
sacramento | 2040

PHASE I CITYWIDE WORKSHOPS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

City of
SACRAMENTO

City of Sacramento General Plan Update and Climate Action Plan



In 2019, the City initiated an update to the General Plan to ensure it remains responsive to the challenges of the coming years. In parallel, the City will also be preparing an ambitious Climate Action Plan that outlines a community-wide framework for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and establishes Sacramento as a climate leader. A critical step in the first phase of the process involves gathering information, feedback, and ideas from community members on the major issues and opportunities for Sacramento. This Executive Summary contains a description of the workshop purpose, format and location; a summary of key findings and major themes; and an explanation of how the input gathered will inform the planning process.

Workshop Purpose, Format and Location

A series of four citywide workshops served as a kick-off of the public engagement process for the General Plan Update and Climate Action Plan. Key objectives of the workshop series were to:

- Build awareness and inform the whole Sacramento community about kick-off of the project.
- Solicit input from community members on critical issues and opportunities, and on the vision and guiding principles for Sacramento over the next 10 to 20 years.

The community workshops were structured in an open house format with a brief presentation about the General Plan Update. Planning staff presented an overview of the process and format of the workshop. Each open house had seven stations representing key topics of the General Plan Update: Issues and Opportunities, Vision Statement and Guiding Principles, Environmental Justice, Climate Change, Mobility, and Livability. As community members walked in, they were provided with a comprehensive facilitated guidebook for each interactive station that provided posed topical questions for each station and allowed space for answers. Community members were also encouraged to add comments directly on some display boards.



Community members listening to the presentation

The four citywide community workshops were held in north, south, and central locations on a weeknight in late-April through early May. The citywide workshops took place from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. More than 340 community members attended the workshop series.



Community members participating in workshop exercises

Summary of Key Findings

Across all workshops, major themes emerged from workshop participants’ responses. Residents wanted to protect and enhance the things they love about Sacramento: the trees, the rivers, the diversity and friendliness, the fresh food, the arts and culture. Residents expressed concerns about climate change and disaster risk, about racial and geographic equity, about housing affordability and homelessness, about safety, and about shortcomings in transit, biking and walking systems. Below are some of the key findings.

Issues and Opportunities

Workshop participants were asked about their overall vision for the City of Sacramento, including what they love about the city and how they would like to see it changed. Their responses indicate top-of-mind concerns, big picture ideas, and major priorities for Sacramento’s future.

When asked what features of Sacramento they valued most, residents described a variety of the City’s unique characteristics, including its access to natural resources, diverse and friendly community spirit, opportunities for walking and biking, and how the City’s size and location enable residents to experience the benefits of both small town and big city life:

- Sacramento’s natural beauty, especially the abundant trees and access to the river (34%)
- Sacramento is a diverse and friendly city, with activities available for people of all ages (28%)
- Sacramento has a unique and welcoming “small-town” feeling, while still offering the arts, entertainment, and cultural amenities typically associated with larger cities (13%)
- Opportunities for walking and biking (13%)
- The accessibility of farmer’s markets and Sacramento’s close connection to the agricultural community (12%)

Residents were asked to describe what, if anything, they would like to see more of in the City. Suggestions included a diverse and expanded suite of public services, increased opportunities for active transportation, and more affordable housing:

- Expanded cycling facilities, including bike lanes, bike paths, places to lock bikes, and ongoing facility maintenance, more frequent and extensive transit, more sidewalks and walkable places, fewer cars and less driving (33%)
- Expanded public services, especially those serving youth, the elderly, and the homeless (17%)
- Affordable housing, particularly located near transit, in walkable neighborhoods, and serving a wide range of resident types, including for those experiencing homelessness (15%)

