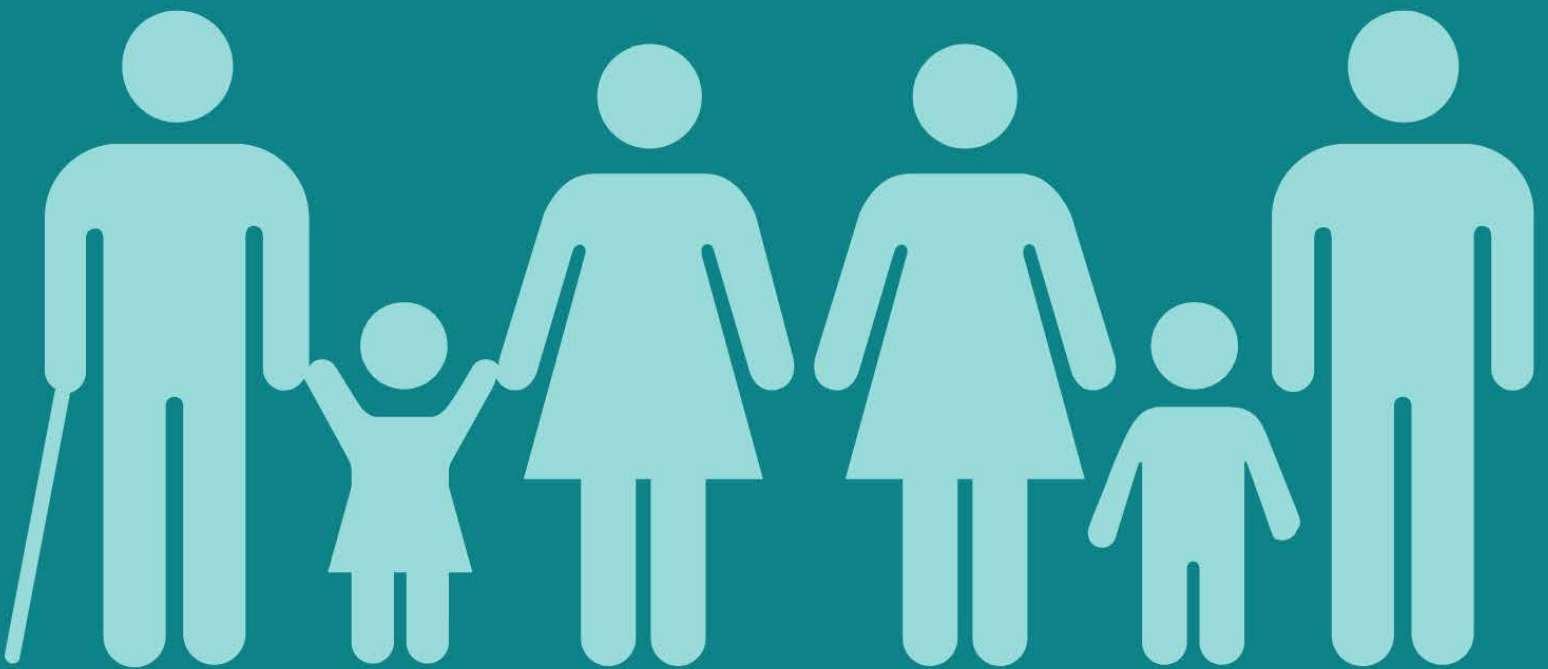


Southwest Lake Forest

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT NEEDS ASSESSMENT



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

Purpose of the Study

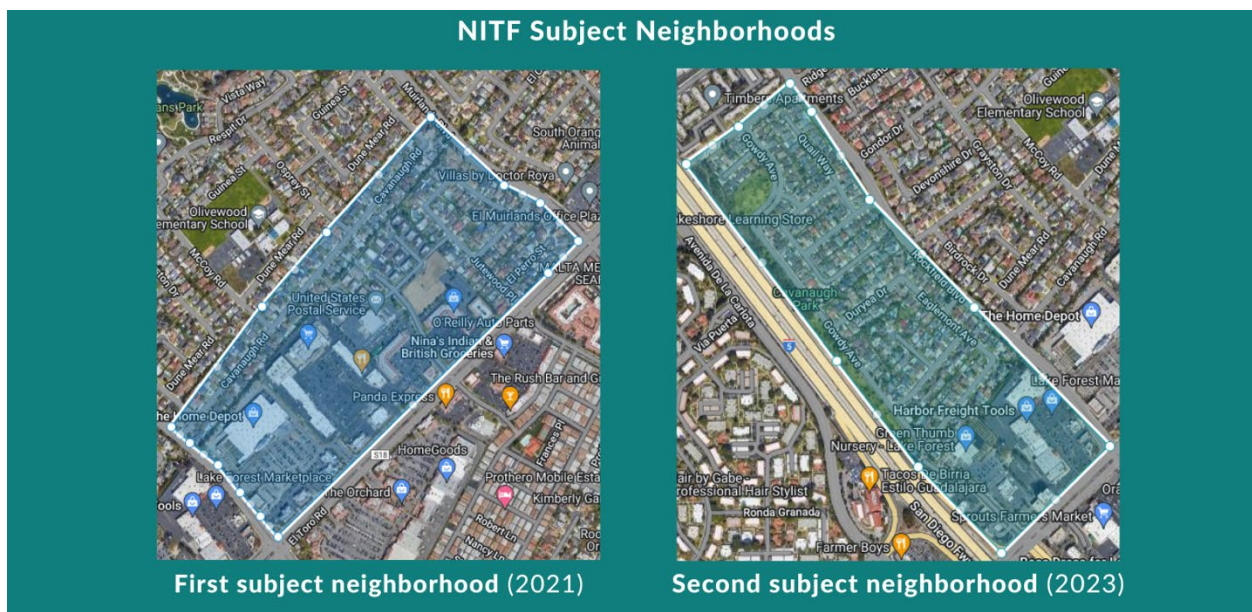
In 2021, the City of Lake Forest formed a **Neighborhood Improvement Task Force (NITF)** to identify and address neighborhood issues. This initiative was a direct response to recorded quality of life issues among residents in Southwest Lake Forest (Area 2) first captured during the City's biannual Community Satisfaction Survey in 2021. To understand the factors contributing to negative resident experiences, the NITF engaged **Communications LAB**, a public affairs and community outreach firm, to gather empirical information from residents in the first subject neighborhood targeting the boundaries of **Muirlands Boulevard, El Toro Road, Cavanaugh Road and Rockfield Boulevard**.

Following the success of the first neighborhood assessment and subsequent action plan to improve the area's quality of life, the NITF selected a second subject neighborhood in Area 2.

The second subject neighborhood contains the boundaries of **El Toro Road, Rockfield Boulevard, Gowdy Avenue and Cavanaugh Road**. The area is home to 213 residential properties and 43 businesses.

While the area is immediately adjacent to the first subject neighborhood, it was understood that residents would have unique needs that required an independent and comprehensive assessment. Communications LAB was re-engaged in 2023 to conduct an in-depth assessment of the new subject area.

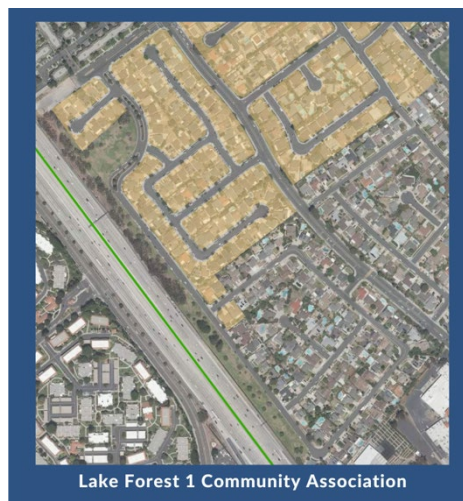
The following **Southwest Lake Forest Neighborhood Improvement Needs Assessment (Area 2)** report provides a thorough account of resident perceptions, observations of the Communications LAB survey team and key recommendations for the NITF's review.



Neighborhood Overview

Before conducting direct outreach, it was essential to review census and historical information related to the subject area. During this review, Communications LAB found interesting facts and features that provided a glimpse of the neighborhood's character.

- **Housing:** the subject area is home to some of the City's oldest homes, with 54% of homes built between 1960-1969 and 40% built between 1970-1979.
- **Vehicles per Home:** 31% of residents reported having access to 2 vehicles, 5% have access to 3 vehicles, 20% reported having access to 4 vehicles, while 21% reported having access to 5 vehicles.



With older homes, we expected to find issues with general upkeep. We also expected to find issues with the availability of multiple vehicles, such as parking.

During our preliminary review of the neighborhood, we also found that approximately half of the subject area is governed by the **Lake Forest Community 1 Homeowners Association (HOA)** (see area highlighted in yellow in the image above). Homes in the HOA were reportedly built after the properties in the southern portion of the study area and are significantly better maintained than the homes in the non-HOA neighborhood.

Neighborhood Themes

Communications LAB's assessment of the subject neighborhood produced extensive and varied findings, but several themes stood out throughout our review of the neighborhood.



Low Safety Perceptions

Generally, residents in the subject neighborhood feel unsafe. This perception is often attributed to the presence of homeless individuals in the area, drug users at Cavanaugh Park, vehicles parked on Gowdy Avenue, and people living in vehicles. Interestingly, while Cavanaugh Park is deemed to be a community asset by many residents, the park also appears to be the center of reported criminal activity in the area. The likelihood of residents recommending the neighborhood to friends and family appears to be negatively affected by their perceptions of safety.



