

Lemon Grove **DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN**

Phase 1 Community Engagement Summary

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Prepared for:



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1.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The City of Lemon Grove is preparing an updated Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) for the downtown area. This effort builds upon the Draft Downtown Specific Plan prepared in 2018, which expanded the original 2005 Downtown Village Specific Plan from approximately 58 acres to approximately 245 acres. The expanded planning area encompasses properties along Broadway between Massachusetts Avenue and Washington Street and extends from SR-94 south to Central Avenue.

While the 2018 Draft DSP was never adopted by the City Council, it was developed through extensive community engagement and technical analysis. The current effort revisits the 2018 Draft Plan to evaluate which elements remain relevant today and identify opportunities to refine the Plan based on current community priorities, market conditions, mobility investments, and changes in State planning and housing legislation.

Community engagement is a key component of the DSP update process. Through public workshops, stakeholder meetings, surveys, and outreach events, the City is gathering input from residents, business owners, property owners, developers, and other interested parties to help shape the future of Downtown Lemon Grove.

This report summarizes the feedback received through the Phase 1 community engagement process and highlights key themes, opportunities, and considerations that will inform preparation of the Draft DSP.

2.0 PURPOSE OF ENGAGEMENT AND FEEDBACK SUMMARY

Community engagement for the DSP update is being conducted in two phases to align with key milestones in the planning process. Phase 1 was designed to gather input from residents, business owners, property owners, developers, and other stakeholders regarding the future of Downtown Lemon Grove and to help inform the preparation of the Draft DSP. Phase 1 engagement focused on validating previously identified issues and opportunities, identifying emerging priorities and challenges, and gathering feedback on land use, housing, mobility, economic development, urban design, and implementation strategies. Phase 2 engagement will occur following release of the Draft DSP in the fall of 2026 and will provide opportunities for the public and stakeholders to review and comment on the proposed plan recommendations.

Together, these engagement efforts provide valuable community and stakeholder perspectives that complement the technical analysis, market research, and planning work

being conducted as part of the DSP update. The feedback highlights evolving community priorities, and informs the update DSP.

The purpose of this Community Input Summary is to document the feedback received during Phase 1 engagement and summarize the key themes, opportunities, concerns, and priorities identified by participants.

3.0 ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Phase 1 community engagement for the DSP update was conducted between May and July 2026. The outreach program included a project website, mailed study area flyers, community survey, public workshop, developer and property owner roundtable, Planning Commission and City Council workshop, Revitalize Broadway presentation Q&A and pop-up outreach events at the Lemon Grove Farmers Market and Lemon Grove Little League.

These engagement activities were designed to reach a broad range of stakeholders and provide multiple opportunities for participation. Input was gathered from residents, business owners, property owners, developers, community organizations, Planning Commissioners, City Councilmembers, and other interested parties regarding the future of Downtown Lemon Grove.

Table 1 summarizes the Phase 1 engagement activities completed as part of the DSP update process.

Table 1: Phase 1 Engagement Schedule and Events

Date	Community Engagement Event
May 8, 2026	Project Website Launched
May 11, 2026	Study Area Flyers Mailed
May 13, 2026	Community Survey Opened
May 14, 2026	Farmers Market Pop-Up
May 21, 2026	Community Workshop #1
May 30, 2026	Lemon Grove Little League Pop-Up
June 10, 2026	Developer and Property Owner Roundtable
June 22, 2026	City Council/Planning Commission Workshop
July 15, 2026	Revitalize Broadway Presentation
July 20, 2026	Community Survey Closed

3.1 POP-UP OUTREACH EVENTS

Two pop-up outreach events were conducted during Phase 1 engagement, including a Farmers Market Pop-Up on May 14, 2026, and a Lemon Grove Little League Pop-Up on May 30, 2026. These events were intended to supplement the formal engagement activities and provide opportunities to connect with community members who may not have participated in the community workshop or other outreach efforts.

Project team members shared information about the DSP update, answered questions about the planning process, and encouraged participation in the community survey and upcoming engagement opportunities. Participants were invited to discuss their experiences in Downtown Lemon Grove and provide input regarding community priorities, mobility, housing, economic development, public spaces, and the future vision for downtown.