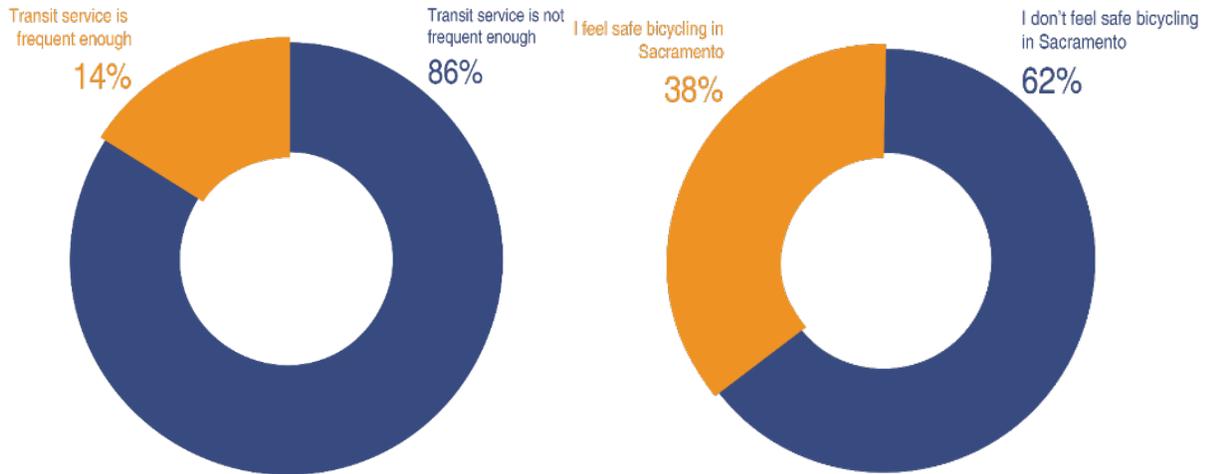
Residents were also asked to describe what they would like to see change in Sacramento. Here, too, major themes emerged around housing affordability, mobility improvements for transit, biking, and walking, and services and housing for those experiencing homelessness:

- Improvements in mobility options for cyclists, pedestrians, and transit riders, including expansion of services and increased emphasis on safety (12%)
- More housing, serving residents at a variety of income levels (11%)
- More housing and services for the homeless population (10%)

Mobility

Workshop participants consistently expressed a desire for better transit, safer bike lanes, and more walkability. Only 1% of citywide workshop participants requested more parking, wider roads, or more freeways, while 33% requested more bike lanes, better transit, more walkable communities, less driving, or car-free spaces. Sacramento’s ambitious climate goals make it necessary to achieve dramatic increases in walking, biking, and transit mode shares; workshop participants helped to identify some of the biggest barriers to achieving that vision. Common themes included increasing the convenience and ease of access of transit services, both the area which they serve and the frequency at which they arrive; improving user’s sense of safety and comfort; and ensuring that transit is affordable for all members of the community (Note that many participants cited multiple factors, so percentages may add up to more than 100%):

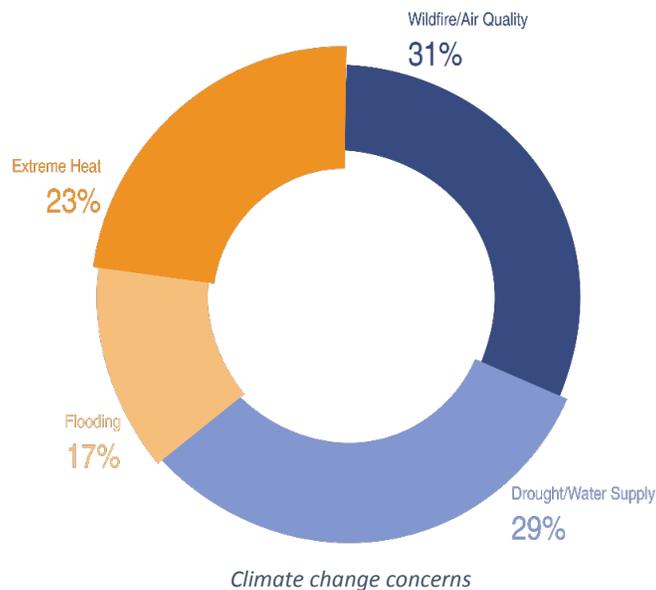
- Bike facilities, sidewalks, and transit routes should reach more places people want to go (43%)
- Cycling, walking, and using transit should feel safe across the city and at all times of day and night (35%)
- Transit services should be frequent, and rides fast and efficient (25%)
- Transit should be affordable to residents of all ages and income levels (9%)
- The transit experience should be clean and comfortable (5%)



Further, clear geographic patterns emerged around how easy it is to get around in Sacramento. Residents of Central City and East Sacramento rated Sacramento very highly for ease of getting around; residents of North Sacramento, North Natomas, South Natomas, and South Area were much more likely to say that they have difficulty getting around the city (see Map: Ease of Getting Around).

