS, and Wakeland Housing & Development Inc. need to be involved

#### Twin Oaks (Buena Creek)

- Allow mixed-use development around the Sprinter station.
- Provide college student housing around the Sprinter station to serve Cal State San Marcos and Palomar College.

#### Valle de Oro/Casa de Oro

- The greatest opportunities are along Campo Road.
- One acre lots now with one home could support up to 10 units.

#### Lakeside

- A big hurdle is how much it costs to build housing at the present time, and the County is limited in how much it can control.
- Consider the limitations of emergency vehicles ingress/resident egress for fire evacuation.

### *Placemaking Improvements*

#### Spring Valley

- Zoning consistency.

#### Twin Oaks (Buena Creek)

- Make sure to provide/support businesses that provide good local jobs for people living in the area.

#### Valle de Oro/Casa de Oro

- None cited.

#### Lakeside

- None cited.



### Other Comments

#### Spring Valley

- The County areas likely could not support densities of greater than 30 units per acre.
- What can be done to allow households to spend less than 41.8 percent of their income for housing (when 28 percent is considered a target in federal programs)?

#### Twin Oaks (Buena Creek)

- Make sure to provide/support businesses that provide good local jobs for people living in the area.

#### Valle de Oro/Casa de Oro

- Desire was expressed for affordable housing and home ownership opportunities that don't disrupt community character.

#### Lakeside

- The efficacy and objective of the study are questionable, including how it will be used/useful to developers, how much it cost to prepare this study, and how it aligns with other County housing projects/studies.
- Many residents don't want high density housing and don't want to be guinea pigs to new County initiatives.

### Community Events

The project team attended eleven community-based events between July and September 2024 to share findings and recommendations from the DFA with community members and solicit additional feedback. These events included two virtual workshops, one with industry members and another with the general public. The table below details the events and comments received.

Event	Date	Number of Attendees	Summary of Comments
Spring Valley Food Pantry Event- Spring Valley Library	7/11/2024	60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We heard that affordable housing is needed.</li> </ul>
Community Climate Conversations	7/15/2024	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No comments were received. The project team provided DFA fact sheets and flyers at this event.</li> </ul>
North County Food Bank- Vista Library	7/18/2024	200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We heard comments about traffic issues in Buena Creek, the need for affordable housing, and how escrow taxes are</li> </ul>

Table A-2. Phase 3 Community Events

Event	Date	Number of Attendees	Summary of Comments
			preventing seniors from selling their properties.
Community Climate Conversations	7/18/2024	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No comments were received. The project team provided DFA fact sheets and flyers at this event.</li> </ul>
Adult Laser Tag-Lakeside Library	7/19/2024	33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community members shared frustration with high home prices and that they're all being purchased by people outside of the community. Some felt this was due to developers being overly driven by profit and others felt it was due to expensive construction materials. Encouraged all to attend the workshop and eventually the board hearing.</li> </ul>
Bluegrass Concert - Casa de Oro Library	7/23/2024	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community members recommended facade improvement programs, public realm spaces, revitalization efforts, and enacting the Specific Plan.</li> </ul>
Fire Board of Directors (Spring Valley)	7/24/2024	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Directors expressed interest in mixed-use, aligning disparate land uses, traffic calming measures, emergency apparatus vehicles, insurance, other County projects such as Community Based Transportation and the Sustainable Land Use Framework, and parking requirements</li> </ul>
Joseph's Store Food Pantry (Spring Valley Church)	7/25/2024	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No comments were received. The project team provided DFA fact sheets and flyers at this event.</li> </ul>
Casa de Oro Food Pantry Event	7/25/2024	50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendees provided feedback on several issues, including flooding concerns, the need for affordable housing, improved street lighting, housing for the unhoused, poor cell phone service, and sewer problems on</li> </ul>

Table A-2. Phase 3 Community Events

Event	Date	Number of Attendees	Summary of Comments
			Montemar Drive in Spring Valley (outside the DFA boundary).
Casa de Oro Alliance Meeting	8/8/2024	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No comments were received. The project team presented an overview of the DFA including preliminary results and recommendations.</li> </ul>
San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce	9/17/2024	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project team provided an overview of the DFA. Participants inquired whether the DFA was looking for feedback from other jurisdictions and if the impact of reducing minimum lot sizes as a tool to increase housing density was being considered.</li> </ul>
Industry Workshop	9/17/2024	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The technical findings generally align with developers' experiences.</li> <li>Building any housing, but especially high-density housing, is currently challenging due to labor and materials costs.</li> <li>The market and financial analyses may not capture the actual acreage of developable land and may therefore give a false impression of capacity potential.</li> <li>Infrastructure costs should not be placed entirely on the developers. It is too much risk and cost for them to take on.</li> </ul>
Public Workshop	9/24/2024	33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants who lived in a DFA area felt the technical findings were mostly aligned with their experiences. Nearly half of the participants did not reside in a DFA community.</li> <li>Key concerns and barriers raised included transportation-related issues, housing affordability, and development costs.</li> <li>There was broad support for the immediate housing development recommendations and some support for the mid-term recommendations.</li> </ul>

