

South Santa Clara County

Community Conversation Appendix

February 23, 2017
Gilroy Center for Arts
341 Monterey Street, Gilroy, California

The detailed notes below are actual comments and feedback from the participants from this community conversation and may not reflect the opinions or future plans of the community foundation.

QUESTION ONE

What are the most pressing issues in Gilroy?

(Two breakout circles, total of 22 participants)

DETAILED NOTES FROM CRITICAL QUESTION ONE

Homelessness

- Homelessness: 300 unsheltered individuals living on the streets of Gilroy.
- Influx of people coming in to hospitals.
- Influx of homeless students at Gavilan Community college, students who require hygiene and other services.
- Homelessness – compassionate care for the influx of people moving to Gilroy.
- Need a place for homeless to rest, to camp, with garbage services, with restroom services instead of kicking people out of creeks and ally-ways. We have to have an alternative to kicking people out of spaces. 911 does not resolve homelessness!
- Safety: maybe this new space for the homeless is fenced in; maybe it has lighting to ensure safety of homeless community and other community members.
- Homelessness – affordable housing, jobs/job training, services to get people back on their feet, perhaps government work to help fund services.
- San Jose does not do enough to solve their homeless problems, folks come down to Gilroy.
- Impacts quality of life for all residents.
- Mental health issues and homelessness.
- Homelessness – unable to find affordable housing.
- Homelessness and affordable housing.
- Homelessness, housing.

- Homelessness (repeated 3 more times).

Affordable housing

- Lack of affordable housing: Less expensive than San Jose and north, but someone who makes \$50,000 or less cannot afford a home.
- "Truly" affordable housing; 200 units in affordable families can't qualify for minimum level of income; family of four would be 50-60K.
- Shortage of housing for people with extremely low incomes - Retired, SSI, disabled, low wage workers, seniors earning less than \$2,000/mo. - nothing for these folks to rent.
- People who \$1,000/month cannot even afford to rent a room!
- Local community college students drop off half-way through the semester because they can't afford education and housing.
- Lack of affordable housing for working community, staff of our organizations cannot even afford to even rent here.
- Lack of transitional housing for folks with mental health or drug issues who are leaving incarceration, hospital or other treatment.
- Affordable housing - very low income working people.
- Housing.
- Housing: measure H impact intensifies this issue; "Measure H urban growth boundaries; higher density will go up and problems will intensity."
- "Struggle of being able to afford a place to live."
- Affordable space for services; need for structures and NPOs spaces to conduct services.

Poverty, hunger, nutrition, human trafficking

- Poverty.
- Hunger - nutrition education.
- Human trafficking (x2).
- Human trafficking issues in Gilroy; different industries; AG, beauty salons; "it's in our backyard."
- Wages compared to cost of living.
- Highest poverty rates in Gilroy than other city in Santa Clara County.
- "Hunger and nutrition education; linked to poverty."

Health/mental health/addiction

Health care

- Diabetic education resources: diabetes increases mortality in communities, obesity / poor food choices increasing diabetes in South County.
- Lack of access to healthcare, hospital as primary health care services.
- Access to healthcare at a local level - wider variety of services, more specialists.

- Health care [2x].

Mental health and addiction

- Behavioral health: closing of the tent cities in Gilroy has impacted police and hospitals with an increase in demand for services. Gilroy has nothing in behavioral health to help the homeless population.
- Behavioral health access to management/resources, problems caused for Gilroy PD/Five/Hospital, greater than 50% of psych holds in Santa Clara County come from Gilroy.
- We need crisis mental health services in Gilroy. If someone doesn't yet have care and is in crisis, they have to call county "call center" to get a referral to a Gilroy agency --- several weeks out! EPS is in San Jose.
- Mental health is tied right in with issue of homelessness.
- Creates an issue of self-medication, drugs on the street, particularly heroin and methamphetamine.
- Drugs rampant, specifically meth and heroin: drugs are easy to get, ubiquitous on the streets, for people trying to quit, hard to avoid, no detox facility, not easy to get treatment.
- Mental health.
- Mental health issues and homelessness.
- Mental health: education, awareness, family/school.
- County no longer offering as much access to psych services.
- Mental health issues overall but lead to homelessness and we have a lot in Gilroy and lack facilities for treatment.
- Feeling of isolation - Not having a space to convene, Language barriers – if you don't speak English you have difficulty to access to many services, potential to perpetuate ills of mental health.

