

Meeting Summary Report: Car Culture Community Listening Session #1
Meeting Date: July 15, 2023
Publication Date: September 1, 2023

Executive Summary

The purpose of this initial session was to provide a forum for County of Los Angeles and car culture community representatives to acknowledge common goals and brainstorm potential strategies to engage the wide range of unique cultures and community needs through streets, public space, and programming within unincorporated communities. This is the first session in a series of stakeholder discussions being held by the County of Los Angeles to plan to balance the use of roads and rights-of-way in unincorporated communities for successful cruising, travel, and other community uses.

The session included brief introductory remarks by the Office of Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, County Department of Public Works, and County Counsel, followed by facilitated discussions in smaller break out groups. Key goal outcomes of this session were to (1) develop a deeper understanding of the role streets, public spaces, and cruising play for the car culture community and (2) discuss ideas for projects and programmatic initiatives for the County of Los Angeles and its partners to consider in its efforts to address community needs.

Attachment 1 summarizes self-reported demographic characteristics of meeting participants.

Part 1: Understanding the significance of cruising

Group discussion participants were asked “How would you describe the importance of cruising in your life?” Key themes from responses include:

- Cruising is part of individual **identity**. Cruising is revered as part of personal and community history, culture, and heritage. It is a way of living that reflects participants’ strong bonds with their family, friends, and community, in a way that transcends generations and perceived differences.
- Cars are a **source of pride** and achievement. Car owners invest a lot of time and resources fixing up their cars and enjoy sharing their works of art with others who can appreciate the hard work that went into them.
- The cruising **community** is a supportive, positive group of like-minded people, many of whom matured over time and want to serve as role-models for the next generation.

Part 2: Motivations and Deterrents for Cruising

Group discussion participants were asked “Who or what influences your involvement in cruising?” and “What are the pros and the cons of cruising?”

Key motivations for cruising identified include:

- Building and maintaining **relationships** with friends, family, and other car lovers.
- Having **fun** with family and friends in a loving environment.
- Enjoying the moving **art show**.
- Giving and receiving **admiration** for the results of hard work invested in the cars.
- **Celebrating** the love for Whittier Blvd and its community of lowriders, including the furthering of Chicano **culture** and generational **family** traditions.
- Experiencing **freedom** and **relaxation** of driving aimlessly or to a destination.
- Leveraging car culture to **mentor** youth into channeling their energies into car designs, skill development, discipline, and hard work.
- Act of resistance and **protest** towards injustice in community. Feels parallel to civil rights movement.
- Attracting increased **commerce** for businesses.
- Supporting **philanthropic** cruising events that help the community through fundraisers, toy drives, giveaways, etc.

Key deterrents for cruising identified include:

- Experiencing traumatic incidents involving harassment, intimidation, disrespect, profiling, and stereotyping by **law enforcement**.
- Participation of uninvited non-lowrider groups who act irresponsibly and dangerously, then lowriders are blamed for illegal or violent behavior by **others**.
- Lack of culturally competent laws and enforcement that result in ticketing, impounding, damage, or destruction of vehicle by law enforcement.
- **Poor Road conditions**.
- Lack of **parking**.
- Getting **stereotyped** as gangsters or troublemakers.



Part 3: Suggestions for Pilot Projects and Programmatic Initiatives

Group discussion participants were asked “How do you think the County could help address the cons?” Top ideas for pilot projects and programmatic initiatives identified by participants include:

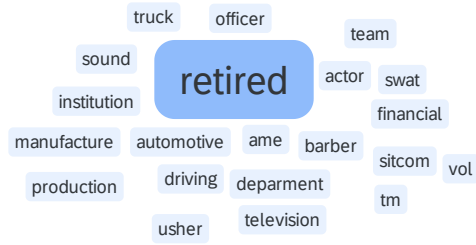
- **Create new special traffic operations program:** Based on effective practices and lessons learned from peer jurisdictions, such as City of Fontana monthly car shows on Sierra Ave and other Inland Empire cruising programs, facilitate organized cruising events on Whittier Blvd on days/times that do not interfere with businesses on the corridor. Have law enforcement (LASD) be part of the event, patrol on foot. Provide supportive traffic control/detours that ensure emergency response, including parking restrictions, during cruise events.
- **Provide new County staff training to grow cultural awareness and competency:** Develop and implement training for law enforcement, with input from the cruising community, to differentiate between cruisers, participants of illegal street takeovers, and other criminal activity.
- **Partner with car culture community on community events:** Highlight/support the good things the car clubs do; provide a space and additional resources for charitable events to be more effective.
- **Invest in new infrastructure and enhanced services at key corridors:** Provide more trash receptacles and litter maintenance and access to public restrooms. Provide traffic signal synchronization on Whittier Blvd. Build a parking structure with restrooms on Whittier Blvd to be used by car culture community, cultural tourists, residents, and business patrons.
- **Implement community-specific parking management:** Consider implementing peak period traffic regulations that designate more street parking on Whittier Blvd during events. Work with local businesses to open their parking lots for the events (i.e. Commerce Center in City of Commerce, etc.)
- **Prepare and adopt County AB 436 Work Plan:** Involve LASD, CHP, Department of Public Works, and Board Office decision-makers in future discussions on cruising and AB 436, with an emphasis on rebuilding trust through mutual respect and understanding. Prepare an action plan and timeline for transition upon AB 436 passage, including decriminalizing cruising and removing the “No Cruising” sign on Whittier Blvd.