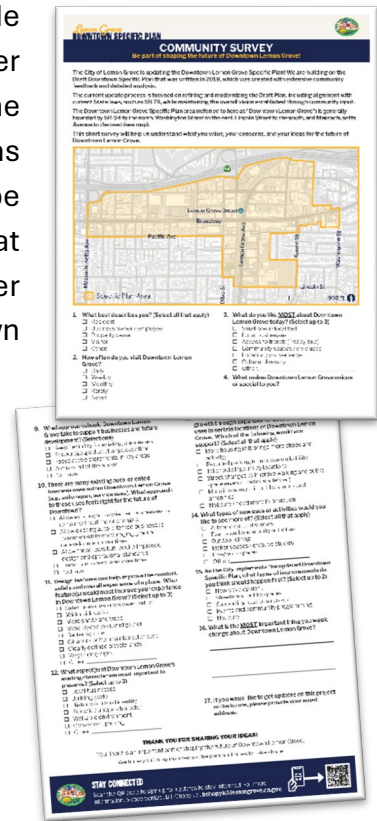
The pop-up events expanded the reach of the engagement program by connecting with community members in informal settings and providing additional opportunities for residents and stakeholders to learn about the project and share their perspectives.



3.2 COMMUNITY SURVEY

The Community Survey was launched on May 13, 2026, to provide residents, business owners, property owners, and other stakeholders with an accessible opportunity to participate in the DSP update process. To maximize participation, the survey was made available in both English and Spanish and could be completed online or through a paper survey distributed at community outreach events. The survey was designed to gather feedback on a range of topics related to the future of Downtown Lemon Grove and to supplement input received through workshops, pop-up events, and stakeholder meetings. The survey closed on July 20, 2026, and received 202 responses.

Survey questions focused on community priorities, land use, housing, building height preferences, mobility, parking, economic development, business retention and attraction, urban design, public improvements, and community identity. Participants were also asked to identify opportunities and challenges facing downtown, evaluate visual preference concepts, and share their vision for the future of Downtown Lemon Grove. The survey summary is included in Appendix A of this report.



3.3 COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #1

Community Workshop #1 was held on May 21, 2026, at the Lemon Grove Community Center and had over 50 participants. The workshop was designed to introduce the project, share the planning process and schedule, and gather community input regarding the future of Downtown Lemon Grove.

The workshop began with a presentation providing an overview of the existing Downtown Village Specific Plan, the 2018 Draft DSP, the proposed planning area, key findings from the 2018 Draft Plan audit, and the targeted updates being considered as part of the current effort. Participants were also introduced to the project schedule, and the role community input would play in shaping the updated Draft DSP.

Following the presentation, attendees participated in an interactive open house featuring a series of stations focused on key planning topics, including downtown priorities and concerns, community character and identity, building scale and neighborhood compatibility, land use and local businesses, streets and mobility, and future growth and

development. Through visual preference exercises, voting activities, written comments, and discussions with project team members, participants provided feedback on community priorities, development preferences, housing, mobility, economic development, and the future vision for Downtown Lemon Grove.

The feedback received during Community Workshop 1 helped identify areas of continued support within the 2018 Draft DSP, highlighted emerging issues and opportunities, and established a foundation for subsequent outreach activities and stakeholder discussions.