Issues Related to Homelessness

Homelessness is at the forefront of the community's concerns. Through online surveys and in-person interactions, stakeholders in the residential and commercial areas expressed a clear and constant concern with the number of homeless individuals in the area. In our **Findings**, we discuss the factors that are perceived to contribute to the growing presence of homeless individuals in this neighborhood. The access point from Bridger Rd. to Cavanaugh Park is at the top of the list of these contributing factors.



Geographic Location Contributes to Perceived Problems

Some of the area's problems can be attributed to the neighborhood's proximity to the 5 Freeway, El Toro Rd., and the access point on Bridger Rd. This geography appears to increase foot traffic, especially of homeless individuals, into the residential neighborhood. Residents also have a generally unfavorable opinion of the business complex on Bridger Rd., which has housed at least two illegal marijuana dispensaries in the past year.

While the proximity to the freeway and El Toro Rd. cannot be remedied, there is an opportunity to explore modifications to the Bridger Rd. access point that may help mitigate resident concerns.



General Need for Property Maintenance

During our assessment it was clear that residential properties need general maintenance, especially in the southern portion of the study area that is not governed by the homeowners association. This lack of property maintenance negatively impacts the general appearance of the neighborhood and resident perceptions.

Wet weather over the winter of 2022 and spring of 2023 appears to have aggravated existing landscaping maintenance issues due to more plant and weed growth.

Residents openly recognize property maintenance as a general neighborhood problem. However, many reported delaying maintenance and property improvements due to financial limitations. While it may be difficult to address larger property maintenance issues (fences, driveways, roof repairs, etc.), there are manageable improvements, landscaping and paint projects that can be encouraged.



Low Community Engagement

Much like the residents of the first subject neighborhood, Communications LAB found area stakeholders difficult to engage. During this assessment, stakeholders were provided various opportunities to share input regarding their quality-of-life concerns through a bilingual online survey, door-to-door canvassing, and a community pop-up.

At the conclusion of the assessment, fifteen community surveys, and one business survey were collected. To supplement the surveys, we conducted a thorough door-to-door canvassing effort of the residential and business areas which generated much of the stakeholder feedback cited in this report.

Once engaged, most stakeholders were willing to share their perceptions and ideas for neighborhood improvements but there appeared to be a general lack of initiative to relay concerns.



Engaged City Staff

During this assessment, the members of the NITF exhibited a genuine concern and desire to improve the quality of life of residents in the subject neighborhood. In addition to receiving routine updates on this project, NITF members and the area's City Council representative attended the community pop up to share resources and interact with residents.

Staff's continued investment and interest in the neighborhood will be critical as an action plan is created to address the area's needs.

METHODOLOGY & TASKS

METHODOLOGY AND TASKS

To evaluate the subject neighborhood and identify quality of life concerns among stakeholders, Communications LAB identified a series of tasks. These tasks included internal assessments, community assessments and a communications audit. Each assessment task is elaborated upon below.

TASK 1 *Internal Assessments*

TASK 2 *External Assessments*

TASK 3 *Communications Audit*

Task 1: Internal Assessments

Working with a neighborhood every day gives one a unique perspective. Thus, it was important that our assessment include interviews with City staff who work and service the subject neighborhood to gauge their feelings, opinions, and recommendations.

The Neighborhood Improvement Task Force assisted in identifying key stakeholders, including department directors and staff, who could contribute relevant, in-depth feedback.

From March 9th to April 28th, 2023, Communications LAB conducted interviews with five stakeholders which lasted on average 30 minutes, via Zoom and in person. The interviews included representatives from the City's Planning, Public Works, and Code Enforcement Departments, as well as representatives from the Orange County Sheriff's Department.

Task 2: External Assessments

To ensure that community stakeholders were informed of the NITF's assessment, Communications LAB executed a three-part outreach plan first implemented in the first subject area in 2021. The plan consisted of the following: **1) bilingual outreach letter with a survey, 2) door-to-door canvassing, and 3) a community pop-up event.** It was especially critical that we provide residents with simple and accessible means of participation.

Community Surveys



Dear Resident,

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! As part of our ongoing commitment to you, the City of Lake Forest is constantly looking for opportunities to improve the quality of life for all who call our city home. To deliver on this promise, among other initiatives, since 1968, Lake Forest has engaged in a **Community Satisfaction Survey** to track its performance in meeting the evolving needs of residents. In response to the results of the 2021 survey, the City formed a **Neighborhood Improvement Task Force (NITF)**. The NITF includes representatives from the City Manager's Office, Public Works Department, Community Development Department and Police Services. The mission of the NITF is to research the quality-of-life issues impacting specific neighborhoods and find ways to implement improvements. **Your neighborhood has been selected as the subject of the next NITF assessment.**

To assist us in understanding issues impacting your neighborhood, the City contracted with Communications LAB, a third-party community outreach and public affairs firm. Over the next few weeks, **Communications LAB will perform neighborhood outreach services in your area to understand your unique experience as a resident and identify what City departments can do to serve you better.** With the information gathered, the NITF will establish a list of neighborhood issues that require city action and formulate a work plan that includes remedies to issues addressed.

As a valued resident, your opinions and experiences are important. You can participate in this process in one of three ways:

1. Visit bit.ly/LFcommunitysurvey or scan the QR code to fill out the Neighborhood Improvement Survey. Respondents who complete the survey will be entered into a raffle to win a \$50 or \$25 Shop & Dine Community Gift Card that can be redeemed at over 60 local businesses in Lake Forest!
2. **Chat with CommLAB:** Communications LAB staff will visit your neighborhood over the next few weeks. Take a few minutes to chat with their team about what city issues, services, and programs are important to you.
3. **Attend our Community Pop-Up Event!** Communications LAB will host a pop-up event on **Saturday, April 15, 2023, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.** at **Cavanaugh Park**. Come learn about the city services and community resources at your disposal and speak to us about ways the city can improve your quality of life. Joining us to share additional resources, information and giveaways will be the **Orange County Sheriff's Department, Orange County Fire Authority, Home Depot and more!**

We look forward to hearing from you and appreciate your participation as we look to better serve you. If you have any questions about this assessment, please get in touch with **Diana Moroso** at diana@communicationlab.com or by phone at (949) 215-9539, Ext. 122.

Lake Forest Neighborhood Improvement Task Force



As a first step, Communications LAB worked with City staff to draft two comprehensive surveys for residents and businesses which addressed a range of topics from public safety to communications. The surveys were hosted on **SurveyMonkey**, a trusted survey platform and consisted of 37 and 41 questions. **Copies of the letters and surveys, are available in [APPENDIX A](#).**

After the surveys were approved by the NITF, Communications LAB mailed a letter to every stakeholder in the subject neighborhood. The letter included information about the NITF's mission, emphasized the importance of receiving stakeholder feedback, and highlighted the three ways stakeholders could participate (**online survey, door-to-door canvassing, or via the community pop-up event**). The letter effectively

served as the community's introduction to this project.

To ensure open and candid responses, Communications LAB did not require respondents to provide names or addresses; however, stakeholders were encouraged to provide other identifiable information (name of the street where their home or business is located) to provide context to stakeholder experiences. The survey window was open for 28 days, from **April 1 through April 28, 2023.**

At the conclusion of the assessment period, 16 surveys were collected (15 resident surveys and 1 business survey).

Community Interviews

With the goal of making stakeholder engagement accessible, a bilingual team of Communications LAB staff canvassed the subject area from April 3rd to April 7, 2023.

Using this proactive approach, our team could personally gather feedback from residents and businesses. Through our extensive outreach experience, we have found that at times, stakeholders feel more comfortable sharing feedback in person especially when discussing personal concerns involving one’s community.



If a stakeholder was not present or did not have time to speak with our team, we left an informational flyer encouraging participation in our assessment through the online survey or by attending the community pop-up event.

We Want to Hear from You!
The City of Lake Forest has selected your neighborhood for a Neighborhood Improvement Assessment.

Help us understand the specific needs of your neighborhood by sharing your observations and opinions with us!

HOW TO PARTICIPATE
Take our Neighborhood Improvement Survey, Enter Our Raffle!
Visit bit.ly/LFcommunitysurvey or scan the QR code below to tell us what improvements you want to see in your neighborhood.

Respondents who complete the survey will be entered into a raffle to win a \$50 or \$25 Shop & Dine Community Gift Card that can be redeemed at over 60 local businesses in Lake Forest!

Survey window will be open through Friday, April 28, 2023

Attend our Community Pop-Up Event on Saturday, April 15
Join us on Saturday, April 15, from 10-2 p.m. at Cavanaugh Park (corner of Cavanaugh Rd. and Gowdy Ave.).

Learn more about the city services and community resources at your disposal and speak to Communications LAB staff about ways the city can help improve your quality of life.

Joining us to share additional resources, information and giveaways will be the Orange County Sheriff's Department, Orange County Fire Authority, Home Depot and more!

Lake Forest Neighborhood Improvement Task Force

Along with the flyer, Communications LAB shared information regarding Lake Forest Housing Programs as recommended by the NITF.

Copies of the NITF and City Resource flyers, are available in [Appendix B](#).

In addition to speaking with residents, this method of outreach allowed our team to spend time in the neighborhood to evaluate and log observations.

A total of 84 stakeholder contacts were made after canvassing all residences and businesses within the study area. (59 resident contacts and 25 business contacts). It should be noted that only 50 of the 59 resident contacts and 11 out of the 25 business contacts resulted in in-depth feedback.

