

University and Bay / “Four Corners” Community Engagement
Community Meeting #4 – August 18 – September 14, 2020
Online – universityandbay.com

Executive Summary

As part of the community engagement process for redevelopment of the “Four Corners” site, Sand Hill Property Company held a fourth community meeting in August 2020. Due to health and safety concerns related to COVID-19, the community meeting was done through an online format. The virtual community meeting included a video presentation, online resources and project content, and an interactive survey. The meeting was originally made available to the public for a two-week period between August 18 – 31, and then was extended for two weeks until September 14th due to its overlap with the start of the school year. This Executive Summary provides an overview of the overarching trends and takeaways that emerged from the qualitative responses and the quantitative results in the online survey.

Participation Data

- 64 survey responses (61 in English; 3 in Spanish)
- 197 unique visitors
- Over 86% of survey participants live in EPA
- Approximately 70% of survey participants work in EPA

Important Themes & Takeaways

Based on an analysis of the online survey results, the following themes and takeaways emerged as the most significant feedback from Community Meeting #4 and reinforce many of the themes that emerged from the previous community meetings. These themes will help guide future programming, design and planning decisions for the Four Corners project.

- **Community Use Flexibility:** Though we have heard in past meetings a preference for a library, this survey demonstrated a flexibility for other community uses and an openness for a community market, an exhibit space and a gathering space, which were selected by between 62%-68% of participants. There were also many comments about having flexible spaces that could serve multiple purposes and incorporate community uses.
- **Greening:** Throughout the survey, as in the previous surveys, participants expressed their desire for more planting and green features such as native planting and green screen walls, to accomplish a variety of purposes including as a way to make the buildings more inviting, as a way to buffer pedestrians from the traffic along University Ave., and as a way to make the project a better neighbor to the surrounding community.

- **Accessible and Inviting:** Survey participants emphasized the need for the project to be accessible to a variety of EPA users and inviting to the EPA community. In addition to including community oriented land uses, the project should incorporate design features such as floor to ceiling windows on the buildings, inviting entrances, wide sidewalks, landscape buffers and lighting along the internal streets, to invite the EPA community into the site. Also, survey participants want to make sure that the project benefits the current EPA community by ensuring that the spaces and programming are designed for the EPA community.
- **Connected to EPA:** The survey responses reinforced the importance of the project principle to be a good neighbor. Similar to the idea of making sure the project is accessible and inviting, responses to the survey noted the importance of integrating the project into the existing EPA community by minimizing the visual impacts on the surrounding neighbors, designing better and safer linkages to the existing neighborhood amenities and incorporating authentic EPA culture into the design, space uses and programming.
- **Placemaking and Placekeeping:** As in the previous surveys, participants want to use art (murals, signage, etc.) to create a space that is uniquely EPA and reflects its history, community and diversity. Survey participants believe that artistic design elements and having space and programming that promotes artistic expression will draw people to the site and make it more inviting to the surrounding EPA community.

Survey Details – Design

The online survey included informative/education components, including a presentation video, a review of the project principles and programming, and an interactive survey comprised of five sections. Below is an overview of the five interactive sections and their corresponding questions:

Community Space Use

- Besides a library, what other community uses would you like to see in this space?
 - If you selected “other,” what use would you like to see?
- Are there any additional thoughts you want to share about the images you selected?

University Experience

- What types of windows would make our buildings on University Ave. more inviting?
- How could we make the entrances to our buildings on University Ave. more inviting?
- What sidewalk features would make University Ave feel more active?
- Are there any additional thoughts you want to share about the images you selected?

Being A Good Neighbor

- What type of building features do you like for the life science/laboratory building?
- What type of building features do you like for the parking garage?
- Are there any additional thoughts you want to share about the images you selected?

Connecting to Neighborhood Amenities

- Do you think the current design does a good job connecting to existing neighborhood amenities?
- What would make it more inviting to walk through the site’s internal streets?
- Are there any additional thoughts you want to share about the design of the streets or the images you selected?

