

Community Engagement Report

Center for the Community Needs Assessment

August 2026

Authors: Miriam Hartig, Alexandra Rodriguez, Cora Murray
Contributors: Clara Zervigon, Daniel Lew, Alyssa Serrano



Summary

The following report provides an overview of CORE's efforts to engage the Altadena community in the early stages of development for the Center for the Community. The Center will include a physical structure and outdoor space located at 2231 N Woodbury Ave and will serve as a social, cultural, and healing-focused "third space". The intent of this process was to ensure that Altadena residents, especially those residing in the immediate vicinity, were meaningfully included in the process of developing the look, feel, and purpose of The Center. Over the course of four months (January – April 2026) CORE spoke directly to nearly 200 residents via focus groups, stakeholder interviews, door knocking, and tabling community events. Additionally, informational materials outlining multiple options for feedback were distributed to 450 more homes.

The community's vision for The Center prioritizes a vibrant, welcoming space that fosters recovery through connection, utilizing shared arts, food, and culture as scaffolding for long-term healing. Key programming desires encompass cultural arts and live events, flexible co-working infrastructure for remote or displaced workers, intergenerational learning (including teen, senior, and adult workforce development initiatives), native gardening and green spaces, and dedicated resources for affinity groups. While the community expressed enthusiasm for The Center, engagement highlighted critical neighborhood anxieties—such as traffic congestion, parking constraints, container structural safety, long-term operational sustainability, service duplication, and potential commercial displacement. To address these concerns, CORE is implementing proactive mitigation strategies, including off-site overflow parking agreements, strict adherence to LA County structural codes, local merchant partnerships, local-first hiring, and establishing a Resident Advisory Board for ongoing community governance.

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I. Background

In January 2026, one year after the Eaton fire destroyed over 9,000 structures and claimed 19 lives in Altadena, CORE (Community Organized Relief Effort) began pre-construction of a community center on Lincoln Avenue north of Woodbury Road. LA County Development Authority (LACDA) leased this lot to CORE with the request that it be used to serve the Altadena community in its recovery from the fire. With the structure designed by the award-winning architect Shigeru Ban, CORE will open the doors of The Center for the Community (“The Center”) in Winter 2026. The Center will focus on providing social, cultural, and healing-focused resources for the Altadena community. The space is intended to complement CORE's existing Rebuild Hub on Lake Avenue, which will continue to focus on the technical recovery and rebuilding processes.

With the intention of developing a center that realizes the vision and desires of the local community, CORE also launched a community engagement initiative in January 2026. Meaningful community involvement includes providing many opportunities and avenues for community voices to be heard and allowing those voices to drive the vision and evolution of the project. The next section describes CORE's process for engaging the community, documenting feedback, and how CORE is already using community engagement to drive the project.

