

MEMORANDUM

Date: March 20, 2026

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Gerry Beaudin, City Manager
Heidi Murphy, Library and Recreation Director

Subject: Pleasanton Connects Network

Pleasanton Connects is a Workday Foundation initiative, with participation from the City of Pleasanton, designed to strengthen community connections across divisions and foster a more unified, resilient Pleasanton. Comprehensive community surveys, in-depth one-on-one interviews, and a community kick-off meeting have been completed to better understand the current state of social cohesion, identify barriers to connection, and illuminate opportunities for building stronger relationships among residents.

A network composed of 28 leaders has been identified from a cross-section of the community to: build relationships, gain skills for communicating across differences, and design and implement a community plan to foster greater connection throughout Pleasanton. Each member of the network has participated in extensive communication training, including active listening, and has agreed to meet monthly for 18 months.

The first two meetings took place in January and February 2026. The first meeting was a kickoff that focused on sharing information and setting priorities for the next 18 months.

The second meeting in February focused on unpacking what belonging and social connection look like in Pleasanton to begin to design a strategy for how to improve them.

Summaries of the first two meetings are included here as attachments.

Attachments:

1. Summary of January 2026 Pleasanton Connects Meeting
2. Summary of February 2026 Pleasanton Connects Meeting



Pleasanton Connects Begins!

January 27, 2026

Dear Pleasanton Connects Network Leaders & Supporters,

Ready...set...**launched!**

Our inaugural monthly meeting took place Tuesday, January 27 at the Amador Recreation Center, and it was an incredibly productive 90 minutes.

Together, the Network:

- Learned more about the Workday Foundation and the City of Pleasanton (see “Group Bios” below)

- Adopted a shared agreement to guide how we communicate within the Network
- Reviewed our collective “arc of focus” for the next 18 months
- Examined initial survey findings on relationships and civic engagement in Pleasanton
- Surfaced key priorities and insights through small-group discussion

The next Network meeting will focus on residents’ reported sense of belonging and their desire to connect — and will explore whether and how these social connection indicators are linked to broader outcomes in Pleasanton.

In the meantime, if you are a part of the Pleasanton Connects Network, please keep an eye out for a brief survey to help us select a logo and communications platform. And for Network members and supporters alike, be sure to check out January highlights and the slide deck below!

Group Bios

Each month the Network will showcase TWO groups or organizations. In January, we learned "what, why, and how" behind the Workday Foundation and the City of Pleasanton. (Click on either to see their full presentation within the slide deck.).

About the Workday Foundation



**56M+ in grants
since 2013**

Grants since 2013



Focus: Elevating human
potential in the age of AI

Workforce Development

Human Connection



Global and Local
Partnerships

OVERVIEW

- FULL-SERVICE CITY
- 456 FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES
- FIVE ELECTED OFFICIALS
- ANNUAL GENERAL FUND BUDGET OVER \$160 M



Network Leaders: Would you like to present your group/organization in February? [Shoot us a note!](#)

Network Norms

Network meetings will always involve group work. These agreements, discussed and co-created by Network leaders in the Pre-Sessions, will guide the Network communications and behavior.

Agreements

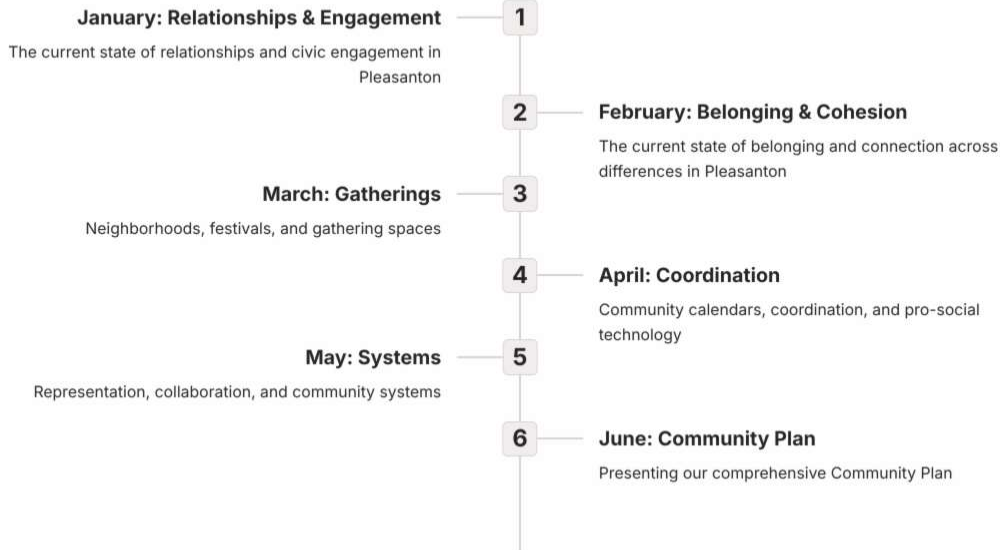
- “Pass” or “pass for now” if you’re not willing or ready to respond.
- Share airtime: avoid interrupting. “Move up, move back.”
- Speak in ways that promote connecting and learning.
- Speak for yourself and not on behalf of others.
- Check out assumptions by asking questions.
- Respect time boundaries.
- Maintain confidentiality. Take the learning, but not others’ stories.
- Attend to cell phones and technology in ways that allow you and others to be as present as possible.
- Assume best intentions and be willing to forgive (Sat)
- Confidentiality within the network, too- share the learning, not the story - the storyteller owns the story (Sun)