Community Pop-Up



To conclude the community engagement portion of the assessment, we wanted to give stakeholders an additional opportunity to share their perspectives while also introducing them to City resources and programs. With this goal in mind, Communications LAB hosted a **Community Pop-Up** on Saturday, April 15, 2023, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in partnership with the City of Lake Forest. The event was held at Cavanaugh Park, a central location for stakeholders in the

subject neighborhood.

Representatives from the Orange County Fire Authority, the Orange County Sheriff's Department, El Tero Water District, and Premier Turf (a drought tolerant landscape and artificial turf vendor) attended and shared valuable resources with stakeholders. The area's representative, Council Member Robert Pequeño (District 5), also attended and engaged directly with residents.

Communications LAB capitalized on this opportunity to gather community input, many from residents who had not previously interacted with our survey team. To help bolster engagement, the City of Lake Forest made gift cards and prizes available for residents who engaged with Communications LAB.



We estimate that approximately 40 residents attended the community pop-up. During the event, 15 residents provided comments for inclusion in our assessment.

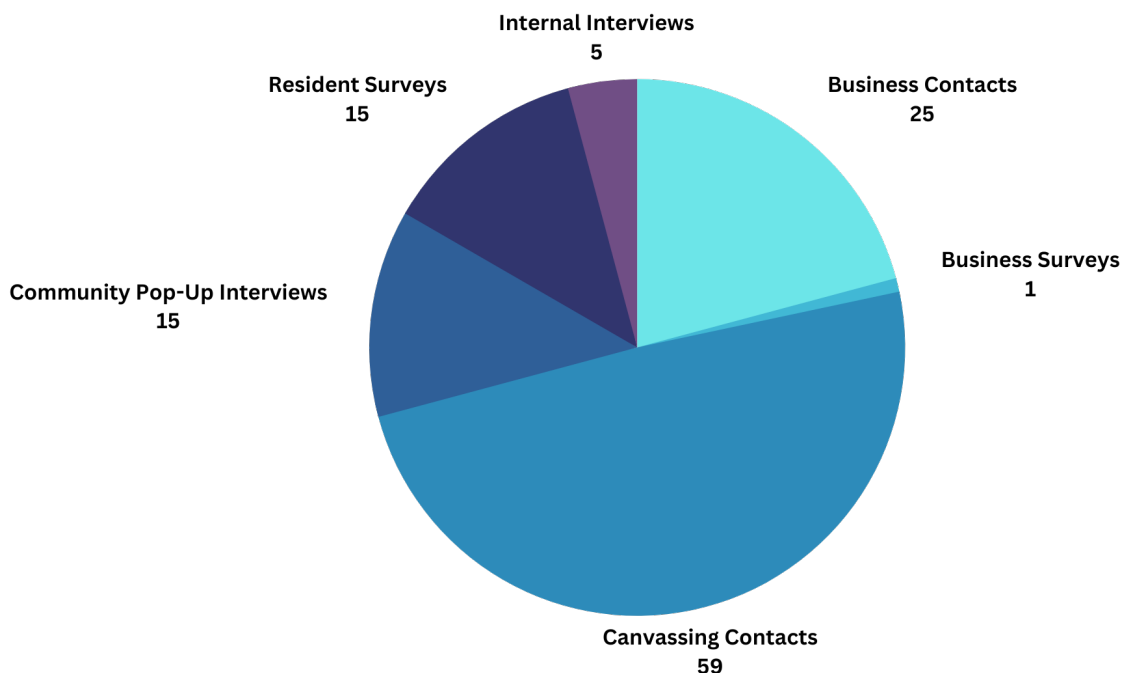
Task 3: Communications Audit

As a firm specializing in communications, Communications LAB believes it is essential to understand how information is currently being shared with residents and work towards addressing any gaps that may be contributing to negative perspectives in the study area.

With this goal in mind, we analyzed the City of Lake Forest’s current communication platforms and tools, including the City website, social media channels and *The Leaflet* magazine. When reviewing these communication tools, we looked at messaging, image and visual consistency, feedback loops, and effectiveness. Our audit findings are recorded and will be reviewed in the **Communications Audit**.

Stakeholder Feedback at a Glance

As described in this section, Communications LAB gathered information via a variety of methods. The results from our outreach efforts are summarized in the **graph below**. All stakeholder feedback was evaluated and serves as the basis for this report.



COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT

Communications Audit Findings

Given the influence of communication on perceptions, Communications LAB conducted an audit of the City of Lake Forest's external communications.

The goal of this assessment was to identify any opportunities to enhance the City's communications with the public. Communications LAB conducted a similar review of the City's communication channels in 2021. Our assessment remains that the City's communications are well executed and seek to connect the public with City resources and information.



Engaging and Easy to Navigate Website: the City's website is visually appealing and easy to navigate. The home page clearly highlights featured content that may be of interest to residents.



Consistent and Varied Communications: the City maintains an open channel of communication with residents utilizing various print and digital platforms. Especially noteworthy is "The Leaflet" magazine which residents consistently identified as their top source for City news.



Partner News: the City consistently shares relevant information and news from partner agencies among them OCFA, OCTA and American Red Cross. These communications ensure that residents are informed of projects and programs outside of City operations that may impact their quality of life.

OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE COMMUNICATIONS



Resident Resource Sub-Page: residents may benefit from the addition of a "Resources" subpage to the City website. The page could host information on direct resources like the Catalytic Converter Protection Program, Neighborhood Pride Paint Program, Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program, Lead Based Paint Reduction Program, and any other programs currently available to residents.



Continue to Inform residents of My360 App- 60% of residents who responded to the online survey reported not being aware of the City's app. Given the benefits and recent re-launch of the City app, it is important that the City continues to educate and encourage residents to download the app.

INTERNAL ASSESSMENTS

Interview Takeaways

Communications LAB conducted interviews with City staff to understand their perceptions and experiences while servicing the area of interest. Below are the takeaways from these interviews:



Good pulse on the community- staff consistently exhibits an in-depth understanding of the general needs of the subject neighborhood.



Subject neighborhood is geographically prone to generate more service calls- the proximity of the subject neighborhood to the 5 Freeway and access points (Bridger Rd.) creates increased foot traffic and opportunities for crime.



Property Maintenance- on average, Code Enforcement deals with 10-20 cases a month in the subject neighborhood. Summertime is an especially busy period, beginning in March.

- **Rain-**rain fall has exacerbated the landscaping problems that existed in the neighborhood.
- **Swan Dr. Property-**Code Enforcement staff has an in-depth understanding of the circumstances surrounding the abandoned property on Swan Dr. and is actively working with the homeowner to address resident complaints.
- **Deterioration-**the deterioration of the properties over the past 10 years has been significant.
- **Financial limitations-**staff perceives that residents in this neighborhood may not have funds available to maintain the properties.



Disturbance calls – it is common for the Sheriff's Department to receive calls to address disturbances (loud noise, cars, people, etc.) in this neighborhood. Over 8800 calls have been registered over the past year in the area from the 5 Freeway to Jeronimo Lane (**Note:** this area is larger than the subject area). There are also many calls reporting suspicious activity in the neighborhood.



Patrolling- the Sheriff's Department frequently patrols the business area.



Public Safety Outreach- the Sherriff's Department previously hosted a crime awareness and resource fair at Cavanaugh Park.



No “Neighborhood Watch” program in the area- staff reports there is no active Neighborhood Watch program in the neighborhood. **Note:** the Sheriff’s Department has done presentations at the clubhouse for the residents living in the portion of the neighborhood governed by the HOA.



Crimes of opportunity- staff perceives the crimes that occur in this neighborhood to be crimes of opportunity caused by people leaving vehicles/homes unlocked.

- The Sheriff’s Department conducts walk throughs of the business area to educate them on the importance of burglary prevention.



Homelessness-staff perceives the following unique circumstances contribute to the increased presence of homeless individuals.

- Proximity to the 5 Freeway
- Access points near the neighborhood (Bridger Rd.)
- Proximity to Laguna Hills bus terminal (terminal is within walking distance of Cavanaugh Park. Los Angeles and San Diego area people are known to travel to this spot.)
- Proximity of Salvation Army and Goodwill (donations are often left outside where homeless individuals can access them.)
- It is reported that homeless individuals in the area do not accept the help offered by the Sheriff’s Department.



Residents have Limited Understanding of Public Safety Laws and Policies – staff perceive residents to be uninformed regarding laws (what public safety officers can and cannot do). The public is consequently surprised and frustrated to learn that public safety officers are often limited by state law.



Cavanaugh Park-no one is allowed to be at Cavanaugh Park between 11 PM and 5 AM. There are no restrictions on parking and sleeping in a vehicle if the vehicle is moved before 72 hours.

- According to the Sheriff’s Department, Cavanaugh Park does not generate many calls for service.



Street Sweeping Signage- the Sheriff’s Department does not usually accompany the street sweeper on sweeping days. When tickets are given to vehicles, the public is upset.



Bridger Rd. Businesses-upgrading the trash enclosure may be helpful.



Cavanaugh Park Complaints-staff believes the design of the park (pockets) contributes to homeless and illegal activity.



Lack of resident participation in City Classes-staff did not believe that any residents in the subject neighborhood have taken City classes.



