

WORKSHOP 1
FEBRUARY 9, 2004
COMMUNITY IMAGE SURVEY

THIS



NOT THIS



CITY OF GRASS VALLEY WORKFORCE HOUSING DESIGN PROGRAM COMMUNITY IMAGE SURVEY RESULTS

The City of Grass Valley Workforce Housing Design Program Community Image Survey (CIS) was presented on February 9, 2004 as a part of Workshop #1. The CIS consists of 40 slides from the City of Grass Valley and similar communities. During the Workshop #1, participants were asked to do participate in the "Community Image Survey" (CIS) to attempt to determine some preferred styles and design features.

The scope of this survey was not intended to be a scientifically accurate poll of the entire community's design desires, rather it was a springboard for a discussion during the workshop about design preferences. Before any discussion of design, participants were asked to rate a series of random slides by giving them a positive or negative score. A summary of the averages of the CIS voting scores is attached.

Eighteen residents of Grass Valley took the survey during the Workshop #1 and then participated in a discussion about the survey.

The residents who took the survey were asked to rate each image on a scale of -10 to +10 based on the following criteria:

- 1) Do I like or dislike the image?
- 2) How much do I like or dislike it?
- 3) Is it appropriate for Grass Valley?

An average score for each of the 40 images was calculated. Scores ranged from a low of -7.6 to a high of +7.7. (The 40 images and average scores follows.)

While the major focus of the Community Image Survey was to engage residents in a participatory exercise, the numerical averages are useful in determining which elements of the built environment are viewed as positive and which are considered negative. These views can then help to shape architectural design, planning policies and decisions.

Some of the highest and lowest scores provided useful insights.

Highest Scores:

The highest score of 7.7 was image #16. Image #16 showed a small and simple "National Folk" house in Grass Valley with a picket fence and front porch. The next highest score of 6.7 was for image #5 that pictured a single-lane street designed for both pedestrians and cars that winds through a new neighborhood in Washington State.

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Other High Scores:

Images #1, #23, #14, #34, #35 all scored above 5. These images each depicted newly constructed projects: an attached project in Washington State, a neo-craftsman home with a generous porch with river-rock columns and a separated sidewalk, a Grass Valley bright-red Neo-Victorian garage with an accessory unit above, a row of small accessory units in Aggie Village, Davis, and the Neo-National Folk homes of the Dough Mill community in Chico.

It was encouraging that 5 of the top 6 scoring images were new projects. Often communities choose the more historic buildings that are well known and loved like some of the Victorian mansions that were also included in the CIS. All of the images that received the top scores were buildings with a simple traditional feel: steeper pitched roofs, articulated porches, textured siding and direct connection to the street.

The lowest scores:

The lowest score of -7.6 was image #4 of an apartment parking lot in front of apartment flats, a -7.2 score for the back of a similar apartment building in image #33. Other low scores included image #22 with a score of -5.8 and image #21 with a score of -4.9 both showing “garden style” apartment flats with low-pitched roofs and continuous entry walks at the 2nd floor. The team acknowledges these poor scores as a sound rejection of the standard apartment complex design that has been common in many communities in the last 40 years. It should be noted that these complexes usually reflect rental apartments rather than ownership products.

Other notable low scores included some important urban design decisions that come with most projects: the streets. The next lowest scores were images #25 and #29 each with a -4 score. Both images from Grass Valley showed typical, wide suburban streets measuring about 36'-40' wide. Image #25 showed no sidewalks with large setbacks and a garage-dominated street front. Image #29 shows a wide, brand-new market-rate suburban street with roll-up curbs. The implications of wider streets have strong effects on the community character of a neighborhood, the likelihood of people walking instead of driving, the quantity of storm-water runoff and the speed that cars travel on the street every day.

Other Comments from the Workshop:

1. Workforce Housing Design Program should work with existing City programs, such as the First Time Home Buyer Program, etc.
2. Revising the development standards should be for all housing not just Workforce Housing.
3. Need to work closely with the Public Works engineering requirements to effect change.
4. Regulatory change is the most important outcome of the program.
5. The recommendations from the Workforce Housing Design Program will be folded into the changes that the City is currently contemplating in the revision of its Development Code.

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Conclusions:

Each site demands specific tailoring and appropriate building types to create the best neighborhood. It was the intent of the workshop to identify some conclusions that can be used to guide the design before the design begins. Only a handful of the hundreds images taken of Grass Valley homes and architectural character could be shown at the Workshop #1 and CIS presentation. Many of these images will also continue to inform the design team during the next phase of design.

We have noted the popular interest in the National-Folk style and Craftsman styles. These buildings tended to have a smaller setback from the street and single-lane driveway, or alley-accessed garages, a “bungalow orientation” (with the short side to the street) and smaller lot sizes. Front porches, steeper pitched roofs, articulated trim at the building openings, and simple building form seem to have been recurring themes in the most popular images. Given the project’s economic constraints and family composition for most work-force housing, simple, two story buildings with tighter lots works nicely with the popular National-Folk Style.

From looking at the street image scores, we intend to pursue narrower streets, vertical curbs, and separated sidewalks - where space allows, to mimic the traditional streets of Grass Valley.

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Community Image Survey



1

+6.3



21

-4.9



2

-2.9



22

-5.8

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3

+3.1



23

+5.5



4

-7.6



24

-0.8



5

+6.7



25

-4.0

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-0.8

6



+4.3

26



+1.2

7



+4.6

27



+1.1

8



+1.9

28

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+3.2

9



-4.1

29



+2.2

10



+3.3

30



+1.1

11



+2.6

31

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-2.9

12



-0.4

32



+1.3

13



-7.2

33



+5.8

14



+6.3

34

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+4.3

15



+5.9

35



+7.7

16



+2.3

36



-4.8

17



-1.7

37

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+2.9

18



-3.0

38



+3.4

19



+3.3

39



+2.5

20



+0.2

40