Arc of Focus

This spring, the Network will be digging into the social connection data we collected in Pleasanton (September–November 2025) and using it to shape a Community Plan, which it will present in June.

Monthly Focus Areas

📅 JANUARY – JUNE 2026



📅 July 2026 – May 2027: Implement, amplify, assess, and iterate together

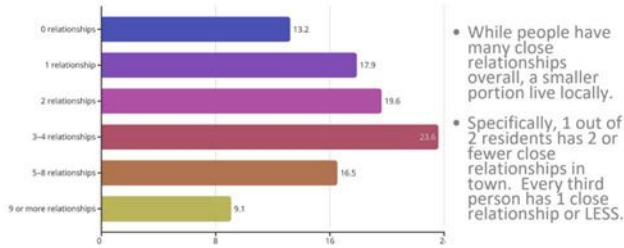
Exploring Data on Social Connection in Pleasanton

What we learned:

Having 3 or more close relationships is considered a minimum protective threshold for health and resilience, and their physical proximity matters because it affects their ability to offer day to day support.

Many of our loved ones live outside of Pleasanton

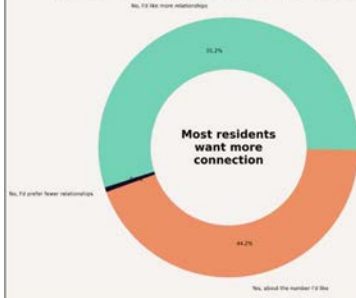
Of the close relationships you counted above, how many live in Pleasanton? N = 842



Only 8.4% of residents reported < 3 close relationships overall (anywhere in the world), however 1 out of every 2 residents has < 3 close relationships *in town*.

Residents want to build more relationships

Do you feel you have as many relationships in Pleasanton as you would like?



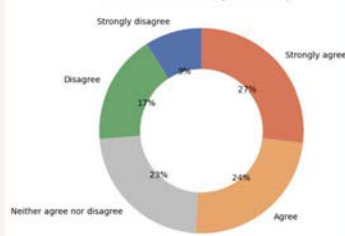
There are noteworthy differences between groups:

- 73% of 35-44 year olds desire more relationships vs. percentages in the 40s, 50s and 60s for other age groups
- More men than women expressed desire for more relationships (61% vs. 56%)

On average, more than 1 in 2 residents would like to have more relationships in town (this spikes to 73% for 35-44 yr olds).

Knowing Our Neighbors

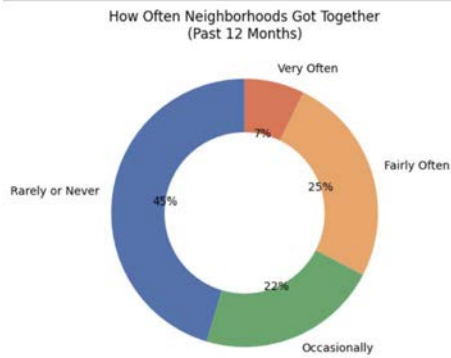
Could You Turn to a Neighbor for Help?



About 1 in 4 residents report that they *rarely* or *never* feel they could turn to a neighbor for help, while roughly 3 in 4 feel they could rely on neighbors at least sometimes.