Staff Recommendations for Improvement

- **Playground Upgrades**-Cavanaugh Park needs an upgrade, especially the playground.
- **Update Code Enforcement Flyer**- the neighborhood may benefit from a more streamlined, clear enforcement “checklist”.
- **Bulk disposal information**-staff believes information on how to dispose of large items would be helpful.
- **Neighborhood Pride Paint Program**-the program is very popular, but funding is limited. The program will re-open in July, giving residents in this neighborhood the opportunity to apply for assistance.
- **Community Projects**-City staff is actively working with local nonprofit organizations to assist elderly/disabled residents with home repairs.
- **Assess Need for a City Facility in South Lake Forest**-staff reports there are no City facilities in the southern part of Lake Forest. This could play a role in the City’s emergency preparedness planning.
- **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)**-given the proximity to the freeway; it may be beneficial for residents in this neighborhood to participate in the program.
- **Mailers/Doorhangers/Flyers**- staff believes these methods of communication may be more effective in this area.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENTS

Cavanaugh Rd.



Increased Presence of People Experiencing Homelessness

The top concern relayed by residents living on Cavanaugh Rd. was the reported constant presence of people experiencing homelessness, especially in or around Cavanaugh Park. The presence of homeless individuals reportedly deters residents from visiting the park and playground and feeds negative perceptions of safety.



Residents report homeless defecate and urinate next to the businesses on Bridger Rd.

"We are afraid to go out to the park because [of] homeless and drug use near the kids playground. We found needles several times and reported to police and the City of Lake Forest." -Cavanaugh Rd. resident.



Drug-Related Activity

Some residents reported that people use and sell drugs at Cavanaugh Park. Another resident reported that their neighbor (Dune Mear Rd.) sells drugs and utilizes a drone to scope the neighborhood for police presence.

Communications LAB observed shoes dangling from power lines which can be interpreted by some to signal a location where drugs are sold.

Cavanaugh Rd.



Noise Impacts

Several residents reported road noise and announcements from Home Depot can be heard indoors. There is also recurring noise allegedly coming from delivery trucks in the early morning hours.



Public Safety

Residents reported that people engage in illegal activities at Cavanaugh Park and the alley between their homes and the businesses on Rockfield Blvd.

A few residents reported attempted home and vehicle break-ins. A resident also reported they believe there is prostitution happening at Cavanaugh Park. Residents also reported finding needles at the park.

Cameras were suggested as a solution to deter reported illegal activities happening at the park.



Parking

Residents report that overflow parking from The Timbers apartment complex is generating parking problems on neighborhood streets.



Street Sweeping

Residents reported that the absence of signage results in the street not being swept.



Property Maintenance

Communications LAB observed properties in need of maintenance, including broken driveways and landscaping which impacts the overall look of the neighborhood.

Other Issues:

- Residents would like to see more “family-friendly businesses”.
- There is a perception that the businesses on Bridger Rd. may be contributing to problems in the area.
- A resident reported that the businesses in the Rockfield Blvd. shopping center generate bad odors.

- Residents would like the park to be “flattened” to reduce “hiding spots”, bushes and, berm removed.
- Residents would like to see better lighting at Cavanaugh Park.
- Some residents would like to add a gate and/or fence to Cavanaugh Park access point on Bridger Rd.
- Residents who live immediately next to the park have experienced home break ins.

“I would like to see [the] same improvements as I see in the newer Lake Forest neighborhoods.” - Cavanaugh Rd. resident.

Gowdy Ave.



Increased Presence of People Experiencing Homelessness

Much like their neighbors on Cavanaugh Rd., residents on Gowdy Ave. who face Cavanaugh Park report a significant presence of homeless individuals in the neighborhood.

Gowdy Ave.



Public Safety

Residents along Gowdy Ave. reported home burglaries, vehicle break-ins and car burglaries. Several residents also reported having found needles at the park.



Greenbelt Maintenance

There appears to be confusion among residents regarding the maintenance of the greenbelts on the sidewalks.



Lighting

Resident reported that additional lighting is needed near 23921 Gowdy Ave.



Parking

Residents report too many vehicles are parked on the street. Some residents reported to have witnessed lewd acts inside the vehicles. It is also reportedly difficult to drive down Gowdy Ave. when vehicles are parked on the side.

“Since the road is not wide enough it's unsafe to drive as it's hard to see the people standing by their vehicles.” - Gowdy Ave. resident.



Communications LAB visited the area on different days and observed vehicles parked alongside Gowdy Ave. that did not appear to move.



Other Issues:

- Potholes in the street.
- Drains on Gowdy Ave. smell.
- Resident would like to see the power lines moved underground.
- Residents would like to see an improved park with new equipment: a swing set, playground and exercise equipment.
- There is a wall alongside Gowdy Ave. that is detaching. *See photo.*

“I am glad to see you taking action towards improvements in my immediate neighborhood and [a] Cavanaugh Park upgrade which we need badly.” - Gowdy Ave. resident.

Eaglemont Ave.



Increased Presence of People Experiencing Homelessness

Residents reported the presence of homeless individuals walking through the street.



Public Safety

According to residents, backyards and storage units have been broken into.



Lighting

Residents reported insufficient lighting on Eaglemont Ave. which presumably creates opportunities for crime.

“Throughout the area there is insufficient street lighting. Given the rise in crime and homelessness more street lighting would be much appreciated.” Eaglemont Ave. resident.



Street Sweeping

Residents would like street sweeping signage posted in the neighborhood.



Property Maintenance/Landscaping

Communications LAB observed properties in need of maintenance. The greenbelts on the sidewalk are also in need of improvement.



Dune Mear Rd.

Increased Presence of People Experiencing Homelessness

Several residents reported there is an increased presence of homeless individuals in the neighborhood.

Drug-Related Activity

According to a resident living on Cavanaugh Rd. there is a home on Dune Mear Rd. where drugs are allegedly sold. The address of the home has been reported to the Sheriff's Department for follow-up.

Lighting

Residents reported that streetlights are too dim and should be brighter, especially at the entrance of the neighborhood.

Property Maintenance/Landscaping

Communications LAB observed trash and poor landscaping along Dune Mear Rd.

Greenbelt Maintenance

Resident expressed confusion over the responsibility to maintain the greenbelts on the sidewalks. Residents would like to know whether the City is responsible for the trees the City reportedly planted.

Speeding

Resident reported there is no speeding enforcement in the area, resulting in speeding vehicles.

Overcrowding

Resident reported there are homes with too many residents. Resident would like to see enforcement to prevent this.

Other Issues:

Resident reported that when it rains, water meters flood and cannot be read.



Alderglen Dr.



Parking

Resident reports parking is an issue. Due to the limited availability of parking, resident has trouble taking out trash bins.



Lighting

Resident reports that lighting in the cul de sac is a concern. The street is very dark at night.



Property Maintenance/Landscaping

Communications LAB observed low hanging tree branches that impact the sidewalk.



Parked Vehicle on Lawn

Communications LAB observed a car

parked on the front lawn. (Pictured above)

The property in question also has a driveway in despair (large cracks).



Duryea Dr.

Increased Presence of People Experiencing Homelessness

Resident reported there are “too many homeless” individuals in the neighborhood.

Drug-Related Activity

Resident reported witnessing people using drugs at Cavanaugh Park.

Graffiti

Resident reported graffiti at Cavanaugh Park. This report was corroborated by Communications LAB.



Short-Term Rental (Airbnb)

Residents report the existence of an “Airbnb” short-term rental property on their street. There is reportedly a lot of activity and potential use/sale of drugs. Resident reports beds are rented nightly. This results in an increase of vehicles and parking issues. The address of the property in question has been shared with City staff.

“I spent a lot of time trying to get the issue [regarding the short-term rental] addressed only to find out the city attorney wouldn’t take the case to solve the problem. The sheriff department has been outstanding”-Duryea Dr. resident.

Property Maintenance

Communications LAB identified a home with a large crack on the property wall.

“I feel like I live in the ghetto. [The] Sheriff's dept is on our street often.”-Duryea St. resident.

Swallow Lane



Increased Presence of People Experiencing Homelessness



Resident reported there are many homeless individuals at Cavanaugh Park and recreational vehicles parked on Gowdy Ave.



Parking

Resident reports parking is an issue due to too many vehicles per home and garages used as living spaces/storage units.



Landscaping

Resident reports the trees planted by the homeowners association are not uniform. Resident would also like to see improved landscaping on Rockfield Blvd.



Other Issues:

- Resident would like to see the powerlines underground.

*“Love the neighborhood, but it needs just a bit of sprucing up!!!!
Landscaping improvements on Rockfield will go a long way to
enhancing our community and property values!” -Swallow Ln. resident.*

Swan Dr.



Property Maintenance

Several residents expressed concern over a property on Swan Dr. The property's front yard is overgrown, and residents have seen rats around the property. The home is presumed to be abandoned. Resident observations regarding the poor maintenance of the property were corroborated by Communications LAB.

Communications LAB also noticed the home's roof needs repair.



Increased Presence of People Experiencing Homelessness

Resident reported the presence of homeless individuals at Cavanaugh Park.



Parking

Resident reported recreational vehicles parked on Gowdy Ave.

*"Many people who live in the apartments on Ridge Route and Rockfield park on Gowdy Avenue. This makes our neighborhood look more congested because of the amount of cars in our street."
-Swan Dr. resident.*



Other issues:

- Resident would like a larger playground at Cavanaugh Park.

"We have no major crimes in our area. The neighbors are friendly, and the houses are well-maintained for the most part."-Swan Dr. resident.

White Dove Dr.



HOA Frustrations

Resident is frustrated with HOA restrictions and processes for renters.



