

City of Norwalk
2020-2024 Consolidated Plan
Outreach Results Stakeholder/Public Meetings

October 22, 2019



Community Meeting – Senior Center

On September 5, 2019, residents and other members of the public were invited to attend a public meeting at the Norwalk Senior Center, located at 14040 San Antonio Drive. Twenty-eight people signed in and approximately thirty-five people participated, including those who chose to not sign in. The meeting began with a presentation to provide background information about the 5-Year Consolidated Plan process. The second half of the meeting format was a listening session comprised of live polling questions and open comments. The results of the live polling and listening session are summarized below.



Listening Session Part I: Live Polling

For the live polling segment, participants were given handheld devices and they keyed in their responses. Once polling concluded, their responses appeared on the screen, projected for all to see, which enabled participants to see how their opinions compared to others.

Question 1. Who are you?

Participants included residents, people who work in Norwalk, service providers, and a few who selected the “other” category, including students.

Question 2. What community facilities are most needed?

For question 2, participants could select from the following options:

- a. Senior centers
- b. Youth centers
- c. Neighborhood community centers
- d. Parks and recreational facilities
- e. ADA accessibility improvements to public roads or facilities

Many people selected neighborhood community centers, parks and recreational facilities and senior centers. Accessibility improvements received a limited response.

Question 3. What homeless housing services are most needed?

Under the category of homeless housing services, participants were given the following responses and they could pick one.

- a. Emergency shelters
- b. Transitional housing
- c. Permanent housing
- d. One-time rent/utility payments
- e. Homeless prevention

Homeless prevention received the strongest response and one-time rent/utility payments generated a smaller response.

Question 4. What neighborhood improvement is most needed?

Participants were offered many responses for question 4. They could choose one of the following:

- a. Commercial building rehabilitation
- b. Street improvements
- c. Sidewalk/curb improvements
- d. Sewer/storm drain improvements
- e. Alley improvements
- f. Additional street lighting
- g. Small business loans
- h. Job-generating businesses
- i. Graffiti removal
- j. Safe routes to school

Participant responses were distributed across a few responses. Commercial building rehabilitation, job-generating businesses and graffiti removal were more common. Except for safe routes to school, infrastructure improvements received few to no responses.

Question 5. What type of housing is most needed in Norwalk?

For question 5, participants could choose one out of several housing types to identify the type they felt was most needed.

- a. Single-family homes
- b. Multi-family apartments
- c. Housing mixed with commercial
- d. Townhomes/condominiums
- e. Housing dedicated to those with disabilities
- f. Senior housing
- g. Supportive housing
- h. Low-barrier housing

In response to question 5, most participants selected single-family homes. In addition, townhomes/condominiums and senior housing generated a strong response. Low-barrier

housing generated some discussion and a few participants expressed an interest in changing their vote to low-barrier housing.

Listening Session Part II: Public Comments



After the live polling session, the meeting opened to comments and questions from the participants. The comments and questions fell into four overarching categories: housing, community facilities, funding and city services, and economic development.

Housing

- Local seniors experience a long-term wait for senior housing units or they are turned down
- Would like to see a preference for local seniors on wait lists
- Seniors need help understanding the process to apply for senior housing
- Locals are being priced out due to fixed incomes, which increase at a much slower pace than the increase in the cost of housing
- Want help to identify properties that have affordable units as well as properties where affordable units can be built
- State and City have properties available for development and they could work with service providers to build housing on them

Community Facilities

- Appreciate unity at the senior center
- Norwalk Senior Center has more unity than in other communities

Funding and City Services

- Question was posed regarding funding for housing and streets, which participants felt should be kept separate

- Planning review process and fees are a barrier to constructing accessory dwelling units and should be simplified because we need more affordable housing
- Consider ways to help seniors navigate the planning, permitting and building processes to promote construction of additional housing stock
- Appreciate graffiti cleanup by City

Economic Development

- Concern about number of vacant buildings and businesses, including a vacant space that was previously a grocery store
- Participants would like a new market
- Property owners can be resistant to making improvements to their properties
- Would like to see the City be more business friendly
- Would like to see old vacant buildings torn down

Stakeholder Meeting – Social Services Commission



Stakeholders, including service providers, were invited to attend a stakeholder meeting at the Social Services Center, located at 11929 Alondra Boulevard. The meeting was integrated into the regularly scheduled meeting of the Social Services Commission on the evening of September 5, 2019. Ten people signed in and approximately 25 people participated, including those who chose to not sign in, two City staff, and two consultant staff. The meeting included a presentation to provide background information about the 5-Year Consolidated Plan process and shared emergent themes in responses to the community survey.

