

In February, thanks to the help of community-based partners, we conducted further outreach on the People's Plan (El Plan Del Pueblo) in South Modesto with focus group and survey sessions. As a result of this engagement, we were able to draw key insights regarding what community members viewed as their main concerns and suggestions for addressing those concerns in the community. Resident conversations in Spanish and English were wide-ranging and touched on all five of our key focus areas. Specifically, this engagement helped us engage community in the following ways:

- Survey: 42 residents
- Engage in focused group discussions: 22 residents

The People's Plan team had not conducted an outreach activity since December and has yet to schedule one for March but is working diligently towards reaching more communities soon.

South Modesto, 02/28/2024: 2 sessions (Spanish in the morning and English in the evening)

1. Civic Engagement and Community Building
 - a. Concerns: Difficulty finding information about events and resources in the community; Limited outreach by local government at all levels to non-English speakers; and a sense of disconnection from local policymaking among residents, particularly Latinos.
 - b. Suggestions: Increase outreach in multiple languages and formats (social media, flyers, door-to-door); partner with trusted community leaders for outreach; create welcoming community spaces and organize events at convenient times for more community members, especially parents and people who work during the day.
2. Economic and Social Health
 - a. Concerns: High cost of living (housing, healthcare, education); difficulty finding good-paying jobs with proper qualifications; lack of technology access and skills hindering job prospects; and stigma surrounding mental health and healthcare access for undocumented immigrants.
 - b. Suggestions: Advocate for higher minimum wages and job training programs focused on in-demand skills in partnership with business leaders; increase access to technology and provide digital literacy training; and partner with community health organizations to address mental health stigma and healthcare access.
3. Transportation
 - a. Concerns: The public transportation system is limited, slow, and unsafe in some areas; and there is a lack of awareness about bus routes, fares, and apps.
 - b. Suggestions: Improve public transportation frequency, reliability, and safety; increase public awareness of bus routes, fares, and apps through a user-friendly system; and invest in infrastructure like dedicated bus lanes.
4. Housing Experiences and Development
 - a. Concerns: Rising rents and a shortage of affordable housing options; difficulty securing stable housing, leading to overcrowding; and concerns about safety and homelessness in some neighborhoods.
 - b. Suggestions: Increase the availability of affordable housing units; explore alternative housing models like tiny homes or multi-generational living; and partner with developers to incentivize affordable housing construction.
5. Climate Resilience and Change

- a. Concerns: Increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events (heatwaves, flooding, etc.); disproportionate impact on agricultural workers and low-income communities; and a lack of infrastructure and resources to prepare for and respond to climate disasters.
- b. Suggestions: Build more cooling centers in vulnerable areas; improve communication and outreach regarding flood preparedness and resources; and invest in climate-resilient infrastructure and prioritize green development practices.

South Modesto residents, regardless of language, grapple with limited access to affordable housing, reliable transportation, and information about community resources from local government and organizations in the area. The high cost of living and a communication gap, especially for non-English speakers, further isolates some communities from economic stability. We also learned that extreme weather events pose a growing threat, particularly for vulnerable populations. Residents taught us that to address these challenges, Modesto needs to improve communication, invest in essential services and infrastructure, and foster collaboration between residents and local government.