

# SOUTHWEST MODESTO PLAN

## Community Workshop #3 Southwest Modesto Plan & Implementation

**Date/Time:** Thursday, March 14, 2024 | 6:00-8:00 pm

**Location:** West Modesto Community Collaborative | 601 Martin Luther King Dr, Modesto, CA 95351

### OVERVIEW

The third community workshop for the Southwest Modesto Plan was held in-person at the West Modesto Community Collaborative. It was attended by 16 participants, including 11 community members. The meeting was held in English with Spanish translation. The purpose of the workshop was to review the project objectives, provide an overview of previous community engagement, discuss findings from the draft Southwest Modesto Plan, and help prioritize plan goals and actions within the Southwest Modesto Plan Area and Crows Landing Road Corridor.

During the small group discussions, frequent comments and discussion themes included the following:

- Suggestions for a cultural or community center, particularly for the arts.
- Support for more coordination with public transit providers to reduce car dependency.
- Questions about property ownership and the process of negotiation with private owners for development.
- Coordination with Community Development Corporations (CDCs).
- Who is the target demographic for housing development, and will they be affordable?
- There is a need for housing that is accessible for seniors and those with mental health needs.
- Capitalize on Southwest Modesto's large lots to build tiny homes or ADUs.



## PRESENTATION

Bruce Brubaker, Principal of Place Works, welcomed all participants and gave a presentation about the Southwest Modesto Plan, which has been written using input from previous community meetings.

- Southwest Modesto Plan purpose and objectives
- Plan Area map and boundaries
- Overview of past community engagement and workshops
- Structure of the Southwest Modesto Plan
- Economic Opportunities
- Housing Development Opportunity Sites
- Additional Goals and Actions

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

The presentation was followed by a time of Q&A. The following questions and comments were discussed and documented:

- Question: Are there going to be any incentives for developers or property owners?
  - The Plan is making recommendations that will go into the general plan that will enable development to happen more easily. We want to hear your ideas.
- Comment: I like the housing project on Madison Street. That is a good example of housing. But we need a cultural space. It would be an actual structure, not just an open space, that is a cultural or community center.
- Question: One of things that struck me is car parking. How are you going to accommodate for car-oriented mentality in central valley California?
  - Parking is a major issue, and providing too much parking can be a barrier to building housing. The Plan recommends having a reasonable amount of parking.
- Question: Would there be coordination with public transportation to address less use of cars?
  - We agree that new housing should have access to transit. For the housing opportunity site we showed, there is a bus line about one block away from the site.
- Question: Since new housing has to be done by property owners and developers, how can the City encourage it? Would there be negotiation or actively working with owners?
  - This is a good question to City on what they can do to get housing. One way is to make it easier to develop, such as changing City regulations, which we recommend in the Plan.
- Comment: This would be a good opportunity for a CDC (community development corporation), who could find the money for acquisition and development (through the STEP Program).
- Question: What kind of population are you targeting? Low income, or anyone who can pay for it?
  - Answer: The Plan Area needs all kinds of housing, from market rate housing to affordable housing. The City is sponsoring some affordable projects that have units for lower income, and there is a project on 7th Street which would be open to mixed income.
- Comment: We have seniors on the verge of being homeless hoping to get into affordable housing. The units in the 7<sup>th</sup> Street project were originally for seniors. Now that this has opened up and is no longer restricted but there is still a serious need for seniors.
- Comment: There is a need for seniors but also mental health.
- Comment: The project needs to lift and consider the people. We need to have something here that people can identify with, to have a space here where people feel like they can belong, like a cultural center for theater, art, and painting.

- Comment: The West Modesto Collaborative is one space, but there should be more places across southwest Modesto that can be cultural centers.
  - At the King Kennedy Memorial Center (West Modesto Collaborative), there is a forthcoming park renovation with basketball court and new space.
- Comment: There is potential in these areas for tiny homes. There are some huge lots on Truman and Spencer. We should try to figure out how to work with those property owners and develop those places.
- Comment: There is one house with an ADU that was financed by the CDC. We should try to figure out who among landowners to work with in the County who have bought up land to bring in new housing.
- Comment: A big issue here is there is no sewer service. Many homes are currently on septic.
- Question: Are ADUs guaranteed to be affordable?
  - No, they aren't guaranteed to be affordable, but they expand the number of housing units available, which will help keep costs down.
- Question: Do you know if the City will have approved plans for ADUs and make them publicly available for other owners to use?
  - The County is planning to make ADU plans available on their website, thereby reducing the cost for building an ADU.