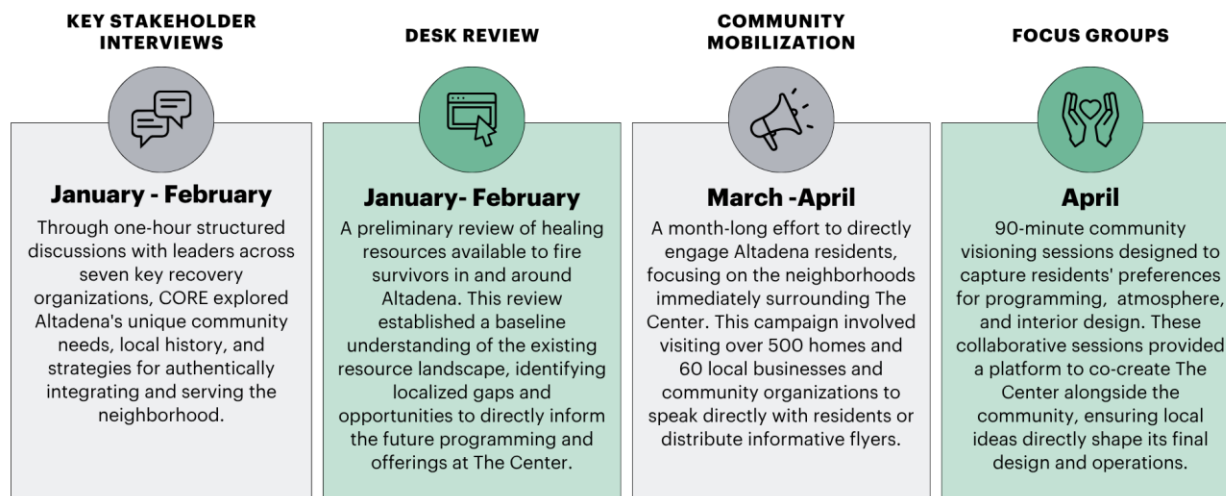


Image 1. Altadena resident stands in front of a custom mural at CORE's Rebuild Hub.

II. Methods

CORE used three modalities to collect feedback from the community: Key Stakeholder Interviews (KSI), Community Mobilization, and Focus Groups. In addition to these activities, CORE conducted a preliminary desk review of resources in January and February 2026.

Community Engagement Timeline 2026



Desk Review of Resources

In January and February 2026, CORE performed a preliminary desk review of resources available to fire survivors in and around the Altadena area. The review focused on community resources that represent the types of events, programs, and activities CORE plans to offer at the forthcoming Center such as creative and expressive arts, mental wellness, and cultural events. Resources were identified through community calendars, online research, and discussion with resource providers. CORE also incorporated recommendations from evaluations from its previous wildfire response programs to inform program planning. See Section 5 for a summary of findings.

Key Stakeholder Interviews

To capture a range of perspectives, seven interviews were conducted in January and February 2026 with community leaders representing various demographic segments and specialized interest groups of fire survivors. The interviews were facilitated as a guided discussion and lasted for 45-60 minutes. KSI's were transcribed and analyzed to highlight themes around ideas for programming, atmosphere of the center, community culture, and resilient rebuilding. The conversations illuminated strong concerns from the community residing in the blocks adjacent to The Center (see Section 4 for a complete list of community concerns). Based on this feedback, CORE developed a community mobilization plan to

directly engage these residents. CORE was not able to connect with all planned stakeholders and is continuing outreach to several other community leaders.

Key Stakeholder Interview Participating Organizations
Completed: Altadena Town Council, Eaton Fire Collaborative, Eaton Fire Survivors Network, Department of Angels, Day One, LA4LA, Eaton Fire Residents United
Prospective: CHIRLA, PACTL, My Tribe Rise, Altagether (block captains)

Community Mobilization

In an effort to increase engagement with The Centers’ immediate neighbors, CORE carried out community mobilization efforts during March and April 2026. CORE hired a dedicated community mobilizer who led efforts to door knock all residents within a three-block radius of The Center (Table 1). The team knocked on over 250 doors on the west side of Lincoln Ave. immediately surrounding the lot, speaking with any residents they encountered either at their homes or in the neighborhood and leaving informational flyers where contact was not made. On the east side of Lincoln Ave. flyers were left at another 200+ homes. The team also spoke with 33 local businesses and 34 community organizations.

During mobilization, the team informed community members about plans for The Center, answered questions, and recorded feedback. Residents and business owners were also invited to attend upcoming focus groups or to submit feedback through a virtual comment box. The team also attended the Altadena Farmer’s Market, a Juicy Little Society food distribution event, and a community market at Sacred Heart Church, which served as other less formal opportunities to engage with residents.

Community Mobilization Engagements	
Total homes visited	538
Spoke to household	88
Flyer only	450
Total businesses spoken to	31
Total community organizations spoken to	34

Focus Groups

In tandem with community mobilization, CORE held four 90-minute focus groups: for any community members, one specifically for business owners, and one for Spanish speaking residents. Through a guided discussion and interactive design activity, the focus groups gathered insight into the desired feel and aesthetic of The Center’s indoor and outdoor spaces as well as ideas for programming and events that reflect the interests and needs of community members.



Image 2. CORE hosts a mosaic-making event at the Lincoln Lot.

III. Community Engagement Findings: Community Ideas and Vision

CLOSE-KNIT, YET FRAGMENTED

"...it's more united than it was before. But it wasn't fractured because of infighting, it was fractured just because there's so many different niches of people, and, you know, different generations..."