Other Comments and Questions

- Do you have any additional comments or questions you would like to share?

Survey Details – Results

COMMUNITY SPACE USE

In the first community meeting, we heard a strong desire for community uses onsite. In a follow up meeting, over 80% of the votes from participants selected a library as a priority community use. Participants considered a library as a resource for the community, a gathering place for families, a facility to draw people to the site, and help celebrate the rich history of the City. In response, our initial proposal included a Public Library in the signature community space. The decision about whether the library will be in this location will ultimately be determined by the City and the County library system. Since it's possible that another location may be chosen for the Library, in this section of the survey participants were asked what community uses they would like to see besides a library. Below is a qualitative summary of the responses as well as the quantitative results.

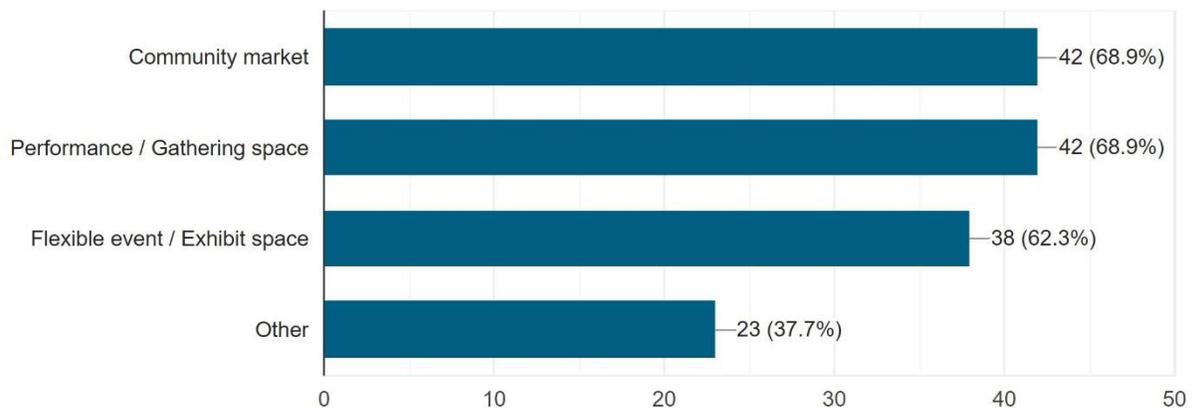
Community Space Use Survey Summary

- While Community Market was the leading vote getter, it's notable that all the responses are pretty evenly ranked.
- A variety of uses were listed under "Other." For the most part, they fell under the themes of some type of robust exhibit space (environmental education, multicultural exhibit), local and multicultural market, city hall/civic space, and entertainment spaces.
- Several respondents also suggested the idea of combining uses. For example, if the primary use is not an exhibit space, is there a way to still have some exhibit use in a part of it?

Community Space Use Survey Results

Besides the library, what other uses would you like to see in this space? (Choose all the apply)

61 responses



Participants that responded “other” were asked what they would like to see on site. Below are the most common responses:

- Space that acknowledges and celebrates the Black community of East Palo Alto
- Community spaces-meeting rooms, classroom, gathering spaces-that are available for use by the community
- Spaces for local businesses including restaurants that can also serve as an event space
- Market space for local makers and crafts
- Civic oriented space such as a town hall or city hall, police station, senior center
- More outdoor space and greenery

In addition to the question above, participants were asked if they had any additional thoughts about the images they selected. The responses mirrored the suggestions from above including providing a civic/governmental use, art exhibit space, community event spaces, and spaces for small, local businesses that is affordable to the community

UNIVERSITY AVENUE EXPERIENCE

In the Ravenswood/Four Corners Specific Plan and the East Palo Alto General Plan, the Four Corners site was designated as the “heart” of East Palo Alto. To help achieve this, the Specific Plan designates Bay Road as a “Main Street” and the General Plan recommends that projects “Revitalize University Avenue.” Our proposal has retail uses along Bay Road to help catalyze a Main Street there. For University Avenue, we’re looking at different types of active uses: office and community uses. In this section of the survey, participants were asked to provide feedback on how the building design at the ground floor can help create a more dynamic experience. Below is a qualitative summary of the responses to these questions as well as the quantitative results.