## OPEN HOUSE

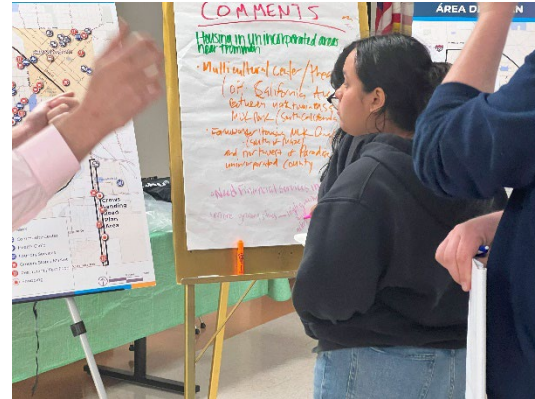
At the end of the presentation, the planning team introduced the open house portion of the workshop. Participants were able to circulate and visit each of four stations to provide comments and ask project staff questions. Each station had a facilitator to guide participants through the discussion and encourage more input. The stations included the following topics: Key Destinations and Opportunities, Economic Development Recommendations, Housing Concepts, and Plan Goals and Actions. The topics were displayed on boards that were made in English and Spanish.

The discussion topics and questions included:

### Key Destinations / Plan Area

For Key Destinations and Opportunities, participants placed stickers where they would like to see additional destinations in the Plan Area. They also gave comments regarding the County areas inside the Southwest Plan Area. Some of the discussion included the following:

- There should be new housing in incorporated areas near Truman.
- Multicultural Center/ Theater (off California Avenue) Between Mark Twain and MLK park.
- Provide farmworker housing at MLK Drive near Washington (south of Maze), and northeast of Paradise Road in the unincorporated County.
- Need financial services In Southwest.
- More grocery stores – high quality and affordable.
- County is making improvements in three areas in Southwest: Spencer/Marshall (just west of MLK Park); Rouse/Colorado (South of Modesto High) and Beverly/Waverly (north of Paradise Road). They will use ARPA funding for new sidewalks and sewer connections.



## Economic Assessment

For the Economic Assessment discussion, participants placed stickers on ideas that they feel need the most attention. Some of the discussion included:

- Attract larger businesses for more jobs.
- What about Amtrak – can that provide economic development?
- Is there a list of business for the SW Modesto Area? (answer – yes in the Economic Assessment study).
- What category of jobs does automotive services fall under? (answer – either retail or industrial)
- What kinds of jobs or industries are being looked at to bring to the area?
- There should be different options for training – not just welding or construction. They should include things like computing, nursing, advertising, bookkeeping and medical technicians.
- How do we strengthen current micro/small businesses so they can hire more? Support for these businesses to expand.
- Allow smaller spaces for business so lower income people can have access to starting a business without having to pay for a large space.
- There should be more workforce development and job training for residents.
- Local businesses, including larger ones, should be connected to residents for employees.
- Support small businesses by streamlining permitting processes for small businesses.
- Get the word out and promote existing financial resources like credit unions.
- On Crows Landing Road, relocate industrial uses to the south to provide other uses including housing at the north.
- Annex County islands along Crows Landing Road into the City.

## Housing Opportunities

For the Housing Opportunities discussion participants placed stickers on the goals that they felt were most important. Some of the discussion included:

- There should be Economic Development near housing.
- Participants preferred housing on both Opportunity site A and Opportunity site B.
- Does zoning allow changing community / commercial buildings into housing? (answer: we are proposing to allow this).
- Would like to see higher density residential.
- Potential to repurpose parking in long term into community/ cultural use (outdoor gazebo, etc.)
- Consider more or all mixed-use development in order to bring more jobs into the area.
- Tactical urbanism, to create places for people.
- Explore opportunities for tiny home communities and tenant protections.
- Farmworker housing or housing for homeless, along Carpenter Rd. (Not depending on employers).
- Concentrating high density housing in SW Modesto, an area already highly segregated and low-income, runs the risk of increasing existing concentrations of segregation and poverty. To combat this, City and County should be encouraged to incentivize and adopt policies supporting a mix of housing types, particularly in areas like Spencer, Marshall, Southeast Rouse / Colorado.
- Explore mixed-income public housing.

## Plan Goals and Actions

For Goals and Actions discussions, participants placed stickers on ideas that they feel they support. Discussion for this topic included:

- More community centers and gathering places will strengthen the cultural ties to the area.
- Provide opportunities for residents teaching other residents about poetry, art, painting, theater, music, dance.
- Participants would like to celebrate the unique heritage of Southwest Modesto.
- There should be ongoing outreach to community members.
- There needs to be more childcare and medical facilities nearby.
- Improvements to parks should align with community needs and priorities.
- Sidewalks and bicycle facilities should be improved.
- Upgrade infrastructure to alleviate flood risks.
- Participants generally thought that unincorporated County land should be annexed into the City and that sewer should be extended to existing houses.

## CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

At the end of the meeting, the project team described the project's next steps, and shared a link to the project website at <https://www.modestogov.com/2973/Southwest-Modesto-Plan>.