Park Improvements

Resident would like a park shelter at Cavanaugh Park.



Parking

Parking overflow from The Timbers complex can affect the parking availability on this street.



Other Issues:

- Resident has observed neighbors engaging in aggressive behavior towards homeless individuals. A neighbor reportedly confronted a homeless individual with a gun.

Quail Way



Increased Presence of People Experiencing Homelessness

Consistent with the perceptions of residents in the adjacent streets, residents perceive there to be a large homeless presence at the park. This topic is reportedly a common topic of conversation in neighborhood discussions.



Parking

Some residents perceive that permitted parking has negatively impacted parking on Quail Way.



Public Safety

According to residents, safety at Cavanaugh Park is perceived as questionable due to graffiti and homeless individuals.



Noise Impacts

Residents report noise caused by trucks entering and exiting Ridge Route. Residents were reportedly not informed of this impact. Quail Way also appears to be home to many dog owners, according to a resident this can be disruptive. This perception was corroborated by Communications LAB.



Other Issues:

- Resident would like to see the power lines underground. The resident was reportedly told the power lines would go underground when she bought the property 30 years ago.
- Resident would like to see an expanded playground and dog park at Cavanaugh Park.
- Resident would like trash cans and dog bags to be made available at the park.
- Resident urged the City to facilitate more community-building events.

Blue Bird Dr.



Property Maintenance (Home on Swan Dr.)

Much like residents on Swan Dr. residents on Blue Bird Dr. expressed a concern over the maintenance of the property located at Swan Dr. Residents are worried about the possibility of a fire and squatters.



Soliciting

Residents report excessive soliciting from solar panel solicitors between the hours of 6-8 PM.

Red Robin Way



Public Safety

According to residents, several homes have had their mail stolen on multiple occasions. The crimes have occurred at various times of the day and night.



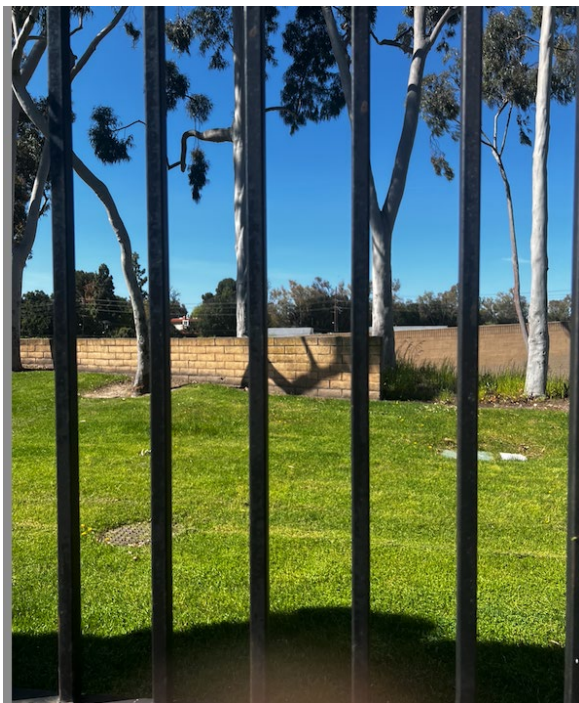
Lighting

Residents would like a light to be installed at the end of the cul de sac because the street is very dark at night.



Increased Presence of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

Residents report occasional disruptions caused by homeless individuals, fires and tents.



Pedestrian Traffic

Residents report that residents from the Timbers complex utilize the passthrough behind the homes on Red Robin Way.



Noise Impacts

Given their proximity to Ridge Route, residents report noise stemming from the construction trucks coming in and out of Ridge Rte. and the 5 Freeway.

A resident also reported that the construction vehicles damage the wall behind their home.

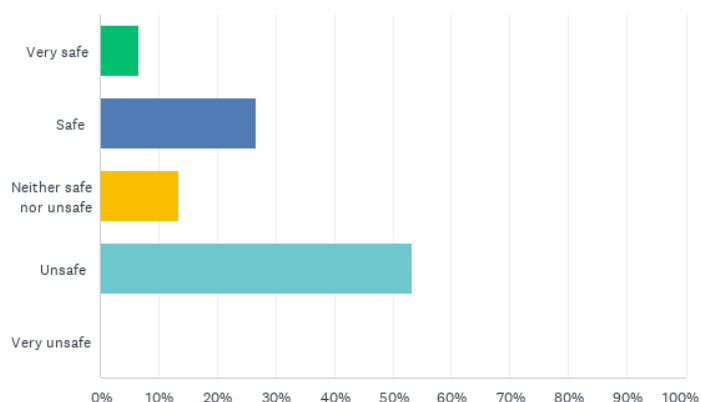
Resident Survey Takeaways

Concurrent to our door-to-door canvassing efforts, we conducted an online survey that collected 15 resident responses.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

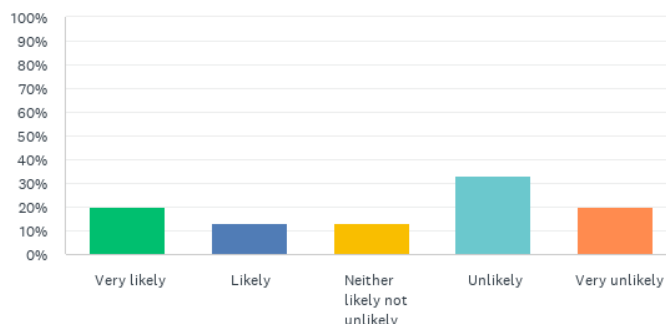
- **Low Safety Perceptions:** When asked how safe they felt in their neighborhood, 53% of respondents reported feeling “unsafe”, while only 27% of respondents reported feeling “safe”. *See chart below for details.*
 - When asked for the reason they feel unsafe, residents frequently cited the presence of **homeless individuals, drug use at Cavanaugh Park, people living in vehicles and vehicles parked on the street.**

Q1 How safe do you feel in your neighborhood?



- **Presence of Homeless Triggers Negative Perceptions-** When asked what they dislike about living in this neighborhood, residents repeatedly cited **homeless individuals, vehicles on Gowdy Dr. and drug use** at Cavanaugh Park.
- **Residents are unlikely to recommend this neighborhood** to friends and family looking for a place to live. (55% are unlikely to recommend this neighborhood. 20% were very unlikely while 33% were unlikely to recommend the neighborhood).

Q19 How likely are you to recommend this neighborhood to friends and family looking for a new place to live?



- **Why wouldn't you recommend this neighborhood?**
 - Homeless
 - Vehicles on Gowdy Dr.
 - Issues at Cavanaugh Park

QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES

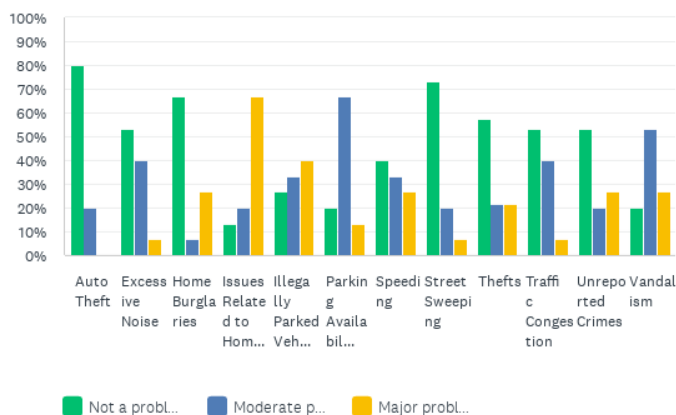
Neighborhood Concerns

Perceived Major Problems (40% and above)

Residents perceive homelessness, illegally parked vehicles and oversized vehicles as major problems impacting their quality of life. [See chart below for details.](#)

- Homelessness
 - 67% of respondents reported “issues related to homelessness” as major problems. 20% of respondents reported this as a moderate problem.
- Illegally Parked Vehicles
 - 40% of respondents reported “illegally parked vehicles” as major problems. 33% of respondents reported it as a moderate problem.
- Oversized Vehicles (RVs)
 - 43% of respondents reported “oversized vehicles” as major problems.
 - 21% of respondents reported it as a moderate problem.

Q3 Please rank the severity of the following issues in your neighborhood.



Perceived Moderate Problems (40% and above)

Residents perceive there to be an array of moderate problems impacting their quality of life, including parking availability, graffiti, vandalism, landscape maintenance, junked vehicles, too many vehicles per home, excessive noise, traffic congestion and too many people per home. The perceptions were captured as follows:

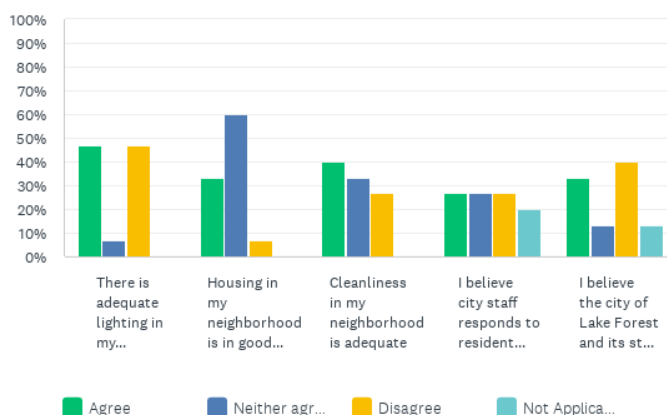
- Parking Availability
 - 67% of respondents reported “parking availability” as a moderate problem.
- Graffiti
 - 53% of respondents reported “graffiti” as a moderate problem, 20% considered it a major problem.
- Vandalism
 - 53% of respondents reported “vandalism” as a moderate problem.
- Landscape Maintenance
 - 47% of respondents reported “landscape maintenance” as a moderate problem, 7% considered it a major problem.
- Junked Vehicles
 - 47% of respondents reported “junked vehicles” as a moderate problem, 7% considered it a major problem.
- Too many vehicles for a single home
 - 43% of respondents reported “too many vehicles for a single home” as a moderate problem, 29% considered it a major problem.
- Excessive Noise
 - 40% of respondents reported “excessive noise” as a moderate problem.
- Traffic Congestion
 - 40% of respondents reported “traffic congestion” as a moderate problem.