"I would definitely think that would be something important to consider that people grew up together. We're like family. Everybody knows pretty much everybody."

INDEPENDENT

"...don't tell me what I should be growing in my backyard!"

"Untamable, fiercely independent".

"The most unique place you'll ever live."

Throughout the community engagement process, residents and stakeholders told us what is beautiful and distinctive about Altadena

NATURE-RICH

"...you're right next to nature. You have owls and bears and all this other stuff. And then, you know, you have horses. We have more horses on our street than cars, oftentimes, going up and down the street."

DIVERSE

"[Residents] drive everything from Bentley's to horses."

"It's been a historically Black and Brown area and one that has been largely a place where whoever you are ... you've been allowed to thrive."

3a. Visions for The Center

A place people want to be.

As stakeholders envisioned The Center, a clear sentiment emerged around the ethos and feel: residents are not looking for another recovery center or survivor space. These spaces already exist in Altadena, and although necessary, they can feel utilitarian and provide a reminder of the fire and ongoing stress of recovery. Rather, the community envisions a space that centers joy, community, and connection. A vibrant and collaborative “third space” that can act as a social and cultural hub and foster long-term healing through shared positive experiences.

Words used by residents to describe the center:



Cultivating the Lincoln Corridor. The location on Lincoln Ave. presents an opportunity to align The Center’s development with broader civic goals. Stakeholders noted that Altadena has a rich history of community visioning, and developing this specific site can address several long-standing neighborhood priorities, particularly:

- This lot has been vacant for many years. Residents view this project as an opportunity to transform a “historically neglected” space into a visually appealing, community-celebrated asset.
- There is a strong community preference for the site to be highly walkable, pedestrian-friendly, and physically integrated into the fabric of the existing commercial corridor. This includes strategic and intentional participation in the ongoing effort to transform the Lincoln corridor.
- Residents also expressed a desire to see the site incorporate multi-modal transit assets, including a dedicated bike-share station, a public DIY bike-repair stand equipped with tools, and a potential public bus or community shuttle stop.

Recovery through connection. Rather than viewing mental health support as a standalone, clinical service, the community suggested a model of “recovery through connection.” In this framework, cultural programming, shared food, arts, and informal gatherings serve as structural scaffolding for mental health and disaster recovery. By anchoring The Center’s activities in joy and mutual support, the community can organically encounter healing conversations and rebuild social cohesion.

3b. Programming Themes

Community members had many ideas for programming at The Center which are categorized into the following programming themes.

Theme 1: Cultural Arts, Music, and Historical identity

Drawing on Altadena's rich history as a home to many artists and creatives, residents view arts and culture as foundational tools for collective healing, narrative preservation, and community expression.

- **Performing Arts:** Recognizing the recent loss of local creative spaces, residents suggested incorporating a flexible performing arts footprint. This area could host intimate cultural events, live comedy shows and independent theater productions, providing a dedicated stage for local storytellers.
- **Visual Arts and Creative Workshops:** The community envisions a dynamic environment featuring changing art displays and dedicated workshop spaces. This gives local artists an affordable, accessible venue to create new work, collaborate with peers, and share their processes with the neighborhood.
- **Live Community Events:** To foster shared joy and connection, The Center's design should accommodate recurring gatherings. Highly requested activities include live concert series, outdoor movie screenings, and community social dancing events, such as salsa nights.
- **Literary and Dialogue Series:** Participants expressed a strong interest in structured intellectual and creative dialogue, recommending programming such as neighborhood book clubs, community storytelling nights, historical lectures, and public talks led by local professionals.

Theme 2: Collective Third Space & Co-Working Hub

Residents envisioned The Center as a flexible, welcoming "third space" that bridges the gap between home and public life, specifically designed to meet the operational and personal needs of remote workers or displaced residents.

