

# Alum Rock

Community Engagement  
*with a*  
Historically Disadvantaged Neighborhood



## Group Report

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Rivasplata & Lee

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Cover image from Rick Kos and Jason Su, "Vision for the Alum Rock Corridor." Used with permission.

# Background

As San Jose grows as a city the available housing is shrinking. New housing developments are needed to help relieve the pressure of high rents in San Jose. One area that is feeling this pressure is the Alum Rock Corridor. Although primarily zoned for light commercial use, the city would like to develop the Alum Rock corridor into something more vibrant than a simple "bedroom community." Currently, it houses 30 small businesses in 11 buildings, and there are plans to develop this light commercial space into a mixed use group of 800 housing units with retail. Form-based coding developments like this say a developer does not need to apply for a re-zoning permit or go through community meetings; even a massive change like this simply has to be approved in a City Council meeting. These meetings, however, are public and are the place where any concerned citizens could raise complaints about the project.

The Futuro de Alum Rock project includes the areas between Alum Rock Avenue & King Road all the way to interstate 680. Major developments planned for the area include Sunset @ Alum Rock, an urban village with 792 residential units and an alternative parking arrangement; Alum Rock Family Housing, 85 affordable units with 29 supportive housing units for formerly homeless individuals on the corner of Alum Rock Avenue and Foss Street; and VTA's Bart Silicon Valley Phase II extension project to create Alum Rock Avenue/28th Street. This last development project is planned to include an approximately five-mile tunnel which includes three underground stations (Alum Rock/28th Street, Downtown San Jose, and Diridon). These new developments are receiving push-back from many residents, small business owners, and advocates fearing for their livelihoods and their homes.

In 2019, Futuro de Alum Rock formed as a coalition of community organizations to address existing neighborhood concerns and anxieties over the City of San Jose's proposed developments. The coalition was made up of CommUnivercity, the City of San Jose's District 5 office, the SOMS Mayfair cultural non-profit, the School of Arts & Culture, and others. The 2019 fall semester also saw a partnership between San Jose State University's Master Urban Planning program and CommUniverCity to help build a community-based vision for the future development of the Alum Rock corridor.

Futuro de Alum Rock assessed the area via walking tours, Community Analyst extensions in ArcGIS, Adobe InDesign summary boards, and other community engagement methods to synthesize findings tied to land use, transportation, connectivity, public art, people, and the history of activism in East San Jose. Their work culminated in a massive event called "Vision for Alum Rock Corridor" where SJSU Urban Planning students and the Futuro de Alum Rock coalition hosted activities to raise awareness of the development issues in the community, and to solicit their feedback on how to move forward. In the spring 2020, an effort was made to extend this community engagement work; however, due to COVID-19 the in-person information gathering was heavily limited. Hopefully going forward there will be more opportunities for the residents of the Alum Rock Corridor to continue to be engaged with the development plans for the future of their neighborhood.

In the rest of this report, we will dig deeper into issues of community engagement, the findings of the Futuro de Alum Rock coalition, and the recommendations that were developed from the community input.

# Community Engagement

Students from SJSU's MUP worked with CommUniverCity to create a survey that was given to members involved in the Alum Rock Corridor community, and categorized them by various demographics. To incentivize participation, individuals who completed the thirteen question survey were entered into a drawing to win a \$50 giftcard. This survey area is in Council District Five and the survey results are intended to provide a list of desired amenities that residents want to see in their community for active councilmembers.

Once the survey was completed, participants were prompted with a message requesting to continue to share their input in creating this amenity list by also participating in a focus group style interview. These had been planned for a group format, but due to the restrictions of COVID-19, these focus groups became phone interviews. To incentivize participation in the phone interviews, participants were provided a \$10 giftcard to Walmart with the option of receiving it by email or mail.

The phone interviews were scheduled for an hour and included more in depth questions that built upon the initial survey that these participants took. Survey participants were categorized into four separate groups: businesses (local/family owned within the study area), parents (of school-aged children), seniors, and youth (high-school age students). Each group had a specific set of questions; these questions were geared toward gathering practical examples of where residents in the community spend a majority of their time, recommendations for improvement, and reasons for these improvements. (See [Appendix](#) for detail of Focus Group Questions.)

Each phone interview had a minimum of two students present, one to facilitate the conversation, the other to take notes. Urban Planning 156/256 students were the primary

facilitator of the conversations, serving also as second note-taker, and asking follow up questions when appropriate. Each interview began with ensuring that the respondent knew the purpose of this project, that their responses would be anonymous, and that the conversation was recorded. Each list of questions has bolded and labeled questions that were priorities, and if time permitted, sub-headed questions were supplemental.

The results from these interviews are being analyzed by the Urban Planning 295 students to establish emerging themes and trends. These trends can be useful when designing new programs and making recommendations for projects. Providing a direct voice from various community groups allows them to provide input specific to their own sets of desires and needs. Under the premise that business desires are most likely different than high school students, the study conducted was to ensure all voices are heard. The scope of the project was taking recommendations and data from all groups of the community. These surveys and interviews allowed an opportunity for the Alum Rock Corridor residents to provide direct feedback on the development plans for the future.

# Findings

Through literature review and community interviews, our group has found several points that should be addressed in the Alum Rock Project. Many residents have expressed that their community lacks in grocery stores, sports and programs for kids, clean streets, trees, and street lighting. In general the Alum Rock community is concerned about people displacement, cultural replacement, danger abatement, and transportation estrangement.<sup>1</sup>

## Preventing Displacement

The recent spur in developments and investments in the Alum Rock area has left residents with many questions. As Camille Llanes-Fontanilla, executive director of local nonprofit SOMOS Mayfair, summarizes it, “What kinds of businesses will have access to these new commercial spaces?” and “What are the rents going to be looking like because right now we have a lot of family-owned businesses -- not big-box retail. There’s a difference in character and that’s what’s causing the fear and anxiety.”<sup>2</sup> This concern is similarly mirrored by the City of San Jose and UC Berkeley, with displacement of local family-owned small businesses and residents as the most pressing issue.<sup>3,4</sup>

Once housing prices get too high or businesses cannot lease their commercial space, you begin an unravelling of the urban fabric. People are unable to afford living in the space and are forced out of the neighborhood as a result. There may be financial repercussions as well; displaced businesses will lose existing clients, and need to start elsewhere which may involve borrowing new loans. Any thoughts of retirement would be delayed many years. Jose V. Rios,

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<sup>1</sup> Kos and Su “Vision for the Alum Rock Corridor.”