Climate Change

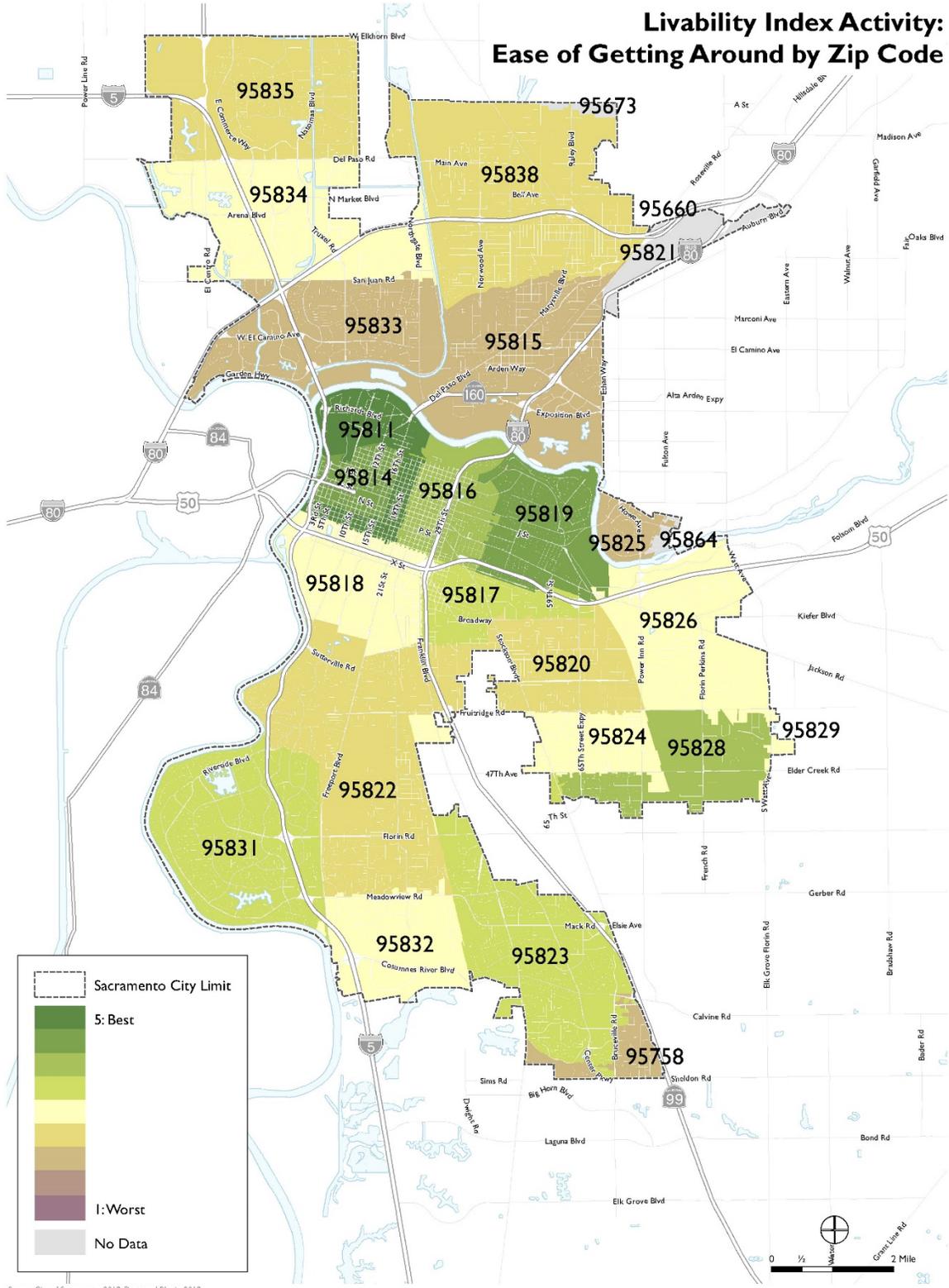
Workshop participants showed a strong, pressing concern about climate change and a desire for the City to take action on climate. Only one resident in all of the Citywide workshops expressed “no concern” about climate change impacts; every other resident was concerned about climate change, especially about wildfire and air quality, drought and water supply, and extreme heat. Additionally, only 7% of workshop participants thought that Sacramento was well prepared for a natural or man-made disaster.



Community members also listed other concerns about climate change; of those responses, a third included concerns about catastrophe, instability, human extinction, disastrous food shortages, or violence, indicating just how urgently many community members want climate action. Other key themes that emerged included concerns over health impacts, general food availability, ecological impacts, and flooding.