3.4 DEVELOPER AND PROPERTY OWNER ROUNDTABLE

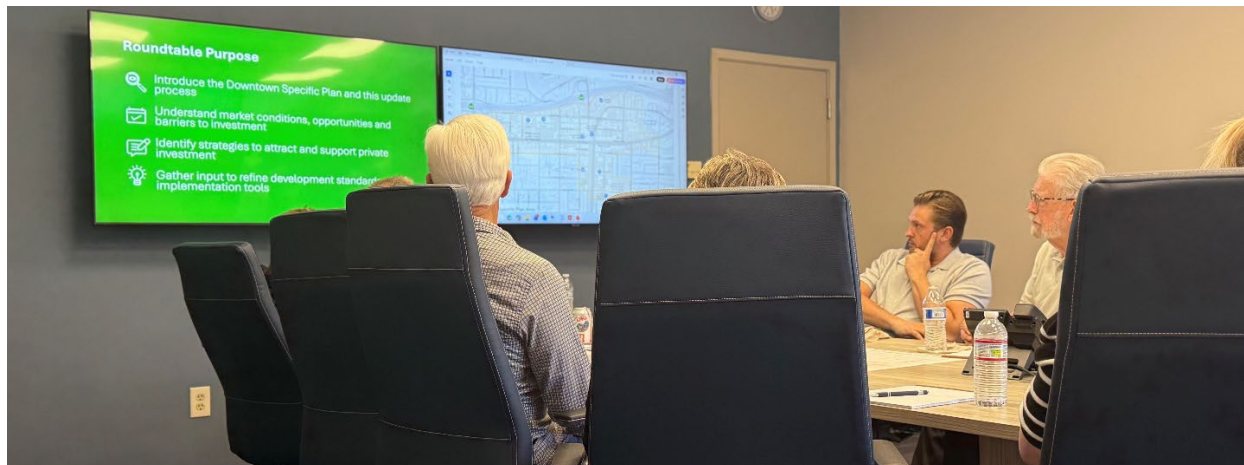
The Developer and Property Owner Roundtable was held on June 10, 2026, and brought together 16 developers, property owners, and real estate professionals familiar with the Lemon Grove market to discuss opportunities and challenges associated with redevelopment and investment in Downtown Lemon Grove. The roundtable was intended to provide insight into current market conditions, identify barriers to development, and gather feedback on strategies that could support implementation of the DSP. The discussion also sought to inform updates to the Plan's development standards and implementation framework.

The roundtable began with a brief presentation summarizing the DSP update process and the objectives of the current planning effort. This was followed by a facilitated discussion focused on market conditions, development feasibility, City processes, parking, mobility, development standards, and implementation strategies. Participants were encouraged to share their experiences working in Lemon Grove and elsewhere in the San Diego region and to identify factors that influence investment and redevelopment decisions.

Discussion topics included redevelopment barriers, parking requirements, building heights, open space standards, land use flexibility, commercial viability, entitlement processes, and opportunities for public-private partnerships. Participants also provided feedback on ways

to improve development feasibility while maintaining high-quality design and creating a more attractive environment for investment.

The feedback received through the roundtable provided valuable insight into market realities, development constraints, and implementation considerations. These perspectives helped identify potential barriers to investment and redevelopment and highlighted opportunities to improve the feasibility of future development within Downtown Lemon Grove.



3.5 CITY COUNCIL AND PLANNING COMMISSION JOINT WORKSHOP

A joint City Council and Planning Commission workshop was held on June 22, 2026, to provide both bodies with a shared understanding of the DSP update process, the 2018 Draft DSP, and the community and stakeholder input received during Phase 1 engagement. The workshop was intended to facilitate discussion regarding the future of Downtown Lemon Grove, identify areas of alignment, and gather policy direction to inform preparation of the Draft DSP. There were 5 City Councilmembers and 4 Planning Commission members in attendance, along with 12 members of the public.



The workshop included an overview of the 2018 Draft DSP, a summary of community and stakeholder feedback received through workshops, surveys, pop-up events, and the developer/property owner roundtable, and a discussion of potential plan refinements and implementation considerations. The workshop was organized around a series of discussion questions focused on identifying barriers to implementation, evaluating the continued

relevance of the 2018 Draft DSP, reviewing community feedback received to date, and gathering input on targeted refinements to the Plan.

Discussion was conducted using a facilitated round-robin format designed to encourage participation from both Planning Commission and City Council members and provide opportunities for the exchange of ideas and perspectives regarding the future of Downtown Lemon Grove. Key discussion topics included economic development, walkability, housing, parking, development feasibility, community character, public spaces, communication and outreach, infrastructure capacity, and implementation strategies. Participants emphasized the importance of balancing future growth and investment with preservation of community character, improving communication and community engagement, supporting local businesses, enhancing walkability and public spaces, and creating a clear and implementable framework for future development. A public comment period concluded the workshop.

Input received during the workshop generally reinforced themes identified through earlier Phase 1 engagement activities and provided additional policy direction regarding implementation, development standards, economic development, mobility, parking, and community character considerations.

3.6 LOCAL BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

On June 30, 2026, City staff conducted business outreach along the Broadway corridor to approximately 50 businesses to engage directly with their owners and operators. The outreach effort was intended to provide information about the DSP update, distribute project flyers, and encourage participation in the community survey and future engagement opportunities. It also provided an opportunity to better understand the perspectives of businesses that play a key role in the downtown area, specifically along Broadway.