<sup>2</sup> Lopez “San Jose: Major Alum Rock development spurred by unusual zoning law.”

<sup>3</sup> City of San Jose “Futuro de Alum Rock.”

<sup>4</sup> Staff Reports “San Jose: Lawmaker calls for public discussion about displacement.”

a local tax preparer, said, “Most of the people have been doing this as a family and cannot build their business again.”<sup>5</sup> Even if some business owners are not looking to retire, it simply isn’t economically feasible currently to relocate as stated by some interviewees.<sup>6</sup>

Thankfully, the City is trying to stem the tide of displacement by building mixed-use affordable housing developments; however, this means moving people and businesses away from their traditional setting.<sup>7</sup> In addition, little communication has made its way from the city to the residents about relocation assistance.<sup>8</sup> Although there are options for relocation, there has been no coordination at the ground level about how to apply for funding, leaving people and businesses affected by the displacement in limbo.

## Restoring Culture

Alum Rock is a neighborhood with a diverse population and a diverse culture. The architecture and landmarks of the area are also threatened by development. Such examples include the previous home of Cesar Chavez, the Mexican Heritage Plaza, and many local businesses.<sup>9</sup> It is without a doubt that these important areas should be preserved to the degree other historic assets have been preserved in the City of San Jose. The councilmember of East Side San Jose, Magdalena Carrasco, is supportive of the community's efforts to save these landmarks: “We need to do what we have to at all costs to preserve the nature and the character of Alum Rock.” In 2019, she introduced a \$100,000 budget proposal that would help businesses in the Alum Rock corridor at higher risk of displacement. Councilmember Carrasco

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<sup>5</sup> Lopez “San Jose: Major Alum Rock development spurred by unusual zoning law.”

<sup>6</sup> Lee, interview.

<sup>7</sup> Lopez “San Jose approves Alum Rock housing project, airport expansion plan.”

<sup>8</sup> Lopez “San Jose to consider investing \$9.4M for Alum Rock housing project.”

<sup>9</sup> Kos and Su “Vision for the Alum Rock Corridor.”



stated, “We need more housing and investment, but we need to make sure that they’re going to be responsible to the residents and coming in as good actors, partners, and neighbors.”

There is a waterfall of developments planned for the Alum Rock area, but all of them are lacking in community input. To best address the concerns of the neighborhood, residents and business owners need to be involved in planning decisions. To preserve the culture of this neighborhood, community assets should be seen and designated as important. Although not everyone regards the spaces in Alum Rock with the same eye, it is critical to include as many of these views as possible in the planning process to help move the area forward while respecting the past.

## Ensuring Safety

The Vision for Alum Rock report found that traffic safety was a major concern in the neighborhood. Many residents find that vehicles often “speed through without regard for people.”<sup>10</sup> In addition, streets often have poor lighting creating unsafe environments for walking at night. One senior interviewee remarked that it used to be safe to take their dog out for a walk around the neighborhood, but does not feel comfortable doing that anymore.<sup>11</sup>

Poorly maintained parks have become places for crime and drug use, rather than community gathering and recreation. Across all the groups interviewed, the team gathered the understanding that the parks within the Alum Rock study area are heavily used, and thus require maintenance and beautification. Unfortunately, the main view of parks by the senior interviewee group is that they are simply unsafe spaces that encourage criminal activity, especially after dark, due to the lack of maintenance. Parks should be the main focal point for

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<sup>10</sup> Kos and Su “Vision for the Alum Rock Corridor,” 52.

<sup>11</sup> Manee and Sahithi, interview.

any change in Alum Rock as they are the first thing residents often think of, for recreation, to improve the neighborhood aesthetically, and to be the anchor for the neighborhood.

## Public Transportation That Works

The same study also found that a majority of residents preferred the future of Alum Rock to focus on alternative modes with 52% supporting public transit and an additional 22% for walking, biking, or scooters. Participants' specific transit reactions were a need for higher bus frequency and observations that the bus rapid transit lane was underutilized. There seems to be a disconnect that residents want higher bus frequency but they are not using the BRT line; it may hint that though there is a desire, the current system does not serve their needs. For cars, most participants wanted one or two parking spaces for each unit in new development; while they acknowledged that alternative modes are preferable, the current urban environment and bus system necessitates the private automobile or at the very least, car-sharing. Again, this highlights the disparity between the community's desire for accessible transit options, and the current bus service.

Alum Rock residents primarily have problems with displacement, cultural erosion, safety, and transportation. New developments are threatening old communities and culturally significant places. There is a lack of safety on the streets and in parks. Transportation has not been adequately serving this neighborhood. How can we ensure steady development in Alum Rock that will benefit existing residents and businesses while also satisfying the need for more housing that is at crisis levels in the Bay Area?

# Recommendations

The recommendations of this paper set out to remediate the four primary improvement targets identified by the interview respondents and categorized as: Displacement, preservation of culture, safety, and transportation. Communities are complex and intricate networks; therefore no individual recommendation is likely to solve the collective problems discussed. These recommendations are intended to be guides, assisting city officials, businesses, and residents achieve community improvements without sacrificing the community or cultural values that create its identity.