Table A-2. Phase 3 Community Events

Event	Date	Number of Attendees	Summary of Comments
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suggestions for engaging property owners focused on financial incentives and further community outreach.</li> </ul>

## Public and Industry Meetings

The project team hosted two online workshops in the fall of 2024 to share technical analyses findings, present recommendations, and gather input to bring to the Board of Supervisors.

### *Promoting the events*

The Industry Workshop was promoted via direct email to a database of development industry professionals, including members of relevant working groups and industry associations.

To promote the public workshop, staff sent emails, posted flyers throughout the DFA areas (see below), utilized social media (e.g., Nextdoor, County Parks, Libraries), and updated the project website. Additionally, staff mailed invitation letters to 159 property owners where the recommendations are being proposed.

A total of 26 community members participated in the workshop, including property owners, Community Based Organization representatives, industry members, and other. Buena Creek had the highest level of representation.

### *Key takeaways of the Industry Workshop*

The objective of the Industry Workshop was to report out technical findings and recommendations, and to solicit input and feedback from the industry professionals. The feedback received informed prioritization of recommendations into Implementation Packages.

A question-and-answer (Q&A) session allowed participants to examine more closely some of the technical findings. Questions mainly revolved around the findings of the market and financial analyses, Climate Action Plan (CAP) direction and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) requirements, inclusionary housing findings, environmental mitigation considerations, among other topics. The project team answered questions and provided a summary document for the workshop in the days following the meeting. Key questions to the participants included:

Do the technical findings of each DFA area align with your experience in these communities?

- Generally, yes. Costs are too high to build high-density, and this is impacting the ability to build housing at needed prices in county areas.
- Some of the infrastructure findings, as well as the financial analysis, don't align with developers' full experiences. For example, water/sewer districts may require developers to upsize or replace

pipes, which can be very costly. Also, the financial analysis may not take into consideration the major loss of developable lands due to on-site requirements and environmental restrictions.

Do the technical analyses and findings support development in these areas?

- Water: Water districts often require developers to upsize and extend piping. Information from private districts is not always clear or easy to access. Furthermore, flow rates of existing pipes may not satisfy density requirements.
- Sewer: At times, permits are needed to connect to existing sewer lines. This is another hurdle for developers.
- Market Assessment: The research is helpful but is fully dependent on the landowner to sell. Household incomes are too low in the area to support housing development.
- Financial Analysis: There are many uncontrollable costs (labor, materials, interest rates, etc.), as well as new requirements by local and state entities. The financial analysis doesn't account for undevelopable land due to infrastructure requirements, right-of-way, etc.
- Land Use: Current densities offered by the County do not match today's need. Minimum densities should be removed.

The DFA was meant to be replicable, are there other analyses or strategies the County should incorporate in the future?

- Improve overall processes, including permitting and applications, but also access to information such as the analyses shown in this study.

If these recommendations are implemented, would it be more feasible for you to develop in these areas? Why or why not?

- VMT has been, and continues to be, a damper on housing development.
- Mixed-used housing (VC-30) is not ideal for developers. Retail and office are hard to fill.
- Property owners have unrealistic expectations and knowledge of land costs.

Are there specific recommendations that would make it easier for you to develop in these areas?

- Waivers and the avoidance of discretionary approval processes.
- There is a need to modernize design-development standards. Current standards are outdated and don't support the variety of housing typologies needed for today's demographics (e.g., empty-nesters, step-down buyers, multi-generational families).

Is there anything else that would make you more interested in developing these areas?

- The County needs to realize the immense cost of infrastructure, and how the risk and funding of this infrastructure cannot rest entirely on developers. Consider having the County as a partner on housing developments of scale.
- Fire insurance is a significant barrier and may get worse. The cost and challenge of fire insurance has increased dramatically.