Business owners were encouraged to share their experiences regarding economic conditions, customer access, parking, mobility, public spaces, business visibility, and priorities for future downtown improvements.

The local business outreach provided valuable insight into the day-to-day experiences of downtown businesses and helped ensure that the perspectives of the local business community were incorporated into the Phase 1 engagement process. Feedback received through these conversations will help inform future updates to the Downtown Specific Plan and guide strategies that support a vibrant and economically resilient downtown.

3.7 REVITALIZE BROADWAY PRESENTATION

A project presentation to the community group Revitalize Broadway was held on July 15, 2026. Revitalize Broadway is a community organization that seeks the urban revitalization of Lemon Grove's Broadway corridor through events, public art, walkability initiatives, and collaboration with local organizations. With over 20 people in attendance, the presentation provided an overview of the DSP update, including the project background, work completed to date,



key themes identified through community engagement, proposed focus areas for the 2026 update, land use and development concepts, public realm and mobility improvements, proposed changes to the Village Commercial zoning district, arts and entertainment initiatives, implementation strategies, the relationship between the DSP and SB 79, and the overall project schedule and next steps.

Following the presentation, attendees participated in a Q&A session regarding various aspects of the proposed Downtown Specific Plan. Discussion topics included future land use and redevelopment opportunities, parking needs, roadway improvements, bicycle facilities, emerging transportation technologies, implementation of SB 79, and the importance of maintaining transparency throughout the planning process. Participants also emphasized the need to encourage high-quality redevelopment, balance the needs of all transportation users, and ensure the DSP reflects the community's vision for Downtown Lemon Grove while supporting future revitalization.

4.0 FEEDBACK SUMMARY

Analysis of the community feedback received during Phase 1 engagement revealed several recurring themes regarding the future of Downtown Lemon Grove. Across workshops, surveys, pop-up outreach events, local business outreach, community presentations, and stakeholder discussions, participants expressed a desire for a more vibrant, walkable, and economically active downtown while maintaining the community's unique character and identity. Common topics included housing, economic development, mobility, parking, public spaces, community character, redevelopment, and strategies to support future investment and revitalization.

While perspectives varied among residents, business owners, property owners, developers, community organizations, and public officials, several areas of common interest emerged throughout the engagement process. Participants frequently discussed opportunities to improve walkability and public spaces, attract new businesses and community-serving destinations, support housing and transit-oriented development, address parking and mobility concerns, encourage high-quality redevelopment, and create a clear and implementable framework for future growth.

Although opinions differed on topics such as development intensity, roadway improvements, bicycle facilities, and parking management, participants consistently emphasized the importance of maintaining Downtown Lemon Grove's identity while creating a more active, economically resilient, and pedestrian-oriented downtown. Feedback also highlighted the need for transparent implementation, continued community engagement, and development standards that balance long-term revitalization goals with market feasibility and community expectations.

The following sections summarize the key themes, opportunities, and considerations that emerged throughout Phase 1 engagement and describe how community and stakeholder input will help inform preparation of the Draft DSP.

4.1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL BUSINESSES

Economic development was one of the most frequently discussed topics throughout the engagement process. Participants expressed a desire to attract additional restaurants, cafés, retail businesses, entertainment venues, and community-serving destinations that would increase activity and create a stronger sense of place in downtown. Many participants viewed Broadway as the City's primary commercial corridor and emphasized the importance of supporting existing businesses while creating opportunities for new investment and revitalization. Vacant storefronts, limited retail options, and the need to attract additional businesses were recurring concerns. Survey respondents also identified

supporting local businesses and economic growth as among the highest priorities for the future of Downtown Lemon Grove.

4.2 COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND IDENTITY

Participants consistently expressed appreciation for Downtown Lemon Grove's small-town atmosphere, historic character, cultural diversity, local businesses, and convenient location. At the same time, many participants noted that downtown has significant unrealized potential and would benefit from improvements that create a more attractive, welcoming, and active environment. Feedback emphasized the importance of balancing future growth with preservation of the community's unique identity while ensuring that new development contributes positively to Downtown's character and supports long-term revitalization.