- **Flexible Co-Working Infrastructure:**
Focus group participants frequently cited a lack of localized, drop-in workspaces with robust digital infrastructure. Residents requested a WeWork-type layout equipped with reliable internet, dedicated computer workstations, and quiet, private rooms available for reservation. This infrastructure would benefit individuals managing insurance claims, working remotely, or navigating long-term housing recovery. Respondents noted that while local assets like the Bob Lucas Library are invaluable, their limited individual workstation capacity creates a distinct service gap in the neighborhood.



Image 3. CORE staff at the Rebuild Hub.

- **Respite and "Hover" Space:**
Stakeholders identified a need for a fluid, low-barrier lounge area tailored to displaced residents. This zone is designed as a comfortable resting place to charge devices and

access technology between appointments, case management meetings, or daily transitions.

- **Informal Socialization:** To encourage organic community building, the space could incorporate a pop-up coffee shop environment or casual cafe-style seating. This provides a relaxed setting where neighbors can cross paths, converse, and access peer-to-peer support without the formality of a structured program.

Theme 3: Intergenerational Learning and Programming

To cultivate long-term community resilience, focus group data emphasized programming that spans generations—offering structured, safe environments for youth, development opportunities for adults, and active inclusion for seniors.

- **Dynamic Youth and Teen Spaces:** Key Stakeholder Interviews highlighted a gap in dedicated, non-institutional spaces for local adolescents. The community envisions a distinct teen space where youth can comfortably hang out, process shared challenges, and build community together. Specific focus group suggestions include a dedicated game closet, regular D&D (Dungeons & Dragons) nights, hands-on woodworking and tinkering workshops, and youth-led skill-building classes that empower teens to teach their peers.
- **Continuing Adult Education and Workforce Development:** To support economic stabilization and increase household income potential, The Center could host professional development lectures, practical job skills training, and bilingual computer and technology literacy classes.
- **On-Site Childcare Accommodations:** Both focus groups and Key Stakeholder Interviews recommended childcare as an enabler for equity and access. Parents and caregivers stated that it would make it considerably easier for them to participate in workshops, classes, or other services if there were on-site, child-friendly accommodations.
- **Senior and Elder Integration:** Dedicated, accessible social programming should be developed to prevent isolation among local seniors, ensuring that elders are celebrated and structurally integrated into the daily life of The Center.

Theme 4: Nature and Environmental Programming

Reflecting Altadena's cultural identification with nature and the ecological realities of disaster recovery, environmental programming emerged as a key pillar for both personal wellness and community-wide environmental justice.

- **Native Gardening and Environmental Justice:** Focus group members strongly advocated utilizing The Center's outdoor footprint to build a demonstration garden centered on native plants, water-wise landscaping, and ecological cultivation. Stakeholders tied this physical asset to environmental justice, calling for targeted soil toxicity, contamination education, and soil restoration classes. This programming can equip residents with reliable, scientific, and factual tools to safely navigate environmental recovery on their own properties as well as teach them about the native ecology.
- **Green Spaces for Rest and Connection:** Beyond structured classes and educational workshops, participants expressed a strong desire for a beautifully landscaped garden and green outdoor space dedicated to rest and informal gathering. Residents emphasized the need for quiet, shaded seating areas where neighbors can sit, unwind,

and socialize in a natural setting. This outdoor footprint is envisioned as a peaceful, open-air extension of the center that promotes daily mental well-being and organic community connection.

- **Experiential Outdoor and Culinary Activities:** To build community connection through nature, participants suggested community-led plant clipping trade days, healthy cooking workshops that celebrate shared family and cultural recipes, and organized carpool meetups to make local hiking trails more accessible to all residents.

Theme 5: Affinity Group

To ensure The Center remains genuinely inclusive and protective of marginalized populations, community feedback highlighted the need to prioritize dedicated, culturally competent spaces and programming for specific affinity networks. Participants explicitly asked to see consistent resources allocated to support:

- LGBTQ+ community networks and youth groups
- Local Scout troops and traditional youth organizations
- Native and Indigenous communities, highlighting ancestral ties to the local ecology

3d. Collaborative Management and Local Business Partnerships

A successful, sustainable community hub requires a reciprocal relationship with the immediate commercial ecosystem along the corridor. During the listening sessions, neighboring business owners expressed realistic operational anxieties regarding the project—specifically centering on potential traffic increases, parking constraints, duplication of existing services, and a fear of being asked to provide professional services without fair compensation.