- Too many people living in one house.
 - 33% of respondents reported “too many people living in one house” as a moderate problem, while 27% considered it a major problem.

OTHER PERCEPTIONS:

- 40% of respondents disagreed with the statement “I believe the City of Lake Forest and its staff work diligently to serve my neighborhood.”
- 47% of respondents disagreed with the statement “There is adequate lighting in my neighborhood.”
- 40% of respondents agreed with the statement “Cleanliness in my neighborhood is adequate” *See chart below for details.*

Q5 For the following statements, please indicate whether you agree, neither agree nor disagree or disagree.



RESIDENT RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

Public Safety Enhancements

When asked what can be done to enhance their public safety, residents would like to see the following improvements:

- **Increased Patrolling:** residents would like to see increased police presence in the neighborhood.
- **Bridge Rd. Access:** residents would like to see a fence to limit Bridger Rd. access.
- **Improved street/park lighting:** residents would like to see additional lighting in the neighborhood and Cavanaugh Park.
- **Short-term rentals-** residents expressed concern with the alleged increase of short-term rentals in the neighborhood.

Code Enforcement Enhancements

When asked what can code enforcement do to enhance services in their neighborhood, residents would like to see the following improvements:

- **Improved yards/landscaping**
- Improved **park maintenance**
- **Enclosed trash bin** on Bridger Rd. and Cavanaugh Rd.
- **Abandoned home on Swan Dr.**-residents would like the abandoned property to be addressed.
- Additional **code enforcement**.

Other resident recommended improvements:

- **Graffiti removal**- residents mentioned delays in responses relating to graffiti removal.
- **Sidewalk repairs**- residents reported broken sidewalks.
- **Overgrown trees**- residents reported overgrown trees on Cavanaugh Rd and Bridger Rd.
- **Lighting**-The sidewalk (presumably Duane Mear Rd.) between Eaglemont and Rockfield Blvd. needs better lighting.
- **Landscaping**-several residents would like to see improved landscaping on Rockfield Blvd.

Beautification Projects

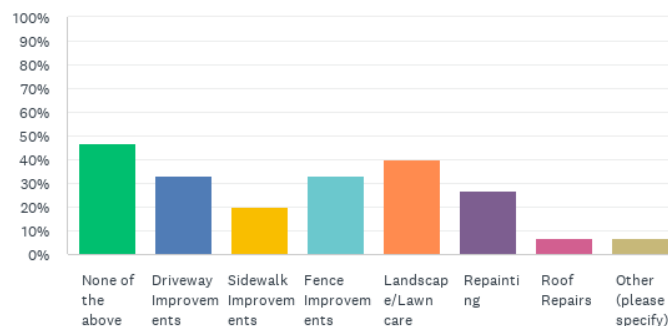
Among the beautification projects residents would be interested in are:

- **Cavanaugh Park**
 - New play area
 - Exercise stations for adults
 - More trees on greenbelt (Cavanaugh Park)
- **Landscaping**
 - Update landscaping on Rockfield between Ridge Rte. and El Toro Rd.

Property Improvements

When asked to identify the types of property improvements needed in their home, **landscape/lawn care** (40%), **fence improvements** (33%) and **driveway improvements** (33%) were the most needed improvements. *See chart below for details.*

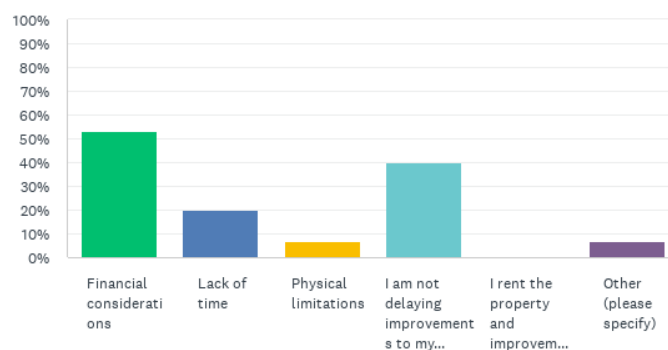
Q15 What type of property improvements (if any) does your home need? Please mark all that apply.



Reasons for Delaying Needed Improvements

53% of residents cited financial considerations as the reason for delaying improvements on their property. [See chart below for details.](#)

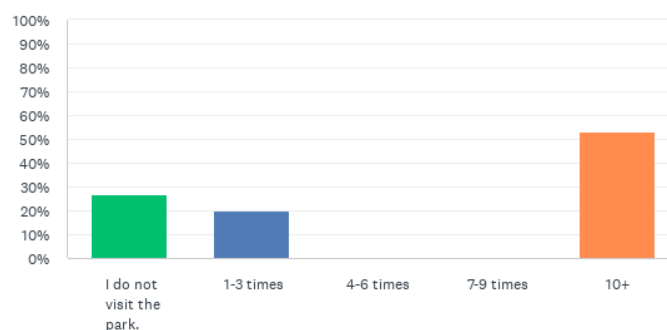
Q16 If you are delaying needed improvements to your home, what is preventing you from performing these tasks? Please mark all that apply.



Cavanaugh Park

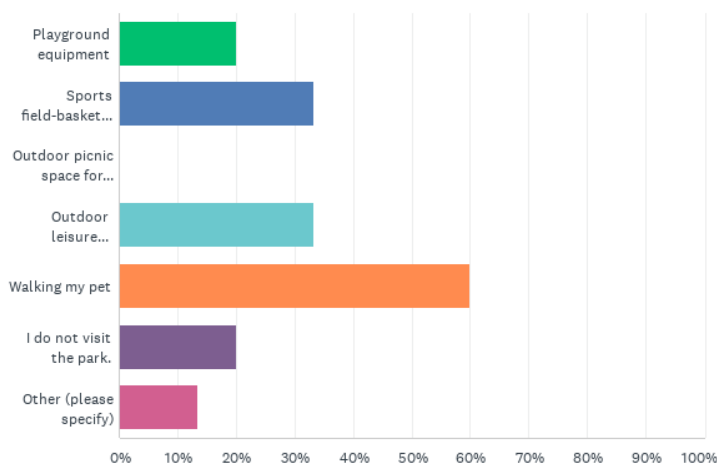
Respondents reported visiting the park frequently, with 53% reporting to visit the park more than 10+times per month. [See chart below for details.](#)

Q24 How often do you visit Cavanaugh Park in a month?



The majority of respondents reported visiting the park to **walk their pet** (60%), followed by those who visit the park to engage in outdoor **leisure activities** like walking, running, jogging or working out (33%) and those who visit the park for the **sports field-basketball court** (33%). *See chart below for details.*

Q25 What is the typical reason for your visit to Cavanaugh Park? Please select all that apply.



Recommended Park Upgrades

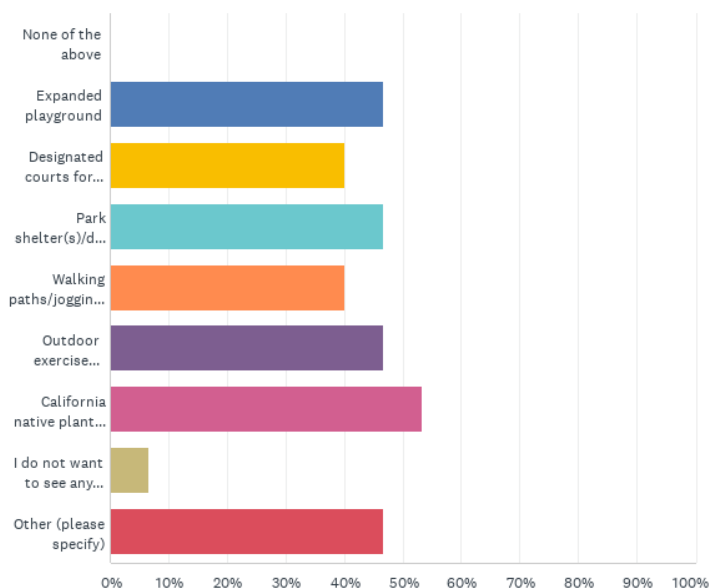
Residents were open to the idea of seeing park improvements at Cavanaugh Park, with 87% of respondents saying they would see park improvements at Cavanaugh Park as a positive development.

Responses regarding potential upgrades to Cavanaugh Park varied:

- 53% of respondents would like to see a California Native Plant Garden.
- 46% would like outdoor exercise equipment.
- 46% would like an expanded playground.
- 46% would like a park shelter/designated picnic areas.
 - Other suggestions:
 - More lighting

See chart below for details.