- Decreased accessibility and affordability of food (15%)
- The effect of extreme heat and air quality degradation on public health (15%)
- Harm to wildlife, tree canopy, and insects (13%)

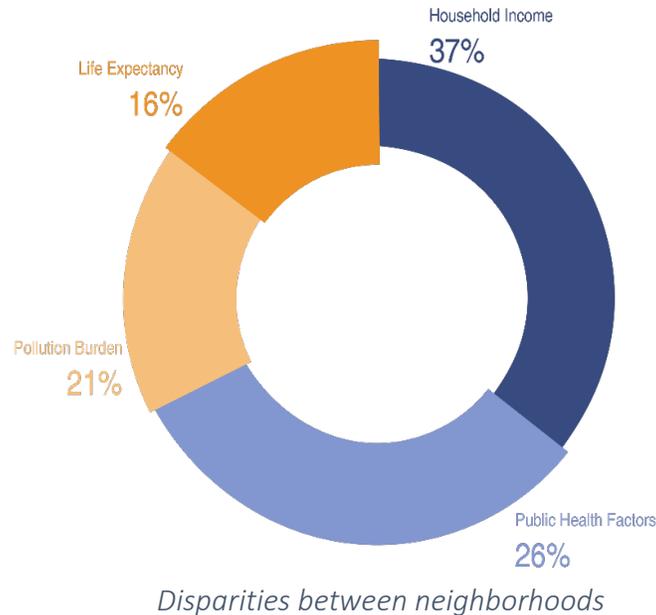
Livability Index Activity: Ease of Getting Around by Zip Code



Source: City of Sacramento, 2019; Dyett and Bhatia, 2019

Environmental Justice

Workshop participants expressed concerns about disparities that they have observed between neighborhoods in Sacramento. The biggest disparities they noted were household income, public health factors, and disparate pollution burdens.



Residents also noted differences in access to healthy food, job and educational opportunities, public and active transit options, and natural resources, as well as differences in the relationship between the neighborhood and local police:

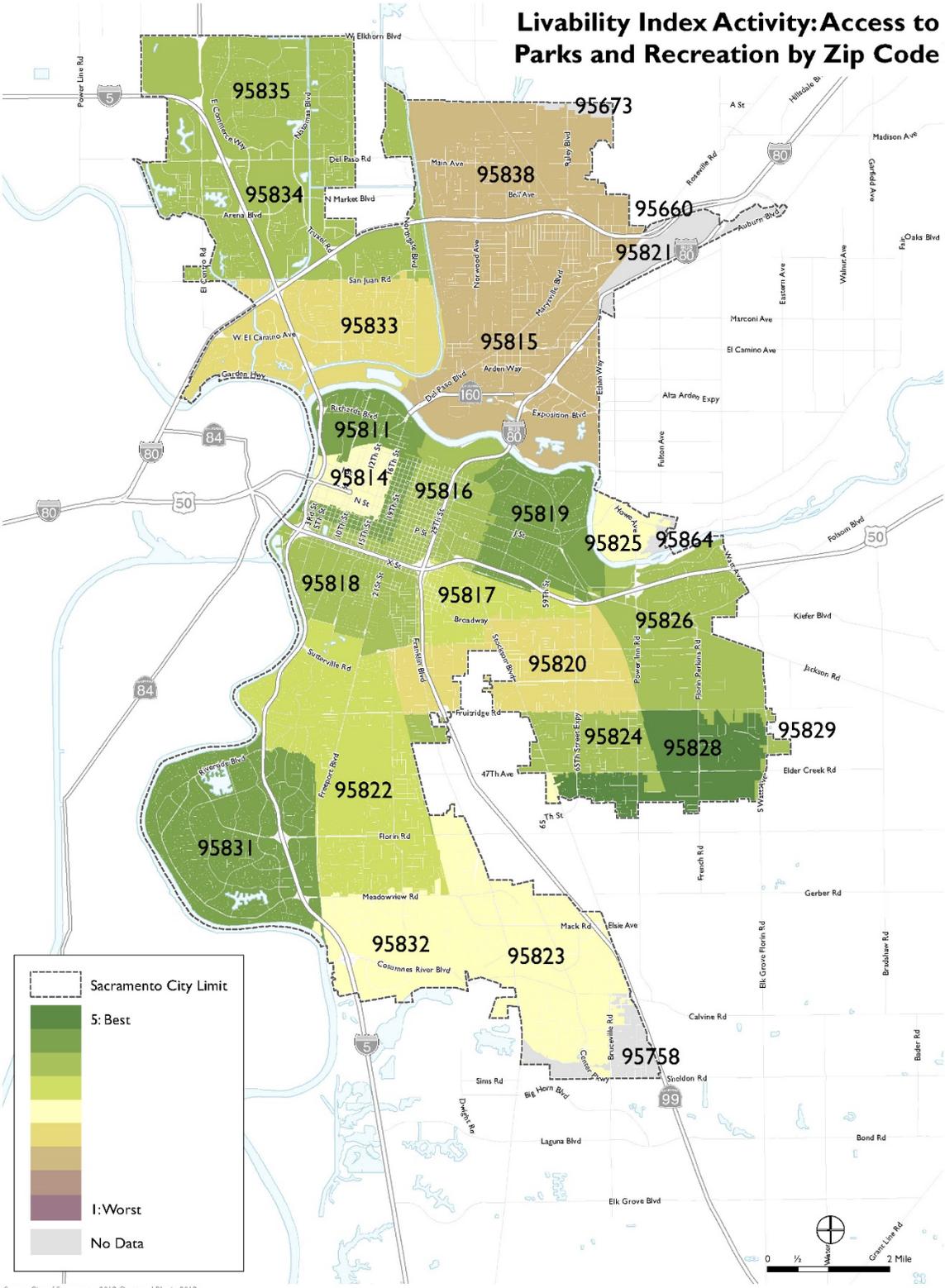
- Access to fresh, healthy food (14%)
- Accessibility of jobs and educational opportunities (14%)
- Quality public transit options and walkability (13%)
- Prevalence of tree canopy and availability of green space (11%)
- Availability of public services, including health and emergency centers (11%)
- Relationship between the community and local police (11%)