However, despite these concerns, local merchants expressed a high level of enthusiasm for the project and are eager to co-design mutually beneficial, hyper-local economic partnerships that drive foot traffic back to the corridor. Some of the examples brainstormed include:

- **Commercial Pop-Ups and Food Trucks:** Integrating a flexible outdoor plaza space that hosts rotating local business pop-ups and food truck spots, directly introducing The Center's visitors to local commercial offerings.
- **Integrated Business Services:** Partnering with local businesses to integrate their specialties directly into larger community events. For example, a neighboring dog grooming business floated the idea of setting up a booth at a weekend community resource day to distribute treats and pet care guidance, enhancing their customer base while supporting Center visitors.
- **Catering Local Gatherings:** Committing an operational budget to hire local, disaster-impacted restaurants to cater The Center's events and gatherings.
- **Local Instructional Contracts:** Instead of relying entirely on volunteer labor, The Center can actively hire local experts and business owners (such as neighborhood ceramics instructors or tradespeople) to facilitate paid classes, cycling financial resources directly back into the neighborhood economy.

IV. Community Concerns and Mitigation Strategies

While the creative visions outlined above provide a blueprint for The Center's programming, turning these aspirations into reality requires a balanced approach. To ensure equity and long-term operational viability, the project's next phase must carefully address the complex structural barriers, hidden populations, financial realities, and neighborhood anxieties detailed in the table below:

PARKING AND TRAFFIC	
Concerns: Residents, particularly in the neighborhood immediately surrounding the Center, voiced concerns about the limited availability of parking at the Center. Particularly, residents are concerned that The Center will cause parking congestion on the streets immediately surrounding The Center, which already accommodates parking demand from the Lincoln corridor. Residents voiced that parking limitations may be particularly acute if The Center is to serve as an event space. Events will create higher demand for parking during short windows of time. Parking poses a more serious problem for seniors and those with limited mobility who are unable to park and walk from surrounding areas. Some residents are concerned that The Center may increase local traffic along the Lincoln corridor, which provides key connection to schools, businesses, and highways.	Mitigation Strategies: CORE, in cooperation with LA County, has secured parking at the LA County lot on Lincoln Ave. during the construction of The Center to reduce construction-related parking congestion. As of June 2026, CORE has secured roughly 50 parking spots at Community Bible Church for weekday evening parking and is in discussions with neighboring establishments to secure other overflow parking opportunities following The Center's opening.
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIP	
Concerns: Residents are concerned that they are being left out of key decisions about The Center's development that will impact their neighborhood and community.	Mitigation Strategies: Community engagement is an ongoing process that is constantly evolving to address community feedback. CORE has expanded its engagement to include a door-

Residents are wary of outsiders and new projects in the wake of the fire given their lived experience with unreliable and predatory actors. Residents are concerned that community engagement may be approached as an afterthought, rather than as a meaningful step of program development. Seniors and those with low digital literacy may have been less engaged due to technological barriers.	to-door community mobilization campaign and will continue to adjust its approach according to community input. Transparency comes before trust. CORE is committed to keeping the community up to date with The Center's development. CORE has created a listserv to provide updates regarding The Center's construction and opening. Community members can sign up here: <u>listserv</u>. Additionally, a Town Hall will be hosted prior to The Center's opening to discuss Community Engagement efforts, programming ideas, and concerns related to the project. The Center's programming will be rooted in the ideas, concerns, and feedback provided during the community engagement process. Looking forward, The Center will integrate community decision-making into its programming, including through the development of a Resident Steering Committee/Advisory Board. Collaboration with trusted community organizations, including Altadena Town Council members, will be central to The Center's program development and implementation. Some community members have raised alternative visions for the use of The Center's lot. The Center will incorporate these ideas wherever possible to make this a functional and desirable space for neighbors. Community ideas that CORE is currently exploring include providing a temporary post office and/or drop box, dog area, and outdoor garden.
PRESERVING NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER AND AFFORDABILITY	
Concerns: Residents shared concerns that The Center's design does not match the look and feel of Altadena and/or the Lincoln corridor.	Mitigation Strategies: CORE will partner with neighboring businesses, including restaurants, shops, and salons for pop up events and special promotions to increase patronage and support the existing establishments along Lincoln corridor.