Immigrant communities

Integration

- Education and civics/coordination of services/ESL; education is top one; civic education is next; ESL is next to communicate and become better citizens; and coordination of services that brings providers together.
- Education resources: ESL, adults, literacy.
- Bridging the Latino – Caucasian Divide #1 pressing issue: culture, economics, politics and education.

Safety and support for Immigrant communities

- Immigration: kids fearing parents are at risk for deportation, there is fear and uncertainty, what will happen?, feeling of "otherness."
- Immigration fears.
- Immigration support.
- Immigration.
- Families fear immigration status, which then affects daily living: school, work, mental health, survival mode.

Education, mentoring and support for young people, workforce preparation, financial education

Education

- Invest in education– an important part of managing growth and looking for generations to come.
- Lack of access to education for youth.
- Education.
- Education in general; ESL; thinking of math and kids and important in this community; thinking of kids.
- Enhancing the public education system so that there is education and economic equity in Gilroy.
- Upgraded facilities at Gavilan College.

Workforce development

- Workforce development grants to increase econ development in area; industry driven; meeting what local industries need to drive local economy.
- Career and workforce educational grants.
- Industry driven educational opportunities.

Financial education

- Financial education – budgets and saving.
- Financial education is very important; for the whole family.
- Financial education; kind of related to civics; understanding that folks can learn how to save; budget; at whatever level in society; relates to family; better opportunities to college; contributing member of society and grow income.

Focus on young people

- Teen mentorship to curb alcohol and drug use that so often feed in to mental health issues as they develop in life; Aggressive program with positive role models and values; We will see the benefits of that in 10, 15 years; Keep kids from starting problematic behavior, become productive members of community; Potential to foster greater sense of community and community engagement with youth.
- More effectively implement AB109, a solution to reduce overcrowding and costs in prison and reduce recidivism.
- More effectively implement Prop 57, the California Parole for Non-Violent Criminals and Juvenile Court Trial Requirements Initiative.
- Need to invest in youth to stop revolving door of incarceration.
- Youth/teen activities after school.

Infrastructure

Transportation

- Roads in disrepair.
- Transportation alternatives to autos.
- City Infrastructure (Roads etc.).
- Potential to increase transportation.
- Public transit.

Managing growth

- How do we manage growth in Gilroy so that we can reduce impact of homelessness, drug use, and other issues as we expand?
- Ensure quality jobs.
- Affordable space for services; need for structures and nonprofits spaces to conduct services.
- Housing growth, impacts to schools, traffic.
- Quality jobs, limited high wage jobs.
- Growth, infrastructure to handle growth without straining capacity.
- Schools to adequately educate our children.
- Affordable housing to accommodate lower income citizens.
- Upgraded facilities at Gavilan College.

Services

- Measure A – we need to make sure we are getting our fair share in South County.
- We have a lack of county services, front door services are in San Jose.
- Need to centralize services down here.

Lack of integration into the County and the region overall

- Gilroy = forgotten by Santa Clara County.
- Not enough support or representation at the County level.
- Not represented, Santa Clara County should remember Gilroy/Morgan Hill.
- Lack of support from county organizations.
- Not enough support from the county.
- Morgan Hill is very different than Gilroy. Morgan Hill is a feeder to San Jose and Gilroy is not. We are more isolated because of that. We don't get tied in to the Silicon Valley/ San Jose thinking. We become our own silo.
- St. Louise Regional Hospital is red-headed step-sister of San Jose.
- Many folks in Silicon Valley do not know that Gilroy is a part of Santa Clara County.
- How do we get Silicon Valley to think that Gilroy is a part of Silicon Valley AND Santa Clara County?
- How to get people to think regionally about these issues – “these are huge issues that go way beyond Gilroy.”
- San Jose does not do enough to solve their homeless problems, folks come down to Gilroy.
- Measure A – we need to make sure we are getting our fair share in South County.
- We have a lack of county services, front door services are in San Jose.
- Need to centralize services down here.

CRITICAL QUESTION TWO

How can SVCF add value and best engage to help solve the most pressing issues in Gilroy?

(Two breakout circles, total of 22 participants)

DETAILED NOTES (PARTICIPANT COMMENTS) FROM CRITICAL QUESTION TWO:

Convene for action

- Fund a forum: quarterly? Gathering to discuss issues/topics.
- Develop focus groups for the issues we have identified with relevant donors and organizations. All of these issues are interrelated.
- SVCF can help perhaps by assisting with further distillation of issues into addressable improvement initiatives.
- Convening.
- Help develop a city collaborative to address underserved population – reps from GPD/Gfive/community solutions/hospital/ compassionate center/city.
- Convene smaller groups of stakeholders and distill down to actual issues with actionable solutions. Focus items are interrelated.
- Need for all stakeholders and organizations to be working together as symptoms are so interrelated. The issues are too large for us to not be working together.