- There are clear and substantial age differences in perceived neighbor support.
- Younger (60% of < age 34 say "never/rarely" vs. 28% age 50+) and newer residents are less connected at the neighborhood level.
- Immigrant residents report lower access to neighbor support than U.S.-born residents.

1 in 4 residents report rarely or never feeling like they could turn to a neighbor for help. Those most likely to feel this way are younger, newer to town, and not U.S.-born.



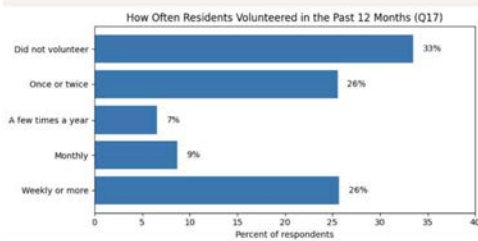
Neighborhood social gatherings are relatively infrequent for most respondents. Nearly half (45%) report the lowest level of neighborhood social activity.

Roughly 47% combined fall into the middle categories, suggesting some neighborhoods do gather occasionally, but not frequently.

This finding aligns with broader patterns seen in suburban communities, where residents often report satisfaction with their city overall but weaker block-level social ties.

45% of residents report that their neighborhood gathers rarely or never, while 22% report occasional gatherings -- high income residents reported a higher frequency of neighborhood gatherings.

Volunteering is polarized



Volunteer participation is unevenly distributed.

While one-third of residents did not volunteer in the past year, a similar share volunteered very frequently.

A smaller middle group volunteered occasionally, suggesting opportunities to convert light engagement into more sustained participation.

1 in 3 residents did not volunteer in the last year, and 1 in 4 volunteered regularly. The middle group, volunteering occasionally, may present an opportunity for more engagement.

Small Group Reflections

- **Disconnection has context.** Network leaders named COVID-isolation and stress as factors shaping how neighbors relate today.
- **Technology is a bridge—and a barrier.** While platforms help people connect, they also silo and isolate us from each other in person. Other pro-social forms of social media might be able to coordinate more--and deeper--forms of in-person connection.
- **Volunteering needs clearer on-ramps.** The group wasn't surprised by polarized volunteering patterns. It emphasized the need for:

- Easier entry points (e.g., volunteer fairs, monthly opportunities, defined roles)
 - Social, community-based volunteer experiences (e.g., a monthly service day, Good Neighbor Day, food festivals)
 - Coordination with nonprofits about what help is needed
 - **Belonging precedes engagement.** Newer residents, younger people, and those navigating cultural or language barriers are more likely to volunteer *after* they feel connected.
 - **Welcoming matters.** Welcome kits, newcomer clubs, neighborhood guides, and even simple gestures (like bringing banana bread!) are ways to help new residents feel seen and included.
-

Revisit the Deck



[Slide Deck from January Meeting HERE](#)

Want to dive deeper? Additional Resources

Social Connection in America Report

Social Connection in America™ is a landmark, science-based survey tracking trends in social connection across the U.S. over time to help build more connected communities. Click on the picture to view the report.



Social Connection in America Webinar -

February 11th

Join our very own Dr. Argo, in partnership with the **Social Connection in America** team for a 1-hour webinar: Tracking Connection: Strengthening Communities on February 11 at 9am PT/12pm ET. This virtual session is for anyone working to strengthen belonging, trust and connection through community.



Dr. Nichole Argo Dr. Julianne Holt-Lunstad Dr. Kim McLearn Katie Clark Wheeler

County Health Rankings Webinar -

February 17th

How are other communities and national organizations using findings on social connection to strengthen their communities?



Network Members Corner

Next week:

- Network Leaders will be asked to weigh in on logo/branding, a communications platform and other organizational items via a short survey!
- We'll share the Pleasanton Connects Contact List, along with elevator pitch language about Pleasanton Connects, and a summary of our upcoming meeting themes.



Next Month



Pleasanton Connects leaders will unpack residents' reported sense of belonging and desire to connect, and reveal how the social connection indicators explored are linked to outcomes like satisfaction and health in Pleasanton. That meeting will be held on **February 24, from 5:30–7:30pm** at the **Pleasanton Senior Center (5353 Sunol Blvd)**.