## Displacement

The most common concern for respondents, reaching across all interviewee demographics was the potential for displacement of both businesses and residents due to increased prices incurred through new development. This paper's recommendations begin first in the designation of rent control measures such as rent control and renter eviction protections, e.g. removing "just cause" evictions.<sup>12</sup>

Further, we are in support of the construction of more affordable housing as is taking place with Alum Rock Avenue Urban Village project which declares itself an 87-unit mixed-use affordable housing development.<sup>13</sup> New developments should be mandated to include 20-30% low-income units within multi-family developments as has been proven effective at reducing impacts of gentrification in New York city.<sup>14</sup> Established in 2011 in the Bay Area, the

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<sup>12</sup> "New California Law Limits When a Landlord can Evict Renters." Retrieved from: <https://lsnc.net/housing/new-california-limits-when-landlord-can-evict-renters>

<sup>13</sup> Lopez, N. (6 January, 2020). San Jose to consider investing \$9.4M for Alum Rock housing project. Retrieved from: <https://sanjosespotlight.com/san-jose-to-consider-investing-9-4m-for-alum-rock-housing-project/>

<sup>14</sup> Mordechay, K., & Ayscue, J. (2018). Policies needed to build inclusive cities and schools. *education policy analysis archives*, 26, 98. doi:<https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.26.3659>

Transit-Oriented Affordable Housing (TOAH) fund was established to offer developers flexible capital for developing affordable housing near transit, which simultaneously improves affordable housing opportunities as well as alleviating traffic and parking challenges.<sup>15</sup> To ensure developers comply with the construction of affordable housing, all in-lieu fees will be paused for the next 5 years.

The most critical element of any new development is outreach within the community. We highly encourage developers and city officials to be transparent in the planning process and discuss with affected communities their needs and desires to help maintain the community's integrity. Each developer will need to create a cultural sustainability plan wherein they outline the measures taken to preserve the existing cultural identity of Alum Rock.

## Safety

The decline in safety was also highlighted across the interviewee categories, primarily in the evenings and around many of the parks.<sup>16</sup> Immediate intervention should consist of street light improvements accompanied by the installation of additional lighting in high priority areas. Designation of high priority areas should be generated after data is collected that indicates its most effective locations; however, starting with parks, schools and other usable public spaces are recommended. Given the large school and family presence in the area, sports and after-school programs should be developed. This serves as a preventative measure, ensuring kids have positive outlets with which to engage their time while allowing for supervised and structured time when parents may be unavailable.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 5

<sup>16</sup> Manny Jacobo and Richard Davis, Interview

Police efforts should be targeted in the area due to complaints of increased criminal activity.<sup>17,18</sup> Police presence should make efforts to interact with community members in a non-enforcement setting as well, achievable perhaps through foot or bicycle patrols, and increased communication and check-ins while on patrol. Given the complexity of police and community relationships, efforts to improve interactions should be carried out with tact.

## Cultural Preservation

The addition of beautification efforts should be included as part of a comprehensive effort alongside improved street lighting and increased police efforts to make parks and public spaces more desirable places for recreation and community events. Beautification efforts can be funded through community grants and/or volunteer efforts from local or regional artists. Planning and implementation efforts should, again, include conversations and outreach efforts with the community. As suggested by an interviewee, a theme of mosaics or murals should be identified to allow for cohesion of the communities identity especially when that identity is defined by its diversity.<sup>19</sup>

## Transportation

Transportation related issues arose in numerous phone interviews with community members, particularly around parking scarcity for business customers and residents.<sup>20,21</sup> More data is needed to fully understand the problem's root cause, but overcrowding is a likely contributor. Despite many interviewees expressing desire for parking permits in

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<sup>17</sup> Jacob and Alec, Interview

<sup>18</sup> Hazel and Smith, Interview

<sup>19</sup> Manee and Nhan, Interview

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 2-4.

<sup>21</sup> Manee and Sahithi, Interview

neighborhoods, this essentially leads to the privatization of public right of way. Improvements to public transit access should be prioritized. The city completed a draft bicycle and pedestrian improvement feasibility study in 2017. Highlighted opportunities within the report identify “under-developed public right-of-way” to offer space for complete street investment and residential “shared streets.”<sup>22</sup>

To alleviate the walking and cycling danger resulting from excessive speeding noted by many respondents, a combination of investments should be made to enhance and widen sidewalks, particularly within school zones in conjunction with traffic calming infrastructure to help reduce the overall speeds of vehicles and improve livability.

New development is not inherently negative; when done properly, it has the potential to reinvigorate communities while minimizing the negative repercussions. Community outreach and earnest policy mandates that mitigate displacement and attempt to retain the cultural values of the community are critical to successful neighborhood revitalization efforts. As this project has demonstrated, CommUniverCity serves as a model organization for bringing interdisciplinary agencies and community members together to ensure the needs of the community are represented in the planning and implementation process of improving our communities.