University Avenue Experience Survey Summary

- A number of respondents commented how University Avenue is a very busy street in terms of traffic and so that inherently makes it feel like a space that is not inviting. That would suggest that making it a more welcoming experience is not only about the pedestrian’s relationship to the building, but also providing a way to mediate/buffer the pedestrian’s relationship to the road.
- For the building, floor-to-ceiling windows are strongly preferred (selected by over 66% of participants) and small windows are definitely not (selected by less than 20% of participants)
- Comfortable seating was the top vote getter to make the building entrances more inviting but it doesn’t appear that there was any option that was significantly disliked. Using other elements such as stepping back from the street and awnings/shade structures were selected by over 60% of the participants.
- Native landscape was selected by over 90% of the participants, making it the clear choice to help activate the street. Wider sidewalks was selected by 80% of the participants as another option.

The former is consistent with the preference for nature/native landscapes that we have consistently heard throughout the community engagement process.

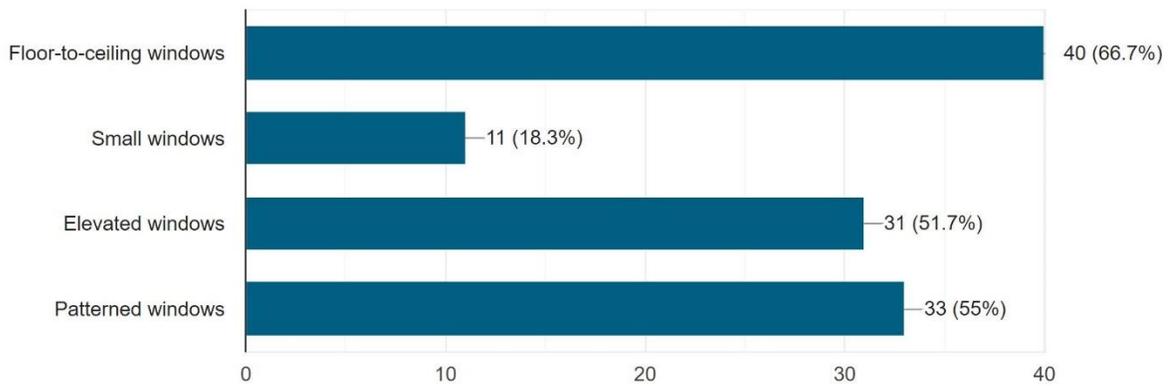
- In the qualitative comments, respondents spoke about accessibility and lighting/safety on the sidewalks.

University Avenue Experience Survey Results

What types of windows would make our buildings on University Avenue more inviting?
(Choose all that apply)