Residents expressed concern that The Center could take space away from a potential business. Some residents raised concerns that The Center, a new, high-design building, is indicative of the development of higher price point establishments, creating a more expensive corridor that displaces traditional businesses and the existing customer base of the corridor.	Community feedback will drive decisions related to the remaining elements of The Center's design, including the use of outdoor space, and interior design. The Center will also explore ways to tailor the look and feel of The Center to the community, such as incorporating local artist murals and landscaping design that matches the character of Altadena.
MISALIGNMENT WITH COMMUNITY NEEDS	
Concerns: Some residents shared that the intended purpose of The Center, to support emotional and community wellbeing, does not address the community's immediate financial and rebuilding priorities. Residents raised concerns that The Center's programming may reach a limited number of residents and that these residents may not be those who would benefit the most from wellbeing support. Many members of the community are still struggling to meet basic needs. These residents may desire and benefit from social-emotional wellbeing programs, but they have the least amount of time and resources to visit The Center.	Mitigation Strategies: Recovery encompasses many competing needs. The Center is not intended to meet all of these needs, but rather to meet particular gaps in services related to wellness and community healing. The local recovery landscape is defined by profound community power, with community-based organizations serving as a primary engine for rebuilding and financial recovery support. The Center's community and wellness programming will dovetail with the services offered by these organizations. The Center will maintain close relationships with organizations focused on the technical side of recovery, including the CORE Hub, to ensure that the Center serves as a connector to complementary services.
BUSINESS CONCERN	
Concerns: Some business owners in the Lincoln corridor raised concern that The Center's programming may compete with their services, particularly if free programs similar to their service are offered at The Center.	Mitigation Strategies: The Center will make every effort to promote local business patronage, including by partnering with local establishments for events and pop-ups.

SUSTAINABILITY OF PROGRAMMING AND MANAGEMENT OF CENTER	
Concerns: Residents voiced concerns about what the future plans are for the Center following its one-year lease to CORE.	Mitigation Strategies: Programming at The Center is a partnership between CORE and LA County. CORE will see to the construction and initial programming- which includes bringing partners on board to ensure the sustainability of continued programming. LA County Department of Aging and Disabilities (AD) and Department of Mental Health (DMH) are already onboarding as early partners and will maintain a continuous presence in the programming of The Center.
SAFETY	
Concerns: Community members expressed that the Center needs to feel safe and secure.	Mitigation Strategies: Establishing a safe space where residents feel comfortable is at the core of The Center's mission. CORE will ensure that The Center is well lit, maintains a secure environment, and is a welcoming, comforting space for all of Altadena.
SAFETY OF SHIPPING CONTAINERS	
Concerns: Residents are concerned about the age of shipping containers causing rust and weakening the structural integrity of the building. Residents are also concerned that reused containers may have been used to transport harsh chemicals, leading to potential chemical contamination.	Mitigation Strategies: Shipping containers are a signature part of architect Shigeru Ban's humanitarian relief design concept, which he has deployed after disasters around the world, including the 2011 tsunami in Fukushima. We are working closely with the Shigeru Ban team to ensure the maximum structural integrity of the containers. This means that containers used for the Center will be treated with specialty rust-resistant paint and carefully modified to ensure structural integrity and safety. LA County has strict regulations regarding the use of shipping containers in a structure. Accordingly, this project meets all relevant LA Department of Building and

	Safety regulations to ensure the safety of our residents.
DUPLICATION OF PROGRAMMING	
Concerns: Concern whether the center will provide redundant resources or take resources away from existing organizations	Mitigation Strategies: We plan to offer complementary services that are not duplicative of services offered elsewhere and to collaborate with local organizations to offer a space to provide their programming and services if they so desire.
LOCAL HIRING	
Concerns: Residents expressed that The Center should provide employment opportunities to local residents.	Mitigation Strategies: CORE will prioritize local residents for all hiring decisions related to The Center personnel.

