

# Buellton General Plan

## Workshop 1 Summary

### Overview

Approximately 25 community members attended the City of Buellton's Community Workshop on Thursday, May 29, 2025. City staff and the consultant team delivered a presentation introducing the General Plan Update process, outlining its goals, timeline, and opportunities for public engagement. Key findings from the recent community survey were shared, highlighting residents' preferences and priorities. The presentation included an overview of existing conditions, along with potential opportunities for future improvements. (The workshop presentation can be found on the City's website: <https://buellton.civilspace.io/en/projects/general-plan-2050>). This portion of the meeting was interactive, with workshop participants providing input, ideas and robust discussion around the following key questions:

- How do we enhance the small-town character and experience?
- How do we ensure that each new piece of infill development and public improvement incrementally enhances small town character and make Buellton "more Buellton", not less?
- How do we better connect the various parts of town and neighborhoods to make Buellton feel and function more like the small town that it is, rather than evolving into a conventional Southern California suburb?

Following is a summary of the community comments received.

### Summary

#### Pedestrian & Bicycle Connectivity and Safety

##### Priority Destinations for Walking and Biking

Workshop attendees identified several destinations they would like to walk or bike to:

- Solvang (3 mentions)
- Schools (3)
- Library (2)
- Santa Ynez (2)
- Ballard Canyon (1)
- Jonata Path Road into town (1)
- Buellton Rec (1)
- Flying Flags (1)
- Rancho de Maria (1)
- Sideways Lounge (1)

These desires reinforce the need for regional connections and in-town network improvements for both biking and walking.

### Connectivity Gaps and Key Improvements Needed

- Strong community need for connections between:
  - Rancho de Maria, Industrial Way, Flying Flags
  - Avenue of Flags (AOF) to McMurray
  - Jonata Park Rd to town (Jonata Springs Ranch area)
- Crossing Hwy 246 (especially west of 101 and near Thumbelina) is unsafe even at existing crossings.
- Crossing Hwy 101 is a major barrier—support exists for a pedestrian bridge
- More crosswalks are needed, especially along Hwy 246 and McMurray

### Traffic Safety & Mobility Barriers

#### Major Obstacles to Walking and Biking

Community members identified several key challenges:

- Crossing Hwy 101
- Crossing Hwy 246 (especially west of 101)
- High traffic speeds on McMurray and Hwy 246
- Lack of direct access to Avenue of Flags by foot or bike
- General lack of safe, comfortable infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists

#### Recommendations

- Add crosswalks and traffic calming on Hwy 246 and McMurray
- Develop safe pedestrian and bicycle paths, especially in areas with fast-moving traffic
- Implement speed transition zones or rumble strips approaching city limits
- Improve signal synchronization on Hwy 246 (e.g., coordinated green lights at 30 mph)

### Transportation Preferences and Support for Change

#### Community Willingness to Use Active Transportation

- Community members would be likely to walk and/or bike if conditions were safe and comfortable to do so. This indicates strong support for expanding transportation options given considerations for safety

#### Support for Infrastructure Investments

- Majority support building a pedestrian/bike bridge over Hwy 101
- Emphasis that crossing safety at Hwy 246 is a higher priority in the near term

### Planning, Development, and Vision

#### Concerns about Land Use Focus

- Industrial Way is seen by some as a neglected but viable downtown area, in contrast to the focus on Avenue of Flags
- The Avenue of Flags development may hinder traffic flow from freeway exits and block scenic views of surrounding hills
- Question raised: How do current Avenue of Flags projects fit within the broader city vision?

### Development Challenges

- Longstanding issue: Approved projects remain unbuilt (some for over a decade)
- Suggestion: Incentivize development to move forward
- Frustrations with County departments (Building & Environmental Health) creating barriers

### Additional Community Input & Concerns

- General Plan Oversight: Lack of recognition for endangered steelhead trout in the Santa Ynez River and Zaca Creek
- Zaca Creek Trail: Uncertainty over how to develop trail through Rancho de Maria HOA (requires consent from 152 owners)
- Traffic Flow Concerns: Warning against reducing Hwy 246 west of Buellton to one lane—could severely disrupt traffic
- Truck Infrastructure: Suggestion to develop a truck stop north of town due to removal of big rig parking on The Avenue of Flags
- Specific Infrastructure Request: Grade-separated northbound 101 on-ramp/off-ramp for truck stop area