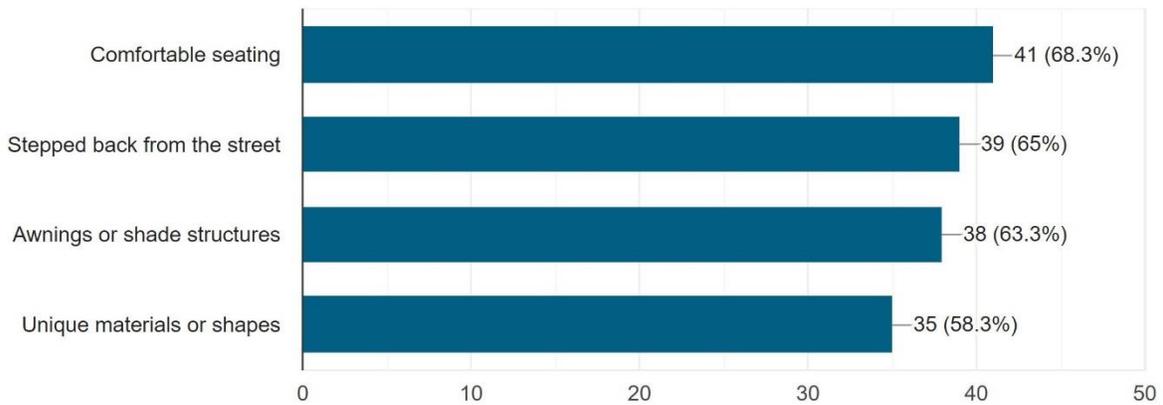


60 responses



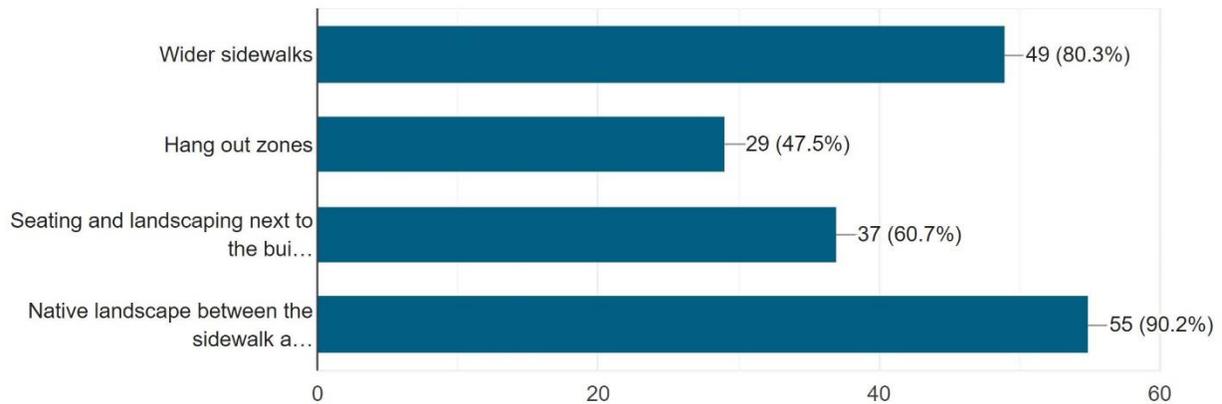
How could we make the entrances to our buildings on University Avenue more inviting?
(Choose all that apply)

60 responses



What sidewalk features would make University Avenue feel more active? (Choose all that apply)

61 responses



In addition to the question above, participants were asked if they had any additional thoughts about the images they selected. Below is a summary of those responses:

- University is currently very busy and a hostile environment to pedestrians and bicyclists.
- The building elements should reflect an EPA look
- Include greenery, planting to buffer from the traffic on University
- Ensure accessibility and lighting to make the sidewalks inviting
- Use design and artistic elements such as murals to reinforce EPA's history and culture and draw people to the site
- Free Wifi will encourage people to come to the site

BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOR

To create a better and welcoming "downtown" experience, the project proposal has more open space along University and Bay and more concentrated uses on the other sides of the project. We are committed to being a good neighbor. Where there are taller buildings, there will be a combination of streetscape design, large setbacks, landscape buffers and attractive architecture to make a better experience. In previous meetings, we asked participants for input on streetscape design. In community meeting #4 we asked participants for feedback about potential building features for two of the buildings along that edge: the life science building and parking garage. Below is a qualitative summary of the responses to these questions as well as the quantitative results.