V. Desk Review Findings: Community Healing Needs and Service Gaps

Altadena is not just a site of recovery, but a high-functioning hub of mutual aid and localized innovation. Community engagement activities revealed an abundant landscape of resources relating to community wellbeing and wellness, supported primarily by community-based organizations, indicative of an innovative and self-reliant ecosystem. However, while a high concentration of resources exists, services appear to be unevenly distributed across different needs, populations, and geographies. The Center aims to address these gaps through its programming, providing a stable environment for neighbors to reconnect and heal within their own neighborhood.

Service Gaps

Through community conversations and a formal desk review of over 60 distinct resources, a few common themes were identified relating to service gaps. These include community gathering spaces, senior programming, teen programming, and flexible spaces with co-working and childcare opportunities. The desk review conducted in March 2026 largely underscored these community sentiments, finding that while Altadena is resource-rich in mind and body wellness resources and youth and family programming, there were

noticeably fewer resources available for seniors, cultural and community events, and nature-based healing activities.

The table below highlights key gaps that were commonly identified in community conversations and underscored by the desk review:

Cultural and Community Gatherings	With the loss of many traditional gathering spaces, like churches, schools, parks, and neighborhood establishments that provided sources of natural, informal connection, Altadena residents expressed that they have fewer opportunities to see one another. A space that offers emotional connection, joy, and collective healing could provide the scaffolding that supports other areas of recovery.
Senior Programming	Altadena seniors, who make up a large proportion of the community, are being left out of recovery efforts. Low levels of technology adoption, social isolation, mobility issues, cognitive barriers, and financial constraints often prevent seniors from connecting with vital resources. Programming should be designed to specifically address the needs and requirements that senior communities in Altadena face to best support their recovery.
Nature Based Healing	Given that Altadena is a community known for both its physical and emotional connection with nature, programming that speaks to this subject area could be a compelling gap to fill.
Mental Health and Wellness	Community members shared that mental health is an ongoing struggle in the Altadena community. The community also expressed that mental health is the foundation of recovery. While our Desk Review revealed a significant concentration of mental and physical wellness resources such as meditation and yoga classes, the community may benefit from additional programming that focuses on unmet needs. For example, Key Stakeholders expressed a desire for wellness offerings for community leaders to prevent burnout.
Youth Resources	While the Desk Review found that family programming is well-represented in the existing pool of resources, further community conversations revealed a desire for more youth-centered resources. In particular, community members desired a space that offered childcare resources and a flexible space for kids to study, hang out, and play while their parents focus on rebuilding tasks. The Desk Review also found fewer youth resources centered on teen programming, another area that community members voiced support for.

Flexible Spaces	With fewer storefronts, gathering venues, and community spaces, community members often lack in-between spaces to go in Altadena. While some businesses do offer a place to sit, work, and relax, there are few free spaces that offer this hospitality, or if they do, they are not big enough to accommodate the need. Community members expressed that The Center could fill this gap.
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Missing Groups

Community conversations highlighted that there is a need for more resources targeted toward underserved groups, such as seniors, language minorities, LGBTQ+ communities, women, and low-income residents. Our Desk Review supported these comments, identifying that community resources are predominantly open to the general public, and a potential gap exists in dedicated services for seniors, women, and the LGBTQ+ community. Community members highlighted additional underserved populations that did not appear in our Desk Review, including renters, unhoused survivors, language minorities, and low technology households.

Neighborhood Access

The Center offers an opportunity to move resources closer to home. Our desk review revealed a large portion of the current resources are geographically concentrated in Pasadena and specific parts of West Altadena. Currently, Altadena-based services are largely limited to a few resilient locations—such as local libraries, the Eaton Fire Collaboratory, and Loma Alta Park—which serve as vital anchors for a community that has lost many of its traditional gathering places. The Center represents an opportunity to bring more resources back to Altadena and provide a healing environment for neighborhood connection.



Image 4. Groundbreaking for the Center for Community in January 2026.