TogetherUp Institute | 8 Edgewater Dr. | Dover, MA 02030 US

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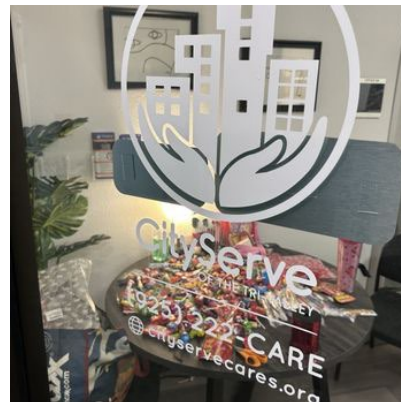
February Meeting Recap

"Unpacking Belonging & Social Cohesion in Pleasanton"

February 24, 2026

Dear Pleasanton Connects supporters,

On February 24, the Pleasanton Connects Network gathered at [City Serve of the Tri-Valley's](#) offices at the Pleasanton Senior Center (thank you to Christine Beitsch-Bahmani and Heidi Murphy for hosting!).



Our purpose: to unpack our original research on what belonging and social connection actually look like in Pleasanton — so that we can design effectively to strengthen them.

Drawing on findings from our community survey (n=1,042), we explored several important insights:

- **Belonging matters *locally*.** Residents who report a stronger sense of local belonging--an index of items that include trust, norms of respect, feeling connected, able to be one's self, etc.-- also report higher life satisfaction, better health, and lower loneliness.
- **We have a strong base to build on. Most residents describe Pleasanton as a place of trust, respect, and neighborly connection.**
- **Voice is our growth area. Many residents do not feel they can influence local decision-making — highlighting a critical opportunity to strengthen civic pathways and shared ownership.**
- **Local experiences differ. Differences across demographic groups remind us that belonging is not evenly distributed — and we can design programming to address that.**

In small groups, participants translated these insights into design priorities, asking, "How might the Network...":

- Make civic engagement and volunteer opportunities more visible and accessible?
- Lower barriers to participation for busy families, working residents, and those who feel disconnected?

- Create clearer pathways from “I care” to “I’m involved”?
- Ensure that all residents feel safe bringing their authentic selves into community spaces?

A clear direction is emerging: Pleasanton has strong social fabric, but we need more intentional infrastructure to connect people within and across groups and make participation easier and more meaningful.

The Network also discussed next steps for building an action-oriented website and communication channels — practical tools that can help residents move from interest to involvement.

Next month, the Network will explore how other communities are building durable connection through neighborhood and community-wide gatherings — to identify strategies that make sense for Pleasanton.

With appreciation,

The Pleasanton Connects Team

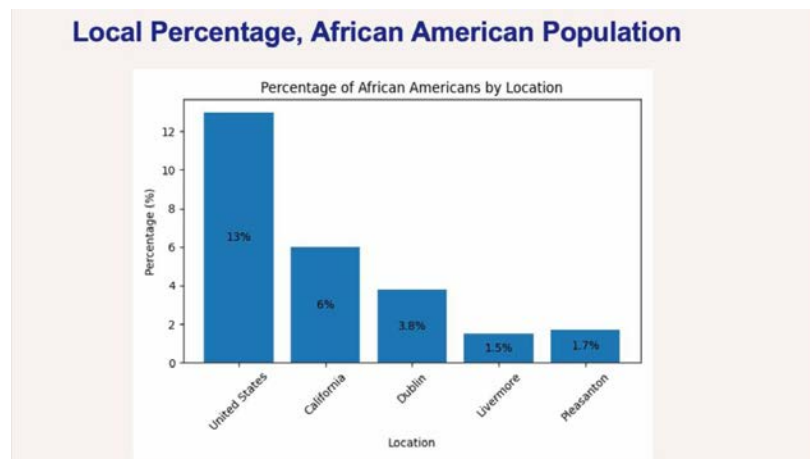
Group Bios

Thank you to **Marvin Dozier** and **Susan Houghton** for sharing their group bios!

Marvin shared his experience as an African American living in Pleasanton, where African American residents represent just 1.7% of the local population. He talked about the need for cross-community partnerships to share resources and support, and to grow informal, within-group networks for local African Americans that can increase civic visibility and reduce social density gaps for African American youth in schools.

More than 26,000 residents in the Greater East Bay have intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs). 80 percent of them live with their families, and less than 20% are employed. Susan spoke about the origins, offerings, and opportunities to get involved with Sunflower Hill, a nonprofit which provides an affordable living community and life-long program options for IDD residents and their families.