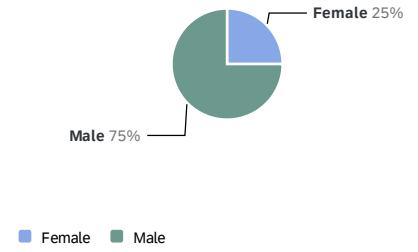
Next Steps

Following this initial meeting, Public Works will be planning at least 3 additional meetings to engage broader East Los Angeles community, Countywide stakeholders, and County and state agency partners who would be involved in future implementation of related projects and initiatives. Before the end of 2023, Public Works will host a final public meeting to present overall community and stakeholder engagement results and final recommendations.

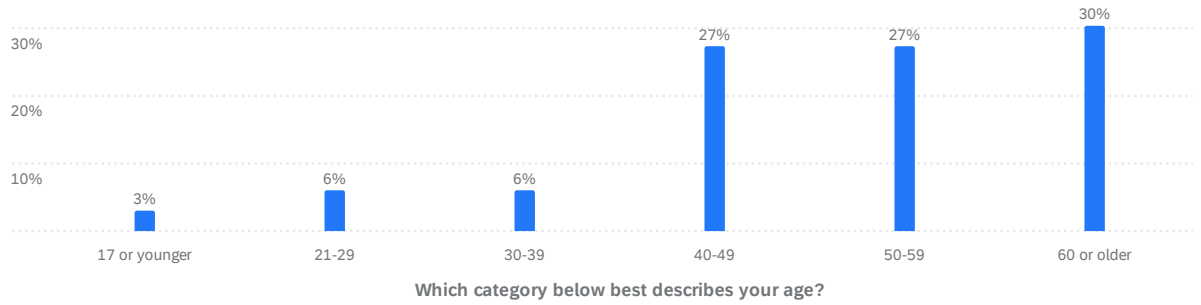
Other Work Industry 37



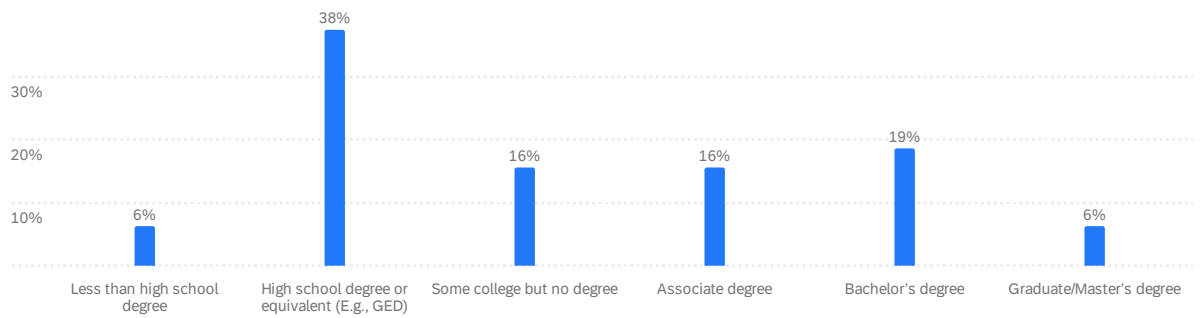
Gender 36



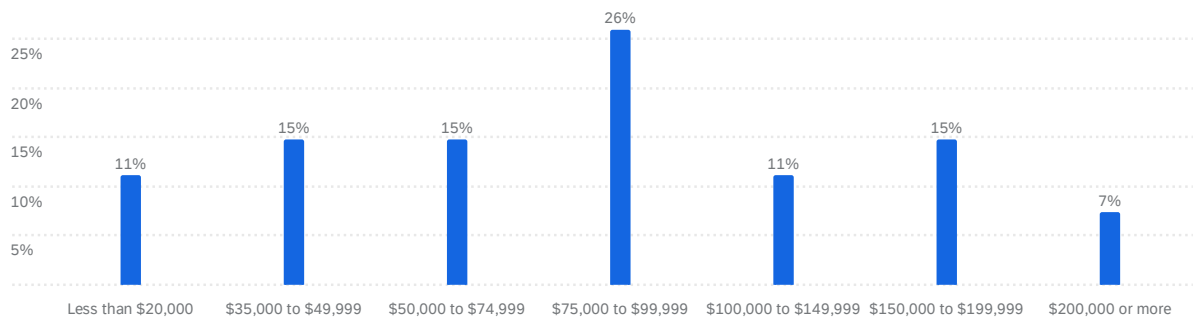
Age 33



Education 32



Household Income 27



Experience 21

Q9 - Anything else you would like to share with us about yourself or your experi...

Please pass AB436

My experience with cruising it's the core and dedication.

Retired educator (43 Years) Lausd. Been cruising since 1975, Imperials car club member, currently president of this legacy car club. Feel free to contact me: Eugene Hernandez cell- 213-407-1927 e-mail - mainvato@gmail.com