Invest in coordinated solutions to affordable housing crisis in Gilroy.

Access to financial instruments that promote affordable housing

- SVCF “low-income mortgages.”
- Simplified consumer lending.
- Develop very- low or no interest revolving fund for extremely low income families for housing down payment.

Resources for affordable housing for students

- College student housing: allow local students to have space to focus on studies as many homes house three generations and are not ideal space to succeed in studies.
- Need for student housing for international students.
- Locals students can’t afford college because they have no place to live.
- Multi-family and international student and faculty housing.
- Student housing, college students, low income and international.

Invest in coordinated solutions to Gilroy’s homeless crisis

Coordinate solutions to housing for homeless that leverages non-traditional housing

- Non-traditional housing as a solution.
- Tiny Homes Village with year round shelter for the homeless, with low barrier jobs homeless can do.
- Example: "Community First Village" in Austin, TX where residents can work onsite with store, transportation, people pay rent they can afford.
- Homeless community is a community. These alternative housing opportunities need to create community.
- We could house homeless for the amount we are spending for Band-Aid solutions we currently implement.

Mental health

- Policy and funding for mental health services (Keri).
- Respond to people on the street.
- Comes with next step services after working with a client, eliminating hospital and jail time, like transitional housing services.
- Policy /funding to support crisis/ mental health services with follow up services (short, long-term, residential, etc.).

Advocate for and invest in education, young people and families

Invest in Education for a more equitable future

- Education – ensure that students are college bound.
- Fund a math initiative for Gilroy Unified School District.

Build on schools to support young people and families

- Foster recreational programs for kids/youth all ages.
- Youth programs – mentorships, job training, counseling, community engagement, accountability.
- Use schools as access points for services (families feel safe accessing services @ schools and already have to be there twice each day).

Advocate for and implement policy to support young people and families

- More effectively implement AB109, a solution to reduce overcrowding and costs in prison and reduce recidivism.
- More effectively implement Prop 57, the California Parole for Non-Violent Criminals and Juvenile Court Trial Requirements Initiative.

Fund financial education/literacy

- Financial education program: -get financial organizations to help and -SVCF can coordinate maybe provide financial support.

Increase regional integration, differentiation, and equitable distribution of regional resources.

Integrate within the region/County

- Leadership and mentorship – work with the leaders who are here and connect to the region in terms of the issues (integration and leadership).
- Encourage through money and guidance greater diversity in the arts (performing/visual) to connect people in the region.

- Convening: bring neighboring cities together to discuss these issues.

Differentiate and champion

- Listen and learn about the Gilroy community in terms of its unique culture and challenge.
- Recognize our need.
- Be a voice.
- More intense advocacy.
- Advocate for Gilroy before the County for more services.
- Connecting Gilroy, San Martin and Morgan Hill into a regional solidarity in society and economy and politics.

Within Gilroy, build capacity, leadership and expertise in the social service sector

- Using tech /media: assist with improving communication among all providers.
- Administrative support, operating costs
- Bring expertise to table
- Partner programs with Gilroy non-profits

Foster Growth

- Economic Development – to create more jobs in the area
- Affordable space for services
- Employment/economic diversification
- Arts and cultural center – larger facility
- Downtown revitalization
- Develop the performing arts and visual arts culture in Gilroy to be much more inclusive
- Strategic planning and “seed” money
- Help Gilroy find funding dedicated to revitalization and the arts.
- Managing growth.

Gather Information/share best practices

- SVCF share best practices from other communities who have faced similar issues.
- Community based “demonstrations” solutions to inspire greater involvement.
- What has SVCF done with other communities to address these issues?

Immigration

- Resources for immigrants: legal, jobs, citizenship.
- Journalism: more fluid ways of communication. “We are the community’s voice and we want to be. We are not the enemy. In the current climate that gets lost.” Ally to disseminate info to the community.

For SVCF and Philanthropy

- Share resources.
- Fund programs run by Gilroy Compassion Center and St. Joe’s.
- Funding.

- Partnership – sharing resources.
- Make sure donors (funders are able to visit NPOs...person to person).
- Focus on activities that require/show collaboration and inclusivity.
- Bring together funders (data) with providers (NPOs) to understand each others vocabulary and develop a common language.
- Micro regional strategies.