Both presentations are linked in the main slide deck (first image below). Click the Sunflower Hill image to watch a powerful informational video.





Network Leaders: *Would you like to present your group/organization in April? [Send us a note!](#)*

How to talk about Pleasanton Connects

"Pleasanton Connects is a network of local residents and leaders working to reduce isolation, strengthen relationships across groups, and build a more connected community."



Unpacking Findings on Belonging & Social Cohesion in Pleasanton

We reviewed findings from the Pleasanton Survey, which measured belonging, trust, and agency across 10 indicators -- these comprise our "Index of Belonging." Highlights can be found below. Please visit the deck below for the full set of findings.

Is belonging in Pleasanton associated with...

- ...greater local satisfaction?
- ...better health?
- ...decreased loneliness?

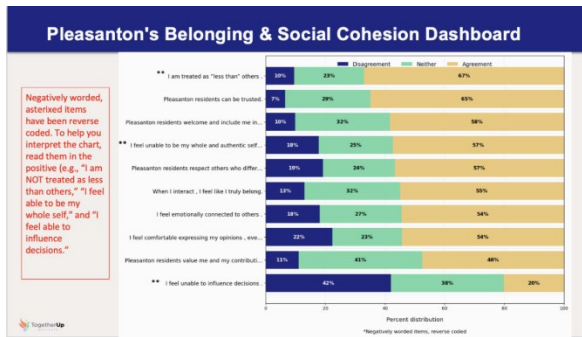
YES 

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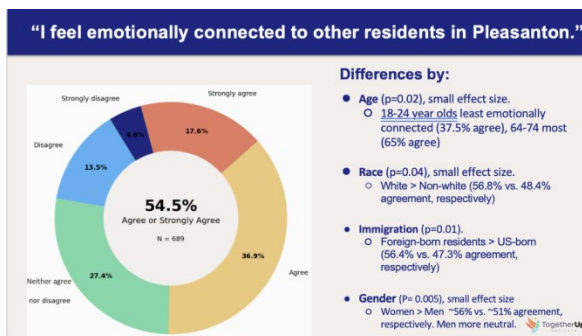
- For every 1-point increase in belonging, **satisfaction with living in Pleasanton** increases by about .52 points. On a 1-5 scale, that's a substantial shift.
- Belonging is associated with better **self-rated health**,

even after controlling for age.

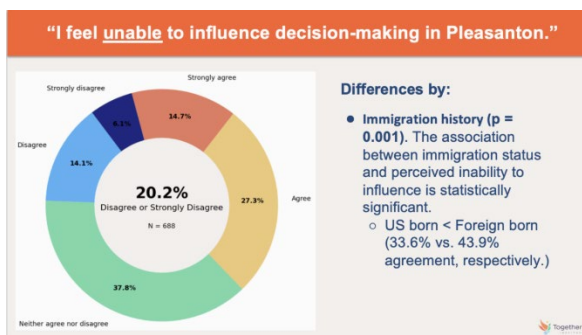
- Belonging is associated with **decreased loneliness**, even after controlling for the size of one's social network.



- A majority of residents report trust, inclusion, and emotional connection.
- Norms of respect and welcoming are broadly felt.
- The most significant vulnerability is felt agency -- many residents feel unable to influence decision-making in Pleasanton.



- There were also important demographic differences:
- In this example, residents reporting lower emotional connection included those who are: younger, non-white, US-born, and male. (All small effective sizes.)



- Only 20.2 percent of residents disagreed with the statement, "I feel unable to influence decision-making in Pleasanton," suggesting the need to increase a sense of civic agency.

Small Group Reflections

In small groups, participants discussed what resonated most and what the data suggests for action. Major themes included:

Agency & Voice

Many groups were struck by the finding that residents feel limited influence in local decision-making. There was discussion about:

- Antiquated or unclear public processes
- Limited pipelines into city boards, commissions, and leadership roles
- The need for more accessible and visible civic entry points

Participants emphasized that invitation matters — inclusion must be intentional.

“Neutral” Responses

Several groups noticed the high number of “neither agree nor disagree” responses and wondered:

- Does neutrality reflect uncertainty, disengagement, or lack of information?
- How might we move people from neutral to connected?

This was described as “soft cohesion” — a foundation, but with room to grow.

Authentic Belonