



City of Ridgecrest General Plan Update Community Workshop #1 Summary

Opportunities, Challenges, and a Vision

100 W. California Ave.
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

On March 28, 2007, over 50 people met at the City Hall and participated in the first of two community workshops designed to give the community opportunities to be involved in shaping the City of Ridgecrest General Plan. The purpose of the first workshop was to provide participants with an overview of the General Plan update process and give everyone an opportunity to offer their thoughts on the future of Ridgecrest. Following the General Plan overview, the workshop participants broke into five break-out groups and discussed the following two questions:

1. List the top three challenges/issues facing the City.
2. List the top three opportunities the City should pursue.

For both questions, each person was asked to write on a card their three top challenges/issues and three top opportunities. Each break-out group then discussed all of the ideas written down, and working as a group, identified what they felt were the overall top three challenges/issues and top three opportunities.



The following pages summarize each group's top three lists for the two questions asked. This is followed by a listing of each person's input on the questions asked.

BREAK-OUT GROUP #1

Question #1: List the top three challenges/issues facing the City?

1. Healthcare
 - a. Lack of healthcare for all ages
 - b. Lack of doctors
2. Managed Growth
 - a. Limit sprawl
 - b. Integration of development
 - c. Infill
3. Flood/Drainage
 - a. Bowman Creek
 - b. SE part of town
 - c. Water flow is not consistent
 - d. No flood control system
4. Streets
 - a. Poor condition
 - b. Need to be planned for the growth
 - c. Congestion – China Lake Blvd.

Question #2: List the top three opportunities that the City should pursue?

1. Education
 - a. Four year school
 - b. Trade school
 - c. Vocational school
2. Alternative energy
 - a. Solar
 - b. Wind
 - c. Geothermal
3. Tourism/Industry
 - a. Solicit
 - b. Retirees
 - c. Retail
4. Managed Growth
 - a. Quality of life

BREAK-OUT GROUP #2

Question #1: List the top three challenges/issues facing the City?

1. Exiting commercial buildings/roads west Ridgecrest Blvd
2. Requiring parks with no \$\$ for maintenance by the City
3. Sumps – no maintenance or follow-up
4. Sphere of influence and annexations
5. Method of funding roads
6. Performing arts theater – city
7. Mixed use development – horizontal and vertical ❖
 - a. Smart development – energy/transit
 - b. Streamline permitting – pay on approval, not on application
8. Flood control issues – drainage ❖
 - a. Infrastructure along with development
 - b. Prioritize funding for the City
9. Aesthetics ❖
 - a. make it look better
 - b. public art in public places
 - c. improve existing
10. Transportation
11. Senior housing
12. Road repair
13. Business sprawl
14. Traffic circulation
15. Preserve air corridors and air quality
16. Manage design and development
17. Availability and conservation of water
18. Sewer trunk lines
19. Affordable housing

❖ = Top issue / opportunity

Question #2: List the top three opportunities that the City should pursue?

1. Linear Parks and recreation through town (Bowman drainage)
2. Improved south entrance at Highway 395
3. North/south circulation improvements
4. New high school and updated sports complex ❖
5. Proven businesses for business park
6. Performing arts center near City Hall ❖
7. Improve City Hall area
8. Renovate Ridgecrest Blvd/Balsam area
9. Maintain open space/skies environment
10. Underground more power lines
11. Economic development – create climate for small business
12. Combine high school/college buildings for joint use
13. Art integral to new building design
14. Grand entrance improvement at all City access points
15. County hospital – mental health care
16. Arts, sports, recreation additions near Jackson Park
17. Environmentally friendly utilities – solar
18. Low cost commercial land

19. Highly educated community
20. Great living/retirement opportunity
21. Better planned parking lots
22. Big RV Draw on winter weekends – 80,000 to 100,000 weekend visitors
23. Infill – vacant commercial and residential ❖

BREAK-OUT GROUP #3

Question #1: List the top three challenges/issues facing the City?

1. Streets and roads
 - a. Fix old
 - b. Make new
 - c. More lights
 - d. Circulation around Bowman and China Lake – pedestrian and vehicle
2. Education
 - a. New schools
 - b. Four year college
3. Money
 - a. Funding, need more
4. Job diversity
 - a. New industry
5. Parks and recreation
 - a. More parks
 - b. More activities – dog park, performing arts venue

Question #2: List the top three opportunities that the City should pursue?

1. Increase tourism
 - a. Transit occupancy tax
2. Make use of vacant buildings
 - a. Penalize owners
3. Airport and transportation
 - a. Increase utilization
4. Aggressively seek new tech businesses for new jobs

BREAK-OUT GROUP #4

Question #1: List the top three challenges/issues facing the City?

1. Economic development – we need a tax source to support our infrastructure
2. Roads – we need more new roads, more repairs need to be made to existing roads
3. Blight – more community clean-ups

Question #2: List the top three opportunities that the City should pursue?

1. Take advantage of infill areas
 - a. Have more consistency
2. Have more community/neighborhood clean-ups
3. Develop a retirement community and recreational area
 - a. BLM (i.e. golf course, outdoor activities, etc.)

BREAK-OUT GROUP #5

Question #1: List the top three challenges/issues facing the City?

1. Ridgecrest buildings
 - a. Fill vacant before building new
 - b. Develop or sell government properties
 - c. Zoning business/private
 - d. Taxation
2. Water issues
 - a. City waste
 - b. Gray water reuse reclamation
 - c. conservation
3. Employment
 - a. Trade schools
 - b. Employ youth
 - c. Business with knowledge level of capabilities to counter high/low of base

Question #2: List the top three opportunities that the City should pursue?

1. Utilities
 - a. Bring in solar/wind energy/geothermal
 - b. Make Valley energy independent
 - c. Develop utility districts
 - d. County annexation/City relationships
 - e. Technical workforce to work energy, environment, transportation
2. Employment
 - a. Technical workforce to work future
 - b. Local business opportunities and China Lake expertise
 - c. Youth employment/trade training
3. Area visitors
 - a. Collect \$\$ OVH
 - b. Dust control speed limits
 - c. Economic "bleed" of dollars from community

ALL INPUTS

Each member of the five break-out groups wrote down three responses for the two questions posed. The answers written down are provided, as written, in the list below. For purposes of this summary, comments were grouped under topic headings.

If more one person made the same comment, the number of similar responses is shown in parentheses following the comment.

Question #1: List the top three challenges/issues facing the City?

Aesthetics

- Grand entrance
- First impression at south end of city at Hwy 395
- More community clean up – neighbors help neighbors (2)

Environment

- Alternative forms of energy (6)
- Environmentally friendly utilities
- Add new dirt laws for air quality (2)

Land Use

- Managed growth (3)
- Economic diversification
- Manage space with smart overlays
- Light manufacturing/Industrial development (2)
- Reserve business park land for main stream businesses with proven successful business plans (i.e., Marriott)
- Infill vacant commercial lots and buildings (8)
- County Land – French St. area, community recreation, arts, sports arenas, hospital, and medical psychiatric and low income (county services)
- Development of utility district
- Site a new landfill so that people don't have to have waste transported out
- Planned school placements (2)
- Begin to structure development (2)
- Renovate Ridgecrest Blvd/Balsam to be the center of town / pedestrian mall

Tourism

- Marketing opportunities
- Improve our tourism via targeting our natural resources
- Convention visitor facilities and marketing (2)
- Take better advantage of tourist potential – more than just promoting filming
- Advertise climate and educated workforce
- Tourist potential
- Tourism and national/international off road events (gateway to Death Valley)

Retirement

- Create a retirement area within walking to facilities and medical improvements (3)
- Retirement golf community

General

- Protect Base mission
- Highly educated community to utilize
- Get the town behind a theme for Ridgecrest and stick to it
- Work closer with Navy to reach a cooperative where duplication of efforts can be minimized
- Collecting money from Off Highway Vehicles (OHV)
- Annexation – County/City relationship
- Increase bed tax
- Recreate the stocks in hospitals for vaccines that are supposedly no longer dangerous
- We could use money to fix up the damaged roads in the City
- Entice the traffic and crowd weary from tech heavy areas with no promise of 350 days of sun, no commute, and high-speed internet and technology

Economic Development

- Economic development (create climate for small business – i.e. clothing stores) (2)
- Low cost commercial rent to bring in businesses
- Economic “bleed” of our dollars from our community
- Employing our youth
- Have a large technical work force that could work future problems such as energy, the environment, transportation
- Find a way to tap into China Lake’s technology expertise
- Try to entice more retail growth by showing our increased population Mon-Thursday
- Encourage growth in existing business, not just go after new business to the valley
- New industry
- Invite more business
- Attract tourism and industry

Quality of Life

- Keep our great lifestyle (2)
- Small town and sense of community (2)
- Maintain open space/skies environment
- Great environment to draw residents
- Recreation (BLM Sierra, golf)
- Expand recreation in the mountains and valley

Transportation

- Develop flexible plan for transportation
- Improvements to all main roads/highways
- North/south circulation – Jack’s Ranch Road, Brady, Mahan.
- Taking care of transportation needs
- Improve transportation and airport to support and attract industry
- Design/improve multiple transit routes around/in and out of town – West Bowman to Jack Ranch
- Share transit system with city/schools
- Better use of airport – promote new carriers/new businesses
- Public transportation, designated bus stops
- Transportation, bus (Amtrak)
- Rapid transit to other communities
- Bring light rail of some sort to cover the city limits

Public Facilities/Services

- New high school west of existing with sports complex
- Performing arts center (i.e. at City Hall) (5)
- Better planned commercial parking lots
- Combine high school and community courses (building for joint)
- Need more public gyms
- Increase joint usage of schools – high school/college – closer usage of laboratory, base dormitory, college, summary use
- Outdoor amphitheater / culture

Education

- Four-year college or trade school (5)
- Education (2)
- Get schools off base (2) and get a new high school

Parks/Open Space

- Create smarter environmental elements (2)
- Recreation (3)
- Off-road vehicle entrances to town kiosks – lights, etc. (zoning allowed)
- 80 to 100,000 RVs on winter/fall weekends per BLM figures
- Linear park from southwest through the City to the fairgrounds
- Make Bowman drain, aesthetically pleasing, safe, functional, park-like
- Share parks with schools and neighborhoods (2)
- Facilitate walking, biking, electric access/paths around Bowman/China Lake intersection
- Linear park on drainage system and recreation areas through town and Bowman Ditch passage

Question #2: List the top three opportunities that the City should pursue?

Aesthetics

- Eliminate blight (i.e., vans, junk cars, trash, burned-out houses)
- The view entering the town – make it more inviting
- The community needs more beautification

Environment

- How is water supply and How many people can it support (6)
- Controlling light pollution
- Water, specifically the use of gray water for golf courses
- Alternative forms of energy (2)
- How do we find the funding/commitment to promote water conservation and water reclamation

Land Use

- Land availability (keep it open or open it)
- Buffer zones
- Economic development
- Managed growth
- What will be done with all the “old” vacant commercial buildings
- Systematic update of abandoned buildings
- Make downtown (old town) walkable shopping area (2)
- Safe area for shopping (sidewalk cafes, etc.)
- Control of industrial growth consistent with water and land usage; horses, sheep, etc.
- Building new without filling vacant buildings, homes, and businesses
- Government owned properties within the City should be either developed or sold
- Zoning (4)
- Total integration of educational facilities as part of the aesthetic and necessary design of the community
- Build within the city limits on available/old land – do not push outside city
- Establish appropriate balance between rural and more dense development
- Build more single family homes within the city limits
- Control high density house building in animal zoned areas

Tourism

- Develop more tourism for maintains, desert, and museums

General

- Keep gangs out / control drugs
- Cluttered / trash
- Money
- Maintenance
- Protect base mission
- How do we fund/find employment or constructive recreational opportunities for our City's youth?
- Entertainment
- Incoming or increasing gang/tagging activities
- Plan for positive City identity “now entering Ridgecrest”
- Funding – discover new ways to pay for things since we are fiscally challenged by our chief employer and the money deficit from state and county (2)

- Tax all unused commercial square footage. This would get the attention of all out-of-town building owners who would then lower their leases and fix their roofs (2)
- Remaining compatible with the NAWS mission

Economic Development

- Small business community
- Other economical development besides the Base (3)
- Ridgecrest needs economic development to have enough money for infrastructure
- Improve blighted areas
- Job or employment opportunities diversity
- Manage new Wal-Mart site to maximize look/feel/flow of opportunity
- Restrict growth that encroaches on DOD RDT&E mission
- City expansion
- Economic diversification / business recruitment
- Maintaining mutual sustainability between City's economic diversity and military mission land use capability
- Bring in high-tech work that uses same talent skills as base but not defense to help balance out the defense ups and downs
- More industries

Quality of Life

- Need to maintain high quality of life (no sprawl development, more parks and recreation facilities)
- Integration of quality of life (recreation, fine arts, shopping)

Transportation

- Traffic congestion in general and China Lake Blvd (3)
- Improve transportation (more flights from airport, better highways to LA, LV, Bakersfield)
- Development of strategic transit system that covers city limits (4)
- Manage traffic (auto and pedestrian) around Bowman/China Lake intersection

Public Facilities/Services

- Flood control / Drainage (7)
- Quality water
- Healthcare (4)
- Infrastructure
- New streets and maintenance of old (15)
- Not enough police/law enforcement
- Affordable healthcare to make the city more attractive to retired persons
- Activities for teens (4)
- Performing art ventures (2)
- Public works funding for street, trees, and scrubs
- Lack of recreation
- More gyms

Education

- New Schools (4)
- Four-year college (3)

Parks/Open Space

- Lack of park(s) in south and southwest of town
- City limits for parks providing recreation use and concert places
- Dog park
- Bikeways in rural areas
- Bike paths in town (2)
- Walking paths

Housing

- Senior Housing (apartments, elderly care, living facilities) (3)
- Providing quality affordable housing for future growth (2)