Further, when residents rated their access to parks and recreation facilities, North Sacramento and South Natomas -- both with large clusters of State-designated disadvantaged communities – received the lowest ratings. (See Map: Parks and Recreation).

Livability

Workshop participants defined livability in broad terms, and gave a sense of the range of factors that go into a feeling of livability. The most common themes around livability included access to nature, easy connections and access, arts and culture, a sense of community, and feeling safe (many participants mentioned several ideas: percentages may add up to more than 100%):

Livability Index Activity: Access to Parks and Recreation by Zip Code



- An environment that feels healthy, with clean air, clean water, and ample access to parks, trees, and other green spaces (33%)
- A community that is well-connected; walking and biking are easy because almost all key stores and services can be found within walking distance (31%)
- Ample access to a variety of public spaces, public services, community events, and arts and entertainment venues, suitable for residents of all ages (31%)
- Living among neighbors who are friendly, supportive, and take pride in their community (31%)
- A sense of safety and security (31%)

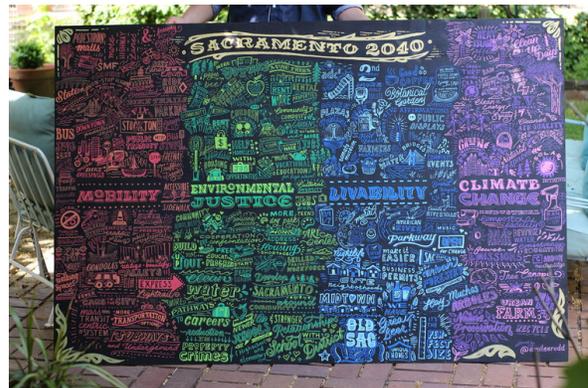
Residents also noted disparities in housing access, a key component of livability. Rating housing choice in Sacramento on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (good), only 7% of respondents picked 5 (good), while 47% rated housing choice as a 1 or 2. Low scores were especially common among residents of North Sacramento and South Natomas. (See Map: Housing Choice).

Community Input in the 2040 General Plan Update and Climate Action Plan

Input gathered through the workshop series identified key issues and opportunities from the community perspective as well as the aspirations of residents, businesses, and employees for the future of the city. This input has shaped the update to the Vision and Guiding Principles. The input will also be revisited later in the process to inform development of goals, policies, and implementing actions for the 2040 General Plan and the Climate Action Plan.



Local artist, Emilee Rudd, creating the community visioning mural at a workshop



Completed community visioning mural

Livability Index Activity: Housing Choice by Zip Code