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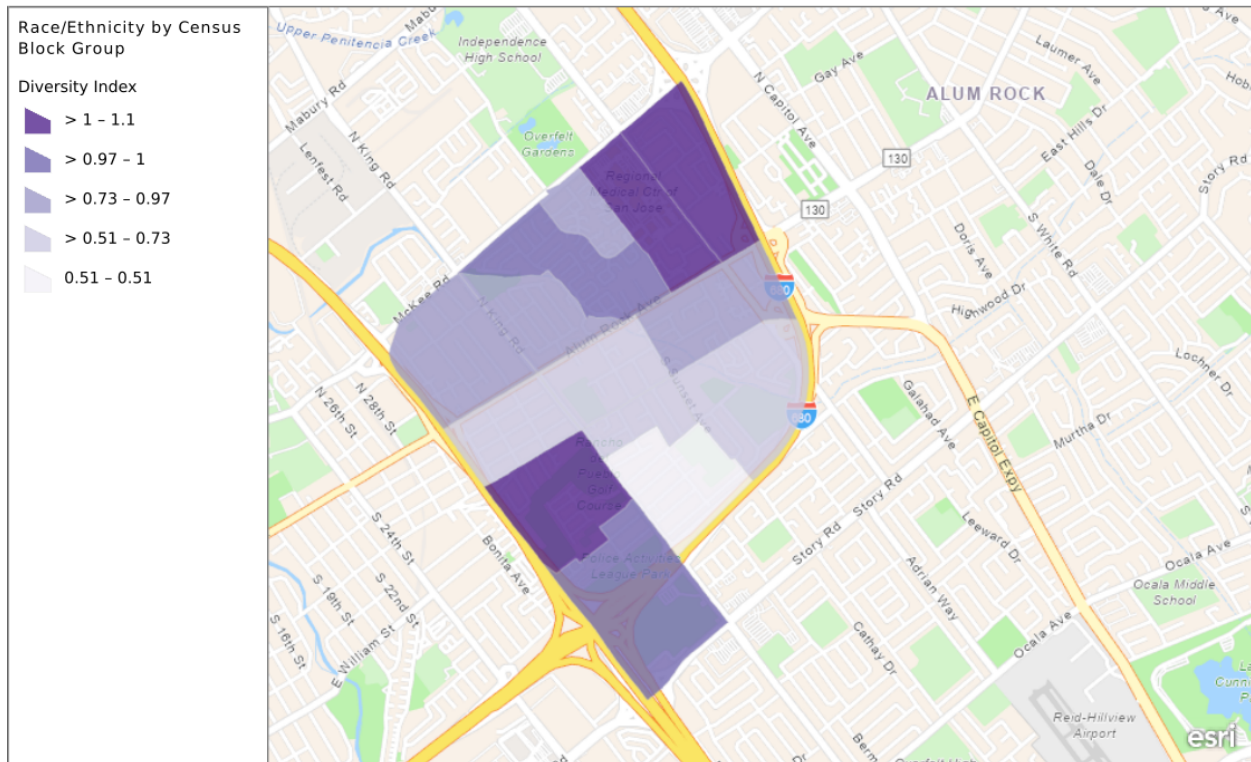
<sup>22</sup> Santa Clara County Parks. Alum Rock Avenue Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements Feasibility Study. (2017).

# Appendix

## Maps

Diversity Index of Study Area from 2010 census : <https://arcg.is/fzfHz>

### Alum Rock Corridor - Race/Ethnicity Data



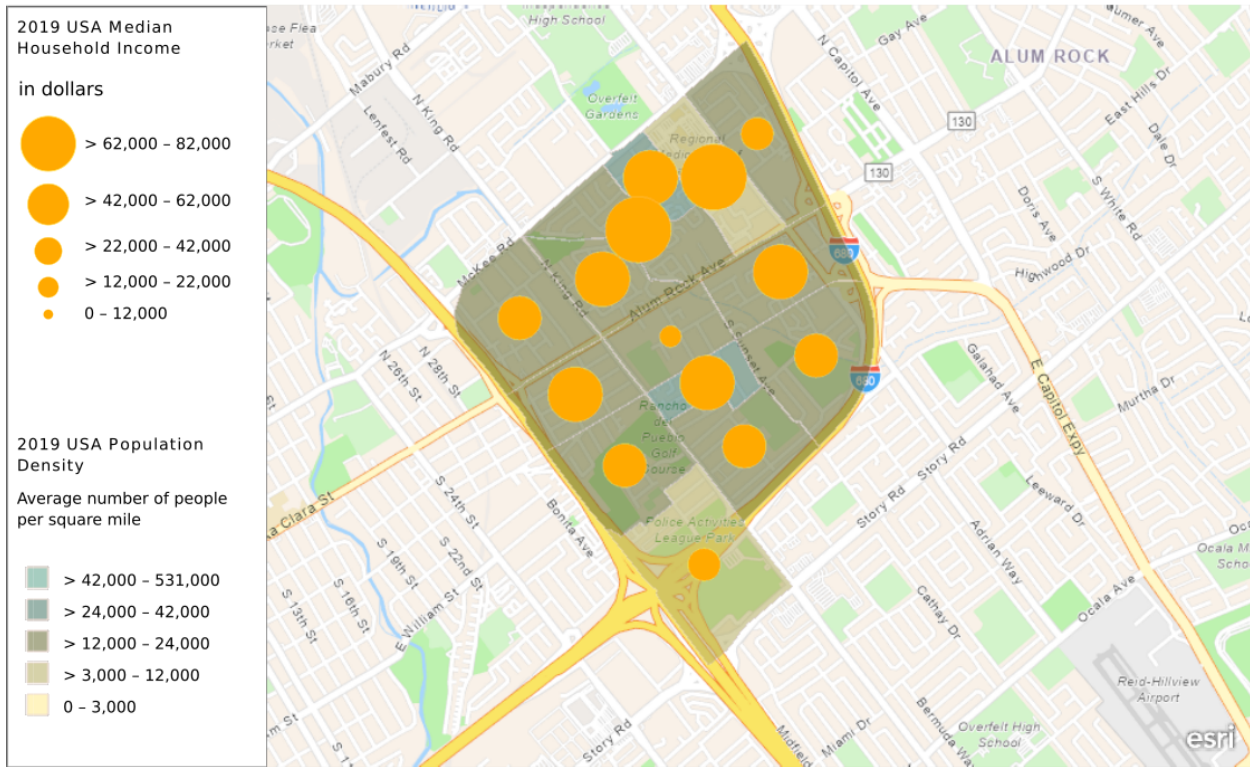
This map shows the likelihood that two persons, chosen at random from the same area, belong to different races or ethnic groups. 0 reflects that there would be no difference, and 1 that they would always be different. 0.4mi

Credits :

County of Santa Clara, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, INCREMENT P, METI/NASA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA

Income and Population (ACS 2018 data) : <https://arcg.is/1zuXGb>

### Alum Rock Corridor Demographics



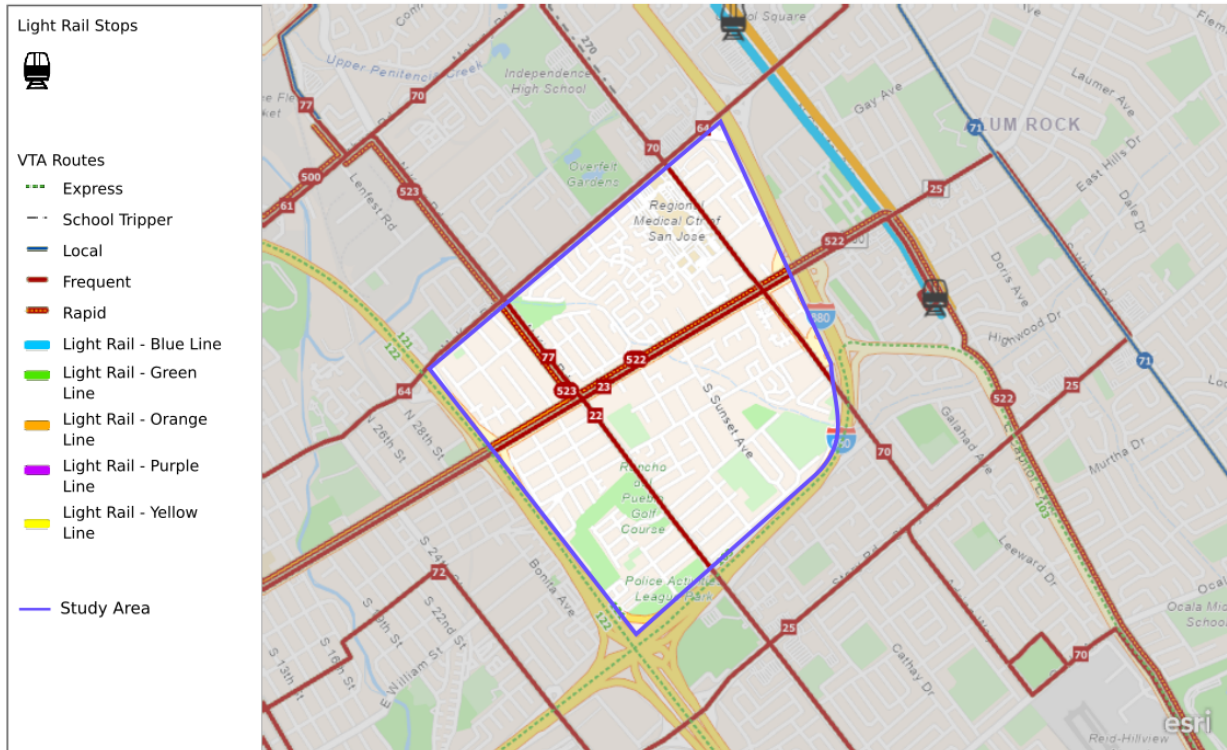
Median household income and population density, overlaid to show differences.

0.4mi



# VTA Routes through the study area

## VTA Routes



VTA routes through and around the Alum Rock area.

0.4mi

Credits :

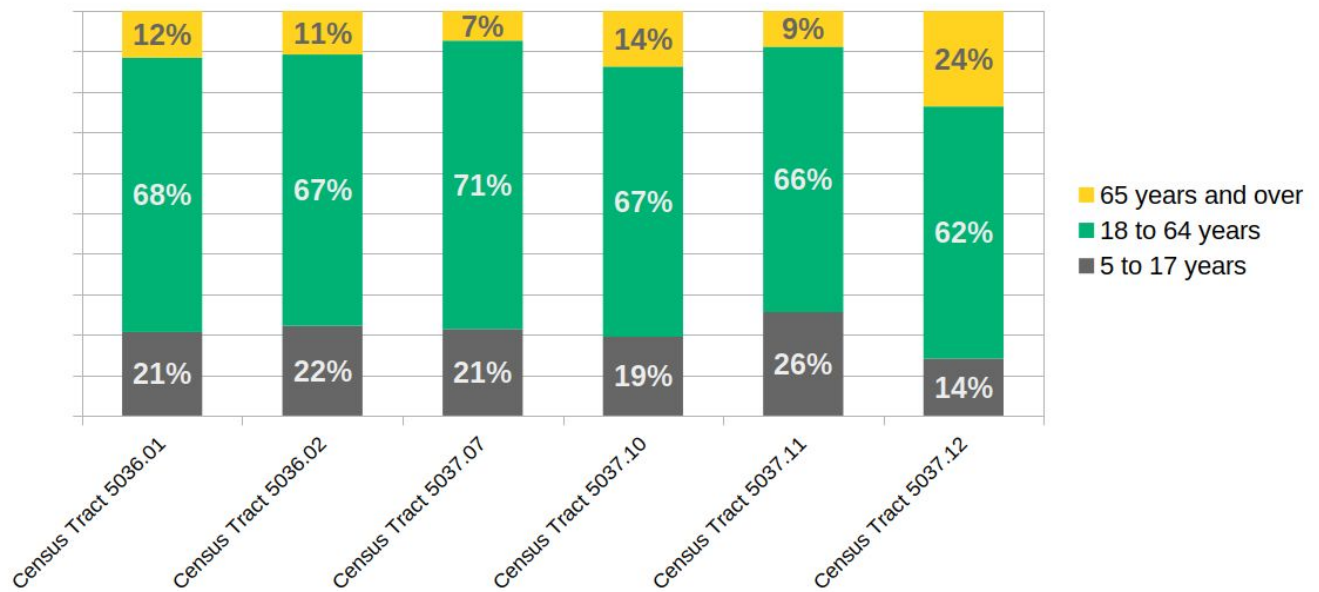
County of Santa Clara, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, INCREMENT P, METI/NASA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA

## Charts

Unfortunately, age and language data were not available at the block group level. This data, from the American Community Survey in 2018, is for the six census tracts that cover the study area and a little beyond.