4.3 WALKABILITY, MOBILITY, AND PUBLIC SPACES

Improving walkability and the public realm emerged as a major community priority. Participants expressed support for safer pedestrian crossings, wider sidewalks, enhanced streetscapes, additional shade trees, improved lighting, public gathering spaces, and other improvements that would create a more comfortable and enjoyable downtown experience. Parking availability and mobility were also recurring discussion topics, with participants emphasizing the importance of balancing the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and motorists while supporting future revitalization. Many participants indicated that investments in streets, public spaces, and mobility improvements should be prioritized early in implementation.

4.4 HOUSING, GROWTH, AND DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY

Community members expressed a range of opinions regarding future growth and housing development. Some participants supported additional housing opportunities, particularly when accompanied by improvements to downtown amenities, businesses, and public spaces. Others expressed concerns regarding building heights, parking availability, traffic, and the potential impacts of additional residential density. Overall, feedback suggested support for accommodating growth in appropriate locations while ensuring that new development remains compatible with surrounding neighborhoods, reflects the community's vision for Downtown Lemon Grove, and contributes to a vibrant downtown environment.

4.5 DEVELOPMENT FEASIBILITY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Developers and property owners emphasized the importance of ensuring that the DSP remains economically feasible and implementable. Participants identified parking

requirements, open space requirements, building height limitations, discretionary review processes, and requirements for ground-floor commercial uses as potential barriers to redevelopment. Many participants expressed support for greater flexibility in development standards, clear and predictable regulations, and streamlined approval processes that provide greater certainty for investment and redevelopment. Participants also emphasized the importance of maintaining transparency and establishing a regulatory framework that is clear, objective, and practical to administer.

4.6 SAFETY, APPEARANCE, AND MAINTENANCE

Safety, cleanliness, and the overall appearance of downtown were recurring concerns raised throughout the engagement process. Participants frequently cited perceptions of crime, homelessness, vacant storefronts, property maintenance issues, and the condition of streets and buildings as factors affecting downtown's attractiveness. Many participants indicated that improving cleanliness, maintenance, public safety, and the overall appearance of the public realm would help encourage investment, attract new businesses, and create a more welcoming environment for residents and visitors.

5.0 KEY TAKEAWAYS

Overall, Phase 1 engagement demonstrated strong community support for revitalizing Downtown Lemon Grove as a vibrant, walkable, and economically active destination while preserving the community's unique character and identity. Across all engagement activities, participants consistently expressed a desire for thoughtful growth that supports local businesses, enhances the public realm, and creates a downtown that serves residents, visitors, and future investment opportunities.

Economic development emerged as one of the highest community priorities. Participants emphasized attracting additional restaurants, cafés, retail businesses, entertainment venues, and community-serving destinations while supporting existing businesses and reducing storefront vacancies. Feedback consistently identified Broadway as the City's primary commercial corridor and highlighted the importance of creating destinations and public spaces that encourage activity throughout the day and evening.

Walkability, mobility, and the quality of the public realm were also recurring themes. Participants supported investments in safer pedestrian crossings, enhanced streetscapes, shade trees, lighting, parks, plazas, and other public gathering spaces that create a more comfortable pedestrian environment. At the same time, parking remained an important consideration, with participants emphasizing the need to balance the needs of pedestrians,

bicyclists, transit users, and motorists while accommodating future growth and redevelopment.

Feedback regarding future growth reflected a desire to balance additional housing and redevelopment with preservation of Downtown Lemon Grove's small-town character. While opinions varied regarding development intensity and building heights, participants generally supported accommodating growth in appropriate locations provided that new development is compatible with surrounding neighborhoods, contributes positively to downtown, and is accompanied by investments in public amenities and infrastructure.

Developers, property owners, and community members also emphasized the importance of preparing a Downtown Specific Plan that is clear, practical, and implementable. Participants supported objective and predictable development standards, streamlined approval processes, and continued transparency throughout the planning process. Feedback highlighted the importance of balancing high-quality design with economic feasibility to encourage long-term investment and successful implementation of the DSP.

Finally, the engagement process reinforced that Downtown Lemon Grove's greatest opportunity lies in building upon its existing strengths rather than redefining its identity. Participants consistently expressed pride in the community's character, local businesses, and sense of place, while identifying opportunities to improve safety, cleanliness, maintenance, public spaces, and overall appearance. Together, the feedback received during Phase 1 provides a strong foundation for refining the Draft DSP and guiding future revitalization efforts that reflect the community's vision for Downtown Lemon Grove.