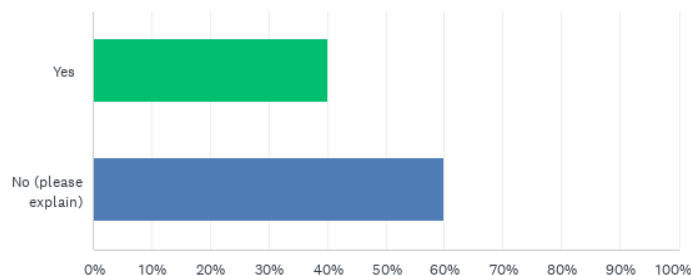
Q26 What features/upgrades would make Cavanaugh Park more inviting to you? (You may select more than one option).



Bridger Rd.

As one of the main entry points into the subject neighborhood, residents were asked their perception of the Bridger Rd. access to Cavanaugh Park. 60% of residents do not see the access point as an asset/benefit to the neighborhood. *See chart below for details.*

Q27 Pedestrians currently have access to Cavanaugh Park from Bridger Rd. (See image below) Do you see this access as an asset/benefit to your neighborhood?



Residents believe that the access point facilitates traffic of homeless individuals into the neighborhood. The rundown appearance of businesses on Bridger Rd is also viewed as unfavorable.

"I use this access to walk to stores however this access is widely used for vagrants. A fence would assist with this."-Cavanaugh Rd.

Communications

- The majority of the survey respondents (60%) were not aware of the City of Lake Forest (360 Civic City) app.
- The Leaflet- 33% of respondents reported that the City magazine is the best way to inform them of news and programs.

Community Building

- 80% of respondents are interested in participating in neighborhood events.
 - Events of interest
 - Community service projects- 60%
 - Community clean-ups-60%
 - Summer concerts-53%
 - Community Fairs- 53%
 - Block Parties-53%
- When asked what they like about living in this neighborhood, residents repeatedly mentioned liking their **neighbors, access to the freeway and shopping centers.**

Business Profiles

During the assessment process, the Communications LAB evaluation team interviewed business stakeholders in the subject area to understand their perspectives and experiences. One online survey was received from a business stakeholder and is accounted for in the observations below.

Below are the high-priority issues consistently identified by business stakeholders.

Lake Forest Marketplace



Increased Presence of People Experiencing Homelessness

Business stakeholders in the Lake Forest Marketplace shopping center reported a significant presence of homeless individuals.

The 99 Cents Only store manager reported that homeless individuals gather in front of the store, especially after 8 PM. There have been robberies in the parking lot and homeless individuals consistently steal items from the store. The manager does not stop these crimes

due to safety concerns.

One business reported that homeless individuals frequently break in to sleep in the businesses electrical room.

One stakeholder shared that his mother, who works at the business, has been harassed by homeless individuals in the past and does not feel safe working alone.

Homeless individuals also camp out in the alley behind the shopping center.



Trash

Communications LAB observed trash throughout the shopping center.





Public Safety

Stakeholders reported that the police response time is slow (45 minutes).



Other observations:

Bank of America has a security guard responsible for monitoring the bank. He had no feedback to provide regarding the shopping center in general.



Yield Sign

It was suggested the addition of a yield sign for vehicles turning right from Rockfield Blvd. on to El Toro Rd.

Bridger Rd. Businesses



Increased Presence of People Experiencing Homelessness

Stakeholders reported an increase in the number of homeless individuals in the areas surrounding the businesses.



Illegal Dumping

Stakeholder reported that items are dumped at the end of the cul de sac.



Other observations

- **Low engagement-** business stakeholders in the subject neighborhood appear unengaged. Only one business completed the online survey.

FINDINGS



The geographic location of the neighborhood contributes to perceived problems

The proximity of the subject neighborhood to the 5 Freeway, and access point on (Bridger Rd.) create increased foot traffic into the residential neighborhood, especially from homeless individuals.

The neighborhood's proximity to the Laguna Hills bus terminal, Salvation Army and Goodwill may also contribute to the increased foot traffic.



Issues related to homelessness

There is a general and widespread concern among residents regarding the presence of homeless individuals. Our various assessments revealed that most residents share a level of concern on this matter.

In the survey, 67% of respondents considered homelessness a "major problem", while 20% considered it a "moderate problem". This means that approximately 87% of respondents believed homelessness to be a problem in their community. As a result, residents' general perceptions of public safety are negatively affected.

- **Cavanaugh Park**- residents cited the park as a gathering place for the homeless. It is reported that residents don't visit the park as often as they would like due to the constant presence of homeless individuals.
 - **Park design** -due to the park's unique design, residents can conceal themselves behind walls, berms, and landscaping to sleep and engage in illegal activities.
- **Bridger Road Access**-there was frequent discussion of pedestrian access from Bridger Rd. to Cavanaugh Park as a contributing factor to the area's increased homeless population.
- **Lake Forest Marketplace**- business stakeholders in this shopping center reported a significant presence of homeless which impacts their businesses and perceptions of safety.



Public Safety Concerns

Residents feel unsafe-this perception was clear in the surveys, where 53% of respondents reported feeling "unsafe", as well as the conversations held with residents during the door-to-door canvassing and the community pop-up. When asked for the reason they feel unsafe, residents frequently cited the presence of homeless individuals, drug use at Cavanaugh Park, people living in vehicles and vehicles parked on the street.

- **Break-ins**- several residents reported home and vehicle break ins.
 - **Cavanaugh Rd.**-several residents reported attempts to break into homes/vehicles.
 - **Gowdy Ave.** -like their neighbors on Cavanaugh Rd., residents along Gowdy Ave. reported home burglaries, vehicle break-ins and car burglaries.
 - **Eaglemont Ave.**- break-ins were reported in backyards and storage units.

- **Lake Forest Marketplace**-a business stakeholder reported that homeless individuals often break into the electrical room of 23775 El Toro Rd.
- **Red Robin Way**-multiple homes have had mail stolen.

Crimes of opportunity - the Sheriff's department perceives that many of the crimes that occur in this neighborhood to be crimes of opportunity caused by people leaving vehicles/homes unlocked.



Property Maintenance

There is a general need for property maintenance which negatively impacts the appearance of the neighborhood. Residents openly recognize that maintenance is a problem, especially landscape maintenance, which 54% of survey respondents considered a problem.

Property improvements are particularly needed in the southern portion of the study area. The Communications LAB's survey team identified the following as the top maintenance needs:

- Landscaping
- Paint
- Broken driveways
- Greenbelt maintenance

When asked for the reasons for delaying needed improvements, 53% of residents cited financial considerations as the reason for delaying improvements on their property.

There is an abandoned property located at Swan Dr. that was the subject of many resident concerns in the northern portion of the study area. Code Enforcement is aware of this matter and is working with the property owner to identify solutions.

At the Lake Forest Marketplace, the Communications LAB team observed trash throughout the shopping center.



Greenbelt Maintenance

Confusion regarding maintenance-there appears to be confusion among residents regarding the maintenance of the greenbelts on the sidewalks. This misunderstanding may be contributing to the lack of maintenance observed.



Drug-related activities

While it is not reported to be a widespread problem, some residents reported concerns relating to drugs.

- **Cavanaugh Park**-residents reported Cavanaugh Park is a drug-use and sale spot. As reported earlier in this report, Communications LAB observed shoes dangling from power lines which some interpret to signal the location where drugs are sold.

- **Drug Sale Tip**-a resident anonymously reported that drugs are sold out of a home on Dune Mear Rd. To avoid law enforcement, a drone is reportedly used to scope the neighborhood. The address of the home where this is allegedly happening has been reported to the Sheriff's Department.
- **Needles at Cavanaugh Park** -several residents reported finding needles at Cavanaugh Park.



Lighting

The general lighting of the neighborhood was a top concern among residents. Among survey respondents 47% believed there is inadequate lighting in their neighborhood. The same sentiment was expressed by residents during the in-person assessments. Some areas in need of better lighting are:

- Cavanaugh Park
- Gowdy Ave. (near 23921)
- Eaglemont Ave. (near Rockfield Blvd)
- Dune Mear Rd. (near the entrances)
- Alderglen Dr. (end of the cul de sac)
- Red Robin Way (end of the cul de sac)



Bridger Rd. Businesses

Complex-there are businesses in this complex that contribute to residents' negative perceptions of public safety.

- **Appearance**- the business complex is in poor condition.
- **Marijuana dispensaries**- at least two illegal marijuana dispensaries have opened in this complex in the past year. Residents reported that patrons of the dispensaries smoked marijuana in the park and parked in front of their homes.
- **Trash bin**- residents would like the trash bin next to the complex to be enclosed. Large items are frequently dumped near the trash bins.
- **Family-friendly businesses**-there is a desire among residents to see more "family-friendly businesses" in this center.



Bridger Rd. Access

Cavanaugh Park access from Bridger Rd. is generally viewed negatively by residents. The access point facilitates the entry of homeless individuals into the neighborhood and the businesses on Bridger Rd. are considered unfavorable because of their nature and rundown appearance.



Park Improvements

Generally, Cavanaugh Park is frequently visited by residents, and they wish to see improvements made to the park. Most survey respondents reported visiting the park to walk their pets, followed by those who visit the park to engage in outdoor leisure activities like walking, running, jogging, or working out.

When asked what types of improvements they would like to see, residents frequently cited wanting to see a better playground and potentially exercise

equipment. In the survey, where residents were provided various options, resident responses varied:

- 53% of respondents would like to see a California Native Plant Garden.
- 46% would like outdoor exercise equipment.
- 46% would like an expanded playground
- 46% would like a park shelter/designated picnic areas.



Parking

In relation to parking, residents raised a variety of concerns.