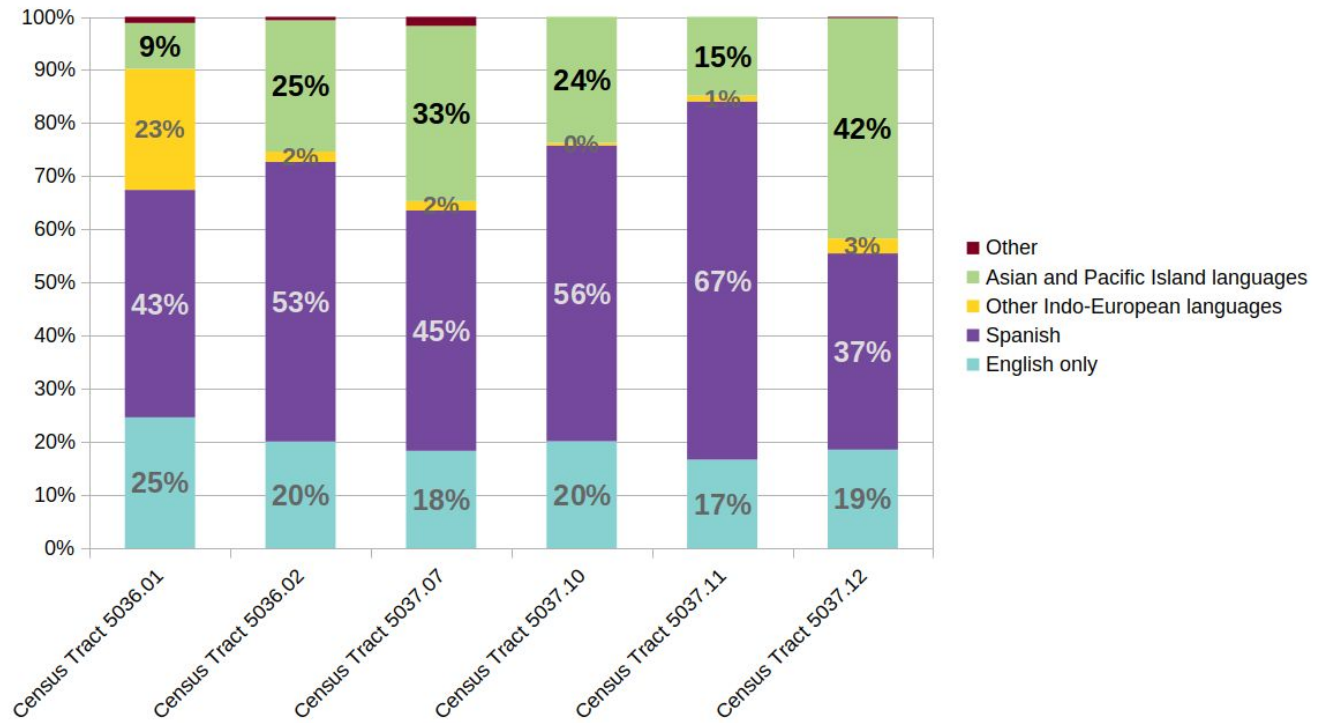
### Age Distribution of Population

ACS 2018 data



## Languages Spoken Across All Age Groups

ACS 2018 data



## Data Table

U.S. Census Bureau (2014-2018). *Age by Language Spoken at Home for the Population 5 Years and Over American Community Survey 5-year estimates*. Retrieved from [https://censusreporter.org/data/table/?table=B16007&geo\\_ids=16000US0668000,31000US41940,140|16000US0668000&primary\\_geo\\_id=16000US0668000](https://censusreporter.org/data/table/?table=B16007&geo_ids=16000US0668000,31000US41940,140|16000US0668000&primary_geo_id=16000US0668000)

	Census Tract 5036.01	Census Tract 5036.02	Census Tract 5037.07	Census Tract 5037.10	Census Tract 5037.11	Census Tract 5037.12
<b>5 to 17 years</b>	<b>20.62%</b>	<b>22.16%</b>	<b>21.40%</b>	<b>19.44%</b>	<b>25.57%</b>	<b>14.09%</b>
only English	6.47%	5.15%	4.04%	5.78%	5.59%	1.44%
Spanish	10.21%	13.36%	13.12%	13.28%	18.55%	9.93%
Other Indo-European languages	3.22%	0.51%	0.00%	0.00%	0.31%	0.20%
Asian and Pacific Island languages	0.72%	3.14%	3.60%	0.38%	1.12%	2.52%
Other	0.00%	0.00%	0.64%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>18 to 64 years</b>	<b>67.88%</b>	<b>67.09%</b>	<b>71.29%</b>	<b>66.82%</b>	<b>65.60%</b>	<b>62.33%</b>
only English	16.23%	13.65%	12.87%	13.87%	9.24%	12.99%
Spanish	29.86%	34.79%	30.37%	39.23%	44.42%	22.48%
Other Indo-European languages	13.05%	0.97%	1.78%	0.49%	0.80%	1.81%
Asian and Pacific Island languages	7.57%	17.05%	25.20%	13.22%	11.14%	25.05%
Other	1.16%	0.63%	1.07%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>65 years and over</b>	<b>11.51%</b>	<b>10.75%</b>	<b>7.32%</b>	<b>13.74%</b>	<b>8.83%</b>	<b>23.58%</b>
only English	1.92%	1.26%	1.41%	0.46%	1.84%	4.11%
Spanish	2.74%	4.50%	1.74%	3.18%	4.43%	4.53%
Other Indo-European languages	6.51%	0.45%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.78%
Asian and Pacific Island languages	0.34%	4.54%	4.17%	10.10%	2.57%	13.94%
Other	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.22%