VI. Next Steps and Recommendations

The community engagement process has established that The Center should serve as a community-driven, holistic "third space" that embeds collective healing within programming dedicated to culture, economic stability, and connection. Community engagement is not a finalized phase; it is an ongoing process that will actively continue through the remainder of pre-construction, construction, and the long-term running of the Center. To operationalize resident feedback, CORE plans to take the following actions:



Image 5. CORE staff and community member at the Rebuild Hub.

Pre-construction and site activation

While the physical building undergoes the final stages of the permitting and pre-construction process, CORE will actively prepare the site and establish foundational logistics to ensure seamless integration into the Lincoln corridor:

Securing Sustainable Parking Solutions: CORE will continue working closely with LA County to ensure construction-phase parking solutions remain intact. As of June 2026, CORE has secured weekday evening parking spots at Community Bible Church and is actively finalizing formal agreements with local neighborhood entities to secure reliable overflow parking lots for larger events and peak programming hours.

Integrating Local Business Partnerships: CORE is proactively working with neighboring businesses to co-design economic partnerships prior to The Center's opening. This includes ensuring a portion of the operational budget is allocated to hiring local, disaster-impacted restaurants and food trucks for center catering, as well as establishing partnerships to hire local artisans, tradespeople, and business owners for paid instructional roles.

Activating the Lot with Community Events: To begin addressing community programming suggestions immediately and demonstrate immediate site activation, CORE will host a series of low-barrier, pop-up events directly on the vacant lot this summer. These activities—such as outdoor acoustic music circles, local business pop-up markets, and salsa nights—will offer a tangible preview of The Center's future culture and bring neighbors together in a shared space of joy.

Feedback Opportunities

To ensure the design and programming of the facility remain responsive to changing neighborhood dynamics, CORE will expand its communication channels and implement structured feedback mechanisms:

Focus Groups: CORE will host a second wave of interactive focus groups towards the end of the summer and early fall. This round will feature co-design sessions geared specifically for local teens, seniors, and other groups identified as “missing” from recovery conversations.

Virtual Comment Box & Listserv: To maintain an immediate, transparent feedback loop, CORE has launched:

1. A dedicated email for the center (centerforcommunity@coreresponse.org),

2. A listserv for regular updates (sign up here: [STAY IN THE LOOP! CORE Center for the Community Updates Form](#)), and

3. A virtual comment box for feedback: [QUESTIONS? COMMENTS? LET US KNOW!](#)

Pre-Opening Community Town Hall: Prior to the grand opening in Winter 2026, CORE will facilitate a comprehensive, bilingual (English/Spanish) public town hall. This forum will serve as a transparent platform to present the finalized community-driven design updates, outline initial program calendars, and directly address remaining neighbor anxieties regarding local traffic and logistics.

Long-term Community Involvement

To ensure The Center transitions from a project managed *for* the community into a center owned and operated *by* the community, CORE will take the following actions to ensure sustainability of The Center and its programs:

- **Establishing a Resident Advisory Board:** CORE will launch a formal application process to establish a local advisory board. This committee will help drive programming decisions and serve as a liaison between the community's desires and CORE's project administration.
- **Implementing a Local Hiring Priority:** To stimulate economic stabilization and ensure The Center's staff mirrors the neighborhood it serves, CORE will institute a local-first hiring policy. Preference for all new positions at The Center will be given to Altadena residents.
- **Iterative Programming Review:** Rather than relying on static annual schedules, the center will implement an iterative quarterly program review. In collaboration with the Resident Steering Committee, this process will use continuous data collection from physical suggestion boxes, digital surveys, and attendance patterns to dynamically adapt workshops, classes, and affinity group resources to meet real-time neighborhood needs.
- **Long-Term Transition Planning:** True community partnership requires an intentional exit strategy. CORE will utilize the ongoing community engagement process over the center's multi-year operational lease to lay the groundwork for long-term sustainability. Through constant consultation with local leaders, the team will eventually co-design a seamless leadership and management transition to a trusted, permanent local grassroots organization or to LA County management. Additionally, CORE is working with LA County to establish several day-one partners who are committed to staying through the transition. This ensures that The Center will be operational during its eventual transitional period, and that at no time will the building be left vacant.