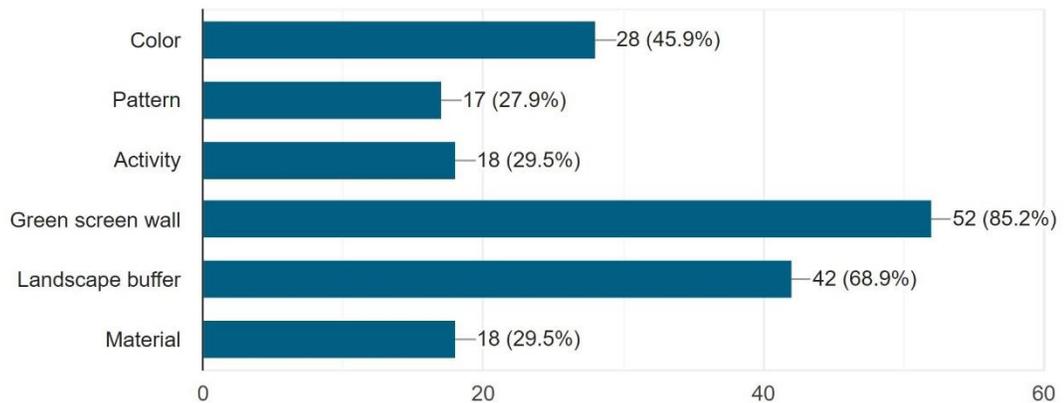
Being a Good Neighbor Survey Summary

- For the life science/laboratory building, there's a clear preference for a Green Screen Wall selected by over 85% of the votes. Landscape Buffer was also popular, selected by nearly 70% of the participants. Again, this is consistent with strong preferences for natural elements that community members have expressed throughout the process.
- For the life science/laboratory building, there seems to be a clear lack of preference for Pattern, Activity, and Material and a moderate preference for Color.
- For the Parking Garage, the landscape themed elements are the top ranked votes here as well. Lighting is also highly rated.

Being a Good Neighbor Survey Results

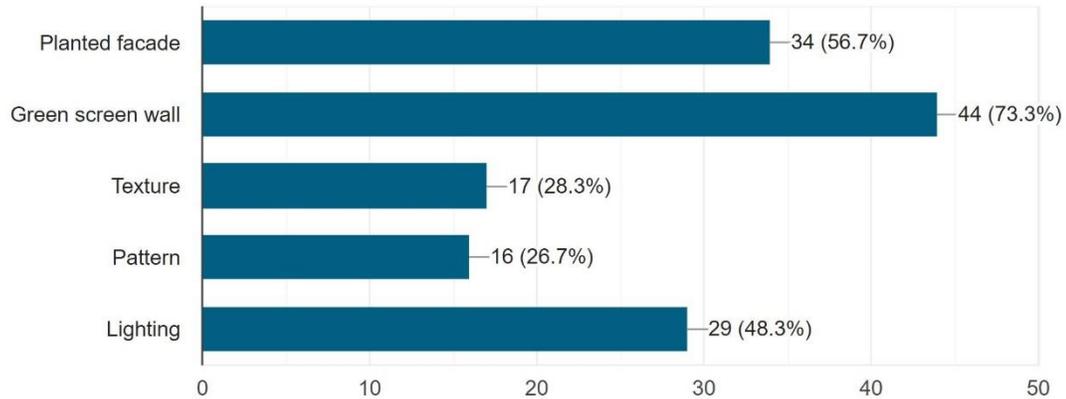
What types of building features do you like for the life science/laboratory building? (Choose all that apply)

61 responses



What types of building features do you like for the parking garage? (Choose all that apply)

60 responses



In addition to the question above, participants were asked if they had any additional thoughts about the images they selected. Nearly all the additional comments focused on using greenery to buffer the parking garage and other buildings from the neighbors, and to help minimize the impacts of the project on the neighbors.

CONNECTING TO NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES

One of the project’s core principles is to “Improve mobility and access.” In response, the design is pedestrian-friendly, bike-friendly, and easily and safely accessible. Our proposal not only connects the neighborhood to Four Corners, but also adds internal streets that make it easier to move through the site to connect to other existing neighborhood amenities, like Jack Farrell Park and City Hall. In previous meetings, we’ve asked participants about what features would make it more inviting to walk to the site. In community meeting #4, the survey asked for input on how to make the internal streets that move through the site more welcoming. Below is a qualitative summary of the responses to these questions as well as the quantitative results.