## Focus Group Questions - Overall Methods and Informed Consent

1. Introduce yourself and the project
  - a. "Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a student in the Urban and Regional Planning department at SJSU. We are working with CommUniverCity and District 5 Councilmember Magdalena Carrasco's office to better understand what community investments are a priority."
2. Explain the goal of the project
  - a. "The goal of these discussions is to provide a list of items the Councilmember can advocate to be built or funded in the community."
3. Explain what they will be doing today
  - a. "Today I am going to ask you some questions about your neighborhood. What you like. What you dislike. What you would like to see improved or preserved. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. I just want you to be as honest as you possibly can with your answers today."
  - b. "The session will take about an hour."
  - c. "If there are any questions you do not wish to answer, we can skip them. If you want more time to think about your answer to a question, just tell me and we will come back to it later in the interview."
4. Explain that the session is recorded
  - a. "We will be recording the session to help keep track of your responses. This will only be used by the students to record your answers. Your name or any part of this recording will not be used at any point to identify you."
5. Explain the incentive
  - a. "For your time today, we will send you a \$10 Walmart gift card. You can choose to get a physical card in the mail or have an electronic gift card sent to your email."
6. Ask them if they have any questions before you begin

### **BEFORE THE END OF THE INTERVIEW**

1. Ask them if they have completed the online survey. If not, you will text or email them the link immediately after the interview.
2. Ask participants if they learned something new about their neighborhood's assets and issues. (Y/N) (HIGH PRIORITY)
3. Ask them if they know anyone else in the neighborhood who would like to be interviewed.
4. Ask if they want to get the gift card as an email or mailed to them as a physical card. Confirm their email or mailing address depending on their response.

### **AFTER THE INTERVIEW**

1. Email or text them thanking them again for their time.
  - a. If they have not yet completed the online survey, include the link in your text or email.
  - b. If they did not tell you how they want to receive their gift card, please confirm in this follow up text or email.

## When asking the questions:

1. Questions bolded and labeled [PRIORITY] should be asked. The sub-questions are meant to help explain the original question if needed. The non-priority questions are there if the group/interviewee is providing short responses.
2. Please respect the time of the focus group/interviewee. It is ok to recommend moving on, framing it as adherence to the agreed upon time.

## Focus Group Questions - Youth

### [PRIORITY] Demographic Questions

1. **How old are you? (use age ranges: 10-12, 13-15, 16-19)**
2. **How many years have you lived in this neighborhood (self-defined in Mayfair or East San Jose)?**

### [PRIORITY] Open/leading questions

1. **What is your favorite place in your neighborhood.**
  - a. What are places you are currently visiting or enjoying?
  - b. \*If asked to define *neighborhood*, suggest a 15 minute walk from where they live.
2. **Describe your typical day**
  - a. Where do they do regularly on weekdays and weekends?
  - b. How do you travel when you do errands or meet family or friends? How far to get to things you need?
  - c. Do you require help to travel? Who or what helps you?

Examples: Rides by family/friends, bus fares, language translation, etc.

### *Other Open/leading questions (if time allows)*

1. Where do you live? Describe your living situation.
2. What's changed in the last 5-10 years?

### [PRIORITY] Specific/topical questions

1. **Is there a place in your neighborhood that you enjoy going to? If so, where and why?**
2. **Is there a place in your neighborhood that lets you feel more connected with your neighbors? If so, where and why?**
3. **Are there areas you do not like to go in the neighborhood? If so, where and why?**
4. **What would you like to see more of in your neighborhood?**
5. **What activities do you do for fun (at home and in public)?**
  - a. What type of entertainment would you like to do more of?

### *Other Specific/topical questions (if time allows)*

1. Can you describe a time you discovered something new that you enjoy going back to in your neighborhood?

2. How well do you know your community? How many neighbors do you know?

### **[PRIORITY] Summary/action questions**

1. Do you see yourself remaining in the neighborhood after you move out on your own/finish school? Why or why not?
2. Hypothetical – If you have \$100,000 to spend on improving the community, what would you spend it on?
  - a. Infrastructure, community spirit, recreation?
3. Hypothetical – Suppose that you could make one change that would make the neighborhood better, what would you change?
4. Overall, how satisfied are you living here?

### *Other Summary/action questions (if time allows)*

1. How do you contribute to the neighborhood? Where do you volunteer/give back?
2. How do you get your information? How do you get/stay involved with community?
3. How do you hear about this focus group?

## Focus Group Questions - Parents or Guardians

### **[PRIORITY] Demographic Questions**

1. How many years have you lived in this neighborhood (self-defined in Mayfair or East San Jose)?
  - a. If you did not grow up in this neighborhood, what led you to move here?
2. How many children do you have?
3. How old are your children? (use age ranges: 0-4, 5-9, 10-14, 15-19)

### **[PRIORITY] Open/leading questions**

1. What is your favorite place in your neighborhood.
  - a. What are places you are currently visiting or enjoying?
  - b. \*If asked to define *neighborhood*, suggest a 15 minute walk from where they live.
2. Describe your typical day.
  - a. Where do they do regularly on weekdays and weekends?
  - b. How do you travel when you do errands or meet family or friends? How far to get to things you need?
  - c. Do you require help to travel? Who or what helps you?

Examples: Assistance by family/social network, transportation, language translation, etc.

### *Other Open/leading questions (if time allows)*

1. Where do you live? Describe your living situation.
2. What's changed in the last 5-10 years in this neighborhood?

### **[PRIORITY] Specific/topical questions**

- 1. Describe any benefits to raising a family in this neighborhood?**
  - a. What in the neighborhood is appealing for raising a family?
  - b. What in the neighborhood helps support raising a family here?
- 2. Describe any challenges to raising a family in this neighborhood?**
  - a. What in the neighborhood is missing that can help support raising a family here?
- 3. Is there a place in your neighborhood that you and your children both enjoy going to? If so, where and why?**
- 4. What would you like to see more of in your neighborhood?**

### **Secondary Questions**

- 5. Is there a place in your neighborhood that lets you feel more connected with your neighbors? If so, where and why?**
- 6. Are there areas you do not like to go in the neighborhood? If so, where and why?**

### *Other Specific/topical questions (if time allows)*

1. Can you describe a time you discovered something new that you enjoy going back to in your neighborhood?
2. What activities do you do for fun (at home and in public)?
  - a. What type of entertainment would you like to do more of?
3. How well do you know your community? How many neighbors do you know?