The meeting also included small group discussions organized around live polling prompts. In response to the prompts, participants identified the following as their top priorities.

- Homeless services and employment training
- Substance abuse
- Mental health

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- Youth services

Several themes emerged from the small group discussions. The following input is organized around those themes.

Overarching Themes

Housing and homelessness

- Visibility of homeless encampments
- High cost of housing pushes residents out of their homes because housing costs are increasing faster than incomes
- Norwalk has insufficient housing stock
- If employment services increase, then homeless services won't be as necessary
- Increasing taxes are a burden for those struggling to cover the cost of housing
- Seniors have a fixed income and the cost of living adjustments are not keeping pace with the cost of housing, which leads to more homeless issues

Mental health and substance abuse are underlying causes

- Root causes of homelessness and unemployment include mental health
- Services to address mental health are most important
- Address the underlying problems rather than the symptoms
- Substance abuse leads to domestic violence

Need to work with youth

- Address mental health challenges with youth before the problems become much more difficult to address when they are older
- Incorporate prevention into school culture and education in the classroom to more effectively address mental health
- Abused children need different services and more services as compared to other youth
- Children who are mentally and physically abused need more than after-school programs
- Youth need more focused help for mental health
- Schools do not have enough therapists to meet demand and need more therapists

Need to inform

- The Consolidated Plan should emphasize the importance of outreach and a method to inform people about available services



Public Notice of Community Workshops for the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan



The City of Norwalk is in the process of preparing its 5-Year Consolidated Plan, required by the Department of

Housing and Urban Development for the use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) funds. The City anticipates receiving approximately \$6.1m in CDBG funds and \$1.5m in HOME funds over the next 5 years. The Consolidated Plan provides a strategy for addressing critical housing and community development needs of City residents.

Public input is critical to understanding community needs and setting funding priorities for housing, social services, and neighborhood improvements. Activities eligible for CDBG funding for low- and moderate-income families and neighborhoods include:

- Community services
- Economic development assistance
- Improvements to public infrastructure and facilities
- Affordable housing
- Homelessness
- Housing rehabilitation



Why is this important to you?

Public participation is a dynamic and ongoing process that is essential to meeting the future needs of every

community. The City must identify the housing needs of the community to determine how to use these funds to achieve far reaching public benefit.

You are the public! When **you make your voice heard**, you are helping City leaders prioritize spending for you, your family, and your community.



How can you participate?

Community Meeting

Thursday, September 5, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.

Norwalk Senior Center, 14040 San Antonio Drive, Norwalk, CA

Residents are invited to attend this meeting to learn about the Consolidated Plan and Analysis of Impediments and the types of programs that can be funded through CDBG and HOME. Residents will be asked to identify neighborhood needs and priorities. Those who cannot attend during the day are welcome to attend the Social Services Commission meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Stakeholder Meeting/Social Services Commission

Thursday, September 5, 2019 at 6:30 p.m.

Social Services Center, 11929 Alondra Boulevard, Norwalk, CA

The Social Services Commission will host a stakeholder meeting concerning the Consolidated Plan and Analysis of Impediments. Organizations providing services to the community are encouraged to attend. The meeting is also open to residents. The meeting will focus on identifying community needs, service gaps, and solutions.



Community and Stakeholder Surveys: Live now through September 10, 2019

<http://www.norwalk.org/hip>

If you are unable to attend, but are concerned about housing, social services, and improving neighborhoods, please take the survey and share with others!



For more information, please contact the CDBG office at (562) 929-5951.