Connecting to Neighborhood Amenities Survey Summary

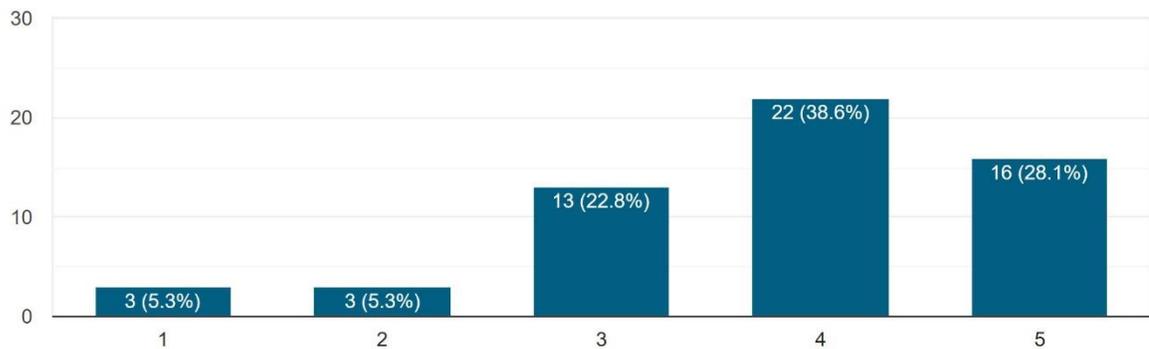
- Respondents generally feel like the project does a good job of connecting to neighborhood amenities.
- For the internal street features, planting and lighting (based on some of the written responses, this seems to be about safety). This maps well to the latest landscape design scheme.
- Other high vote getters were low seating and open views. Based on previous surveys and engagement, the desire for open views might be partly driven by the perception of safety. That

might suggest exploring ways that the building can peel back or become more porous at select corners and/or using wayfinding as a strategy to bring greater clarity to corner conditions.

Connecting to Neighborhood Amenities Survey Results

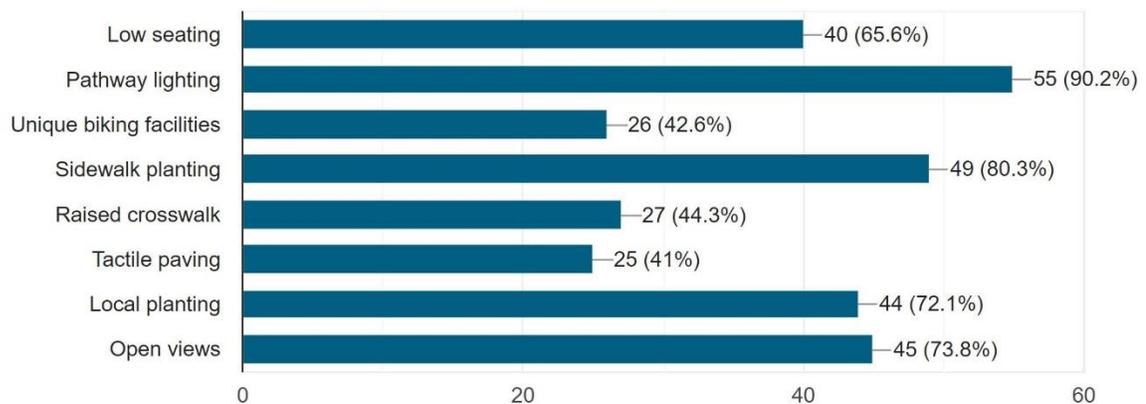
Do you think the current design does a good job of connecting to existing neighborhood amenities?

57 responses



What would make it more inviting to walk through the site's internal streets? (Please select the images that you like best)

61 responses



In addition to the question above, participants were asked if they had any additional thoughts about the design of the streets or the images they selected. The most common responses focused on increasing the connections between the project streets and the surrounding neighborhood corners and providing better accessibility for pedestrians.

OTHER COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

At the conclusion of the survey, participants were asked if they had any additional comments or questions that they wanted to share. Many participants were thankful for the opportunity to provide input and complimented Sand Hill's approach to community engagement though a couple noted the need for greater voices from the senior community as well as a greater social media presence. Other comments centered on ensuring that the neighbors of the project were being considered in the project design and outreach.