### **[PRIORITY] Summary/action questions**

- 1. Hypothetical – If you have \$100,000 to spend on improving the community, what would you spend it on?**
  - a. Infrastructure, community spirit, recreation?
- 2. Hypothetical – Suppose that you could make one change that would make the neighborhood better, what would you change?**
- 3. Overall, how satisfied are you living here?**

### *Other Summary/action questions (if time allows)*

1. How do you contribute to the neighborhood? Where do you volunteer/give back?
2. How do you get your information? How do you get/stay involved with community?
3. How do you hear about this focus group?

## **Focus Group Questions - Businesses**

### **[PRIORITY] Demographic Questions**

- 1. How many years has your business operated in this neighborhood (self-defined in Mayfair or East San Jose)?**
  - a. If you did not start in this neighborhood, what led you to relocate here?
- 2. How many businesses do you operate?**



### 3. How many employees do you have per business?

#### [PRIORITY] Open/leading questions

#### 1. What do you think draws people to visit the neighborhood?

#### 2. What is your favorite place in your neighborhood.

- a. What are places you are currently visiting or enjoying?
- b. \*If asked to define *neighborhood*, suggest a 15 minute walk from where they live.

#### 3. Describe your typical day operating your business?

- a. Examples: opening/closing, loading supplies, attracting customers, cleaning and maintenance in and around business, bookkeeping, managing employees, weekday/weekend differences
- b. Do you require help to manage business operations?

Examples: Assistance by family/social network, transportation, language translation, etc.

#### 4. Where do you see your business in five years?

#### Other Open/leading questions (if time allows)

1. Where do you live?
  - a. Do you live in the neighborhood? In San Jose?
2. What's changed in the last 5-10 years?

#### [PRIORITY] Specific/topical questions

#### 1. Describe any benefits to doing business in this neighborhood.

- a. What in the neighborhood makes it attractive to do business here?

#### 2. Describe any challenges to doing business in this neighborhood.

- a. What in the neighborhood are obstacles to do business here?

#### 3. What would you like to see more of in your neighborhood to support your business?

- a. What are the places or things missing or that have disappeared in the community that you miss?

#### Secondary Questions

#### 4. Describe any ways your employees benefit from working in this neighborhood.

- a. What in the neighborhood makes it attractive for employees to work here?

#### 5. Describe any challenges your employees face working in this neighborhood.

- a. What in the neighborhood makes it challenging for employees to work here?

#### 6. Describe any ways your customers/clients benefit from this neighborhood.

- a. What in the neighborhood makes it attractive for customers to patronize/shop here?

#### 7. Describe any challenges your customers/clients face in this neighborhood.

- a. What in the neighborhood makes it challenging for customers to patronize/shop here?

*Other Specific/topical questions (if time allows)*

1. How well do you know your community? How many neighbors do you know?
2. Have you ever had to change the location of your business? If you had to move your business today, do you think you could find another appropriate, affordable space in the neighborhood?

**[PRIORITY] Summary/action questions**

1. **Hypothetical – If you have \$100,000 to spend on improving the community, what would you spend it on?**
  - a. Infrastructure, community spirit, recreation?
2. **Hypothetical – Suppose that you could make one change that would make the neighborhood better, what would you change?**
3. **Overall, how satisfied are you operating here?**

*Other Summary/action questions (if time allows)*

1. How do you contribute to the neighborhood? Where do you volunteer/give back?
2. How do you get your information? How do you get/stay involved with community?
3. How do you hear about this focus group?

## Focus Group Questions - Seniors

**[PRIORITY] Demographic Questions**

1. **How many years have you lived in this neighborhood (self-defined in Mayfair or East San Jose)?**
  - a. **If you did not grow up in this neighborhood, what led you to move here?**
2. **How old are you? (use age ranges: 50-54, 55-59, 60-64, 65-69, 70-74, 75-79, 80+)**

**[PRIORITY] Open/leading questions**

1. **What is your favorite place in your neighborhood.**
  - a. What are places you are currently visiting or enjoying?
  - b. \*If asked to define *neighborhood*, suggest a 15 minute walk from where they live.
2. **Describe your typical day**
  - a. Where do they do regularly on weekdays and weekends?
  - b. How do you travel when you do errands or meet family or friends? How far to get to things you need?
  - c. Do you require help to travel? Who or what helps you?

Examples: Assistance by family/social network, transportation, language translation, etc.

*Other Open/leading questions (if time allows)*

1. Where do you live? Describe your living situation.
2. What's changed in the last 5-10 years?

**[PRIORITY] Specific/topical questions**

1. **Is there a place in your neighborhood that you enjoy going to? If so, where and why?**
2. **Is there a place in your neighborhood that lets you feel more connected with your neighbors? If so, where and why?**
3. **Are there areas you do not like to go in the neighborhood? If so, where and why?**
4. **What would you like to see more of in your neighborhood?**
5. **What activities do you do for fun (at home and in public)?**
  - a. What type of entertainment would you like to do more of?

*Other Specific/topical questions (if time allows)*

1. Can you describe a time you discovered something new that you enjoy going back to in your neighborhood?
2. How well do you know your community? How many neighbors do you know?

**[PRIORITY] Summary/action questions**

1. **Hypothetical – If you have \$100,000 to spend on improving the community, what would you spend it on?**
  - a. Infrastructure, community spirit, recreation?
2. **Hypothetical – Suppose that you could make one change that would make the neighborhood better, what would you change?**
3. **Overall, how satisfied are you living here?**

*Other Summary/action questions (if time allows)*

1. How do you contribute to the neighborhood? Where do you volunteer/give back?
2. How do you get your information? How do you get/stay involved with community?
3. How do you hear about this focus group?

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