### *Key takeaways of the Public Workshop*

The objective of the public workshop was to present the findings of the DFA and gather feedback from community members related to the barriers to development and recommendations. Project team members provided an overview of the project's technical analysis and recommendations, followed by a Q&A discussion where participants were able to share their perspectives and ask questions related to the project. The feedback received from community stakeholders also informs Implementation Packages to prioritize recommendations to the Board. Key questions to participants included:

Do these findings align with your experience in your DFA area?

- 43% of respondents said the findings align with their experiences.
- 14% of respondents said the findings did not align with their experiences.
- 43% of respondents do not live within a DFA area.

What are some barriers to housing development that you have experienced or are aware of?

- Traffic, road infrastructure, sidewalks, poorly implemented train stations
- NIMBY and willing developers
- Restrictions on tiny homes, RV parks, and mobile home parks
- Affordability
- High cost
- Number of units and prices
- Building more units

Out of the recommendations, which do you consider the higher priority or most effective to promote housing development?

- 83% of respondents thought the immediate recommendations (e.g., amend land use designations to change and increase housing capacity, and to conduct outreach with property owners to encourage development of vacant land and assembly between parcels owned by the same person) should be prioritized.
- 17% of respondents thought the mid-term recommendations (e.g., makings of a Specific Plan) should be prioritized.

What specific strategies could be implemented to engage property owners effectively and encourage them to consider developing vacant land or assembling parcels?

- Financial analysis of feasibility
- Start with in-person conversations
- Waive pre-application fees for affordable housing
- Affordability
- Financial incentives, waive fees
- Moderate conversations with neighbors

Would you be interested in assisting in the development of a Specific Plan for your DFA area?

- 20% of respondents indicated they would be interested.
- 20% of respondents indicated they would not be interested.
- 60% respondents said they might be interested

Are there other infrastructure improvements needed in your DFA area to support housing development?

- There are missing links in sidewalks and bike lanes.
- New sidewalks and bike lanes
- Roundabouts
- Trains and busses

Are there any other recommendations we should consider to support housing development?

- Safe access to Sprinter station
- Financing
- Allow tiny homes and unrestricted RV parks
- Public safety

Do you have any additional questions or comments?

- Considering the number of homeless camping in the public streets, why are there not more incentives for tiny home communities?
- Would like a train/trolley line to go through Buena Creek to solve transportation

### **Developer Meetings**

In early December, the project team hosted five online meetings with developers to review the updated industry-specific recommendations, ensuring they support housing development. Each developer was asked these two questions:

- 1) Do these recommendations make it more likely for you to develop in the unincorporated County or specifically in the DFA areas?
- 2) Is there anything else that we are missing?

Below is a summary of the feedback we received:

#### **Affordable Developers**

- To boost affordable housing production in San Diego, key actions include expediting approvals, securing diverse funding, using surplus land efficiently, and simplifying regulations
- Collaboration, clear communication, and strategic investments in transit and infrastructure will further create a supportive environment for developers and ensure long-term success

#### Infill Developers

- To accelerate affordable housing development, please prioritize ministerial processing, align zoning with the General Plan, and address infrastructure challenges.
- Developers emphasized that simply increasing density is not realistic strategy in the DFA areas. They expressed support for aligning zoning with the General Plan but not for major zoning changes.
- Developers need predictable and flexible regulations, combined with financial incentives like density bonuses, gap financing, and public-private investment mechanisms.
- Collaboration, clear guidelines for specific plans, and strategic focus on medium-density projects will ensure both market viability and community needs are met.
- Improved local amenities and infrastructure will further enhance development appeal and financial feasibility.

#### Market Rate Developers

- To improve market-based housing development, aligning zoning with the General Plan, addressing VMT concerns, and expanding ministerial processes are essential.
- Infrastructure upgrades, flexible design guidelines, and mitigation of fire risk are critical to overcoming barriers.
- Developers also emphasize the need for realistic financial analyses, supportive state financing, and incentivized land use policies to boost feasibility. These measures will enable sustainable growth while maintaining the region's housing needs.

### **Professional Stakeholder Meetings with Technical Working Groups**

The project team met with the following technical working groups on the dates listed below:

- Land Development Technical Working Group on March 20, 2025
- BIA Technical Working Group on April 18, 2025
- Farm Bureau Technical Working Group on May 6, 2025
- Environmental Coalition Technical Working Group on May 16, 2025

At each meeting, the project team provided an update on the DFA and informed the technical working groups that the DFA report will be posted on the project website for public prior to being presented to the Board of Supervisors.