- **The Timbers Residents Parking on Gowdy Ave.** -residents of The Timbers complex consistently park in the neighborhood, causing resident parking problems.
- **Gowdy Ave. Parked Vehicles**-there are many vehicles along Gowdy Ave. that do not appear to move. In particular, there are a lot of recreational vehicles parked on the street.
 - **Road blockage**-The cars parked alongside Gowdy Ave. make it difficult for vehicles to pass. This was corroborated by Communications LAB and was especially notable where the road curves. Communications LAB has provided City staff with photos of the blockage.
- **Too many vehicles per home**-43% of survey respondents cited “too many vehicles for a single home” as a moderate problem, while 29% considered it a major problem. This perception was corroborated during door-to-door canvassing efforts.
- **White Dove Dr.** -The Timbers residents sometimes park on this street affecting parking availability.



Noise Impacts

- **Home Depot**-store announcements can be heard inside the homes of residents living on Cavanaugh Rd. There is also recurring noise allegedly coming from delivery trucks in the early morning hours.
- **Construction Vehicles (Ridge Route)**- construction vehicles are parked at the end of Ridge Route (near 5 freeway). Residents report noise caused by trucks entering and exiting the street.



Graffiti

Residents in the area considered graffiti to be a moderate problem. In the survey, 53% of respondents reported graffiti as a moderate problem, while 20% considered it a major problem. There were several complaints from residents about graffiti removal delays.



Short-term rentals

The presence of short-term rentals on Duryea Dr. is generating concerns among residents. Residents reported that a property is rented nightly generating an increase in vehicles and impacting parking availability.



Trash

Due to the parking problems in the area, some residents reported having trouble taking out their trash bins for pick-up. This was especially notable on Alderglen Dr.



Street Sweeping

Streets are not being swept because of the lack of signage. Communications LAB corroborated the absence of signage throughout the neighborhood. Interestingly, the Sheriff's Department shared that residents get frustrated when enforcement occurs.



Other recommendations/observations:

- Residents also suggested wanting to see:
 - Improved landscaping on Rockfield Blvd.
 - Underground power lines
 - Limited soliciting- residents in the northern portion of the subject area reported that there is excessive soliciting from solar panel companies in the late evening (6-8 PM).
- Yield sign-it was suggested the addition of a yield sign for vehicles turning right from Rockfield Blvd. on to El Toro Rd. would be helpful.



Perceptions to be aware of:

- **Residents are unlikely to recommend this neighborhood** to friends and family looking for a place to live. (55% are unlikely to recommend this neighborhood. 20% were very unlikely while 33% were unlikely to recommend the neighborhood).
- **Residents do not believe cleanliness in their neighborhood is adequate.**
- **Residents like their neighbors**-when asked to explain why they like to live in this neighborhood, many residents mentioned living with their neighbors as the top reason.
- **Long-term Residents**-most of the residents we interacted with reported having lived in the neighborhood for 10-20+ years.
- **Low engagement**-stakeholders in the subject neighborhood appear to be generally unengaged. Only 16 stakeholders participated in the survey. Furthermore, staff believe that no residents in the subject area have taken any City classes.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Recommendations

The following are key recommendations for the consideration of the Lake Forest Neighborhood Improvement Task Force. These recommendations are suggestions based on community feedback and Communications LAB's assessment of the subject neighborhood.



Conduct Neighborhood Lighting Assessment

Evaluate and develop an action plan to improve neighborhood lighting to enhance perceptions of safety and security.

The following priority areas highlighted by residents should be considered:

- Cavanaugh Park
- Gowdy Ave. (near 23921)
- Eaglemont Ave. (near Rockfield Blvd)
- Dune Mear Rd. (near the entrances)
- Alderglen Dr. (end of the cul de sac)
- Red Robin Way (end of the cul de sac)



Promote Enhanced Property Maintenance and Compliance

Educate residents on the responsibility to maintain their properties. This can be achieved through a “code enforcement checklist” flyer or postcard detailing resident responsibilities, especially regarding landscaping. Information should also be included to address confusion over the maintenance of the greenbelts on the sidewalk.

It is important that the City be cognizant of the financial constraints that residents reported. The City should share information regarding programs available for low-income residents.

- *Options for consideration:*
 - Promote Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program
 - Promote Neighborhood Pride Paint Program
 - Promote Lead-based Paint Reduction Program
 - Host landscaping workshops
 - Partner with nonprofit organizations/religious organizations to assist elderly/disabled and low income with beautification projects.



Distribute Code Enforcement Checklist

Distribute the updated code enforcement checklist (currently in production) so that residents can assess their properties for potential code enforcement violations.



Host a Neighborhood Clean-Up Day

Encourage and empower residents to dispose of unwanted/unused items in their homes.



Assess Street Parking on Gowdy Ave.

Evaluate street parking on Gowdy Ave. to address issues brought up by residents. Specifically address “road blockages” created by vehicles parked alongside Gowdy Ave. where the road curves.

Options to consider:

- Extend “no parking anytime” restriction.



Proactive Street Sweeping Enforcement and Signage

Evaluate the addition of street sweeping signs to inform residents and other drivers of the sweeping schedule. This may assist in deterring vehicles that reportedly do not move on street sweeping day. Proactive enforcement and ticketing may also serve as an additional deterrent.



Assess Traffic Concerns for Action:

- Yield sign on Rockfield Blvd. and El Toro Rd.
- Speeding- residents on Cavanaugh Rd. and Dune Mear Rd. reported increased speeding incidents.



Address Bridger Rd. Access Point

To address concerns with the entry point, consult with planning professionals to assess solutions available to redesign/close Bridger Road. The access point is believed to facilitate the entry of homeless individuals into the neighborhood.



Address Concerns with Bridger Rd. Property

Given the negative perceptions residents have of this building and the multiple illegal marijuana dispensaries that have been housed at this location, it is important that the City maintain constant communication with the property owner to encourage them to maintain the property, trash bins, and do their due diligence before allowing a new business to operate. (NOTE: The address of the building has been shared with City staff.)

Other things to consider:

- Residents would like more “family-friendly businesses” in this center.



Noise Level Education

Distribute information to businesses in shopping centers adjacent to the subject neighborhood regarding City noise ordinance and discuss noise reports during early hours with management at Home Depot.

A conversation should also take place with the agency that owns the construction vehicles on Ridge Route to share resident complaints regarding the noise caused by the trucks entering and exiting the street.



Reimagine Cavanaugh Park

Evaluate the feasibility of redesigning Cavanaugh Park to remove reported opportunities for homeless activity and crime (walls, berms, hedges). Residents would also like to see a new playground that expands access to older age groups.

It is important to keep in mind that residents reported frequenting the park to walk their pets, followed by those who visit the park to engage in outdoor leisure activities like walking, running, jogging, or working out.

Other options to consider:

- Outdoor exercise equipment
- California native plant garden
- Install cameras to deter crime



Increase Patrolling

Evaluate the feasibility of increasing patrolling in the areas which reported criminal and drug activity:

- Cavanaugh Rd.
- Dune Mear Rd.
- Gowdy Ave.
- Eaglemont Ave.
- Red Robin Way
- Lake Forest Marketplace



Graffiti

Assess opportunities to enhance graffiti removal response time.



Raise Awareness of City's Efforts to Address Issues Related to Homelessness

In response to the reported significant presence of residents experiencing homelessness in the residential and business areas, it may be beneficial for community and business stakeholders to be informed of the City's general efforts to address this issue.

- *Options for consideration:*
 - Virtual Workshops on Homelessness Efforts: educate residents on City efforts to address issues related to homelessness and what can and cannot be enforced per state law.



Neighborhood Watch Program

Educate and encourage residents in the subject neighborhood to form neighborhood watch programs.



Beautification

- Improved landscaping on Rockfield Blvd.



Infrastructure repairs

Evaluate and address the merits of resident reports regarding the following issues:

- Underground power lines



Short-term rentals

Ensure that the property on Duryea Dr. has a permit to operate a short-term rental business. Investigate allegations that the property rents rooms on a nightly basis.



Assess Need for a City Facility in South Lake Forest

Assess opportunities to establish a City facility in South Lake Forest to meet community needs.



Promote Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

Given the proximity of this neighborhood to the freeway; it may be beneficial for residents in this neighborhood to participate in the program.

Opportunities to Enhance Communications



Community events: Community Stakeholders are open to the idea of participating in community events, especially community clean-ups, service projects, fairs, summer concerts and block parties.



Resident Resource Sub-Page: residents may benefit from the addition of a “Resources” subpage to the City website. The page could host information on direct resources like the Catalytic Converter Protection Program, Neighborhood Pride Paint Program, Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program, Lead Based Pain Reduction Program, and any other programs currently directly available to residents.



Continue to Inform residents of My360 App- 60% of residents who responded to the online survey reported not being aware of the City’s app. Given the benefits of the app and the recent launch of the new City app, it is important that the City continues to educate and encourage residents to download the app.

Look Ahead

Through this second Neighborhood Improvement Needs Assessment the City of Lake Forest is sending a powerful message to residents: ***Lake Forest cares.***

With this proactive approach, the City is engaging in a unique exercise, one in which residents are able to openly share their negative perceptions, and staff are open to listening and finding solutions.

We have confidence that the recommendations included in this report will help to guide the NITF to create an action plan that addresses neighborhood concerns and elevates the area’s quality of life perceptions.

Communications LAB is proud to have been a part of this process and looks forward to assisting the City of Lake Forest as it continues to strive for a better future.



Communications**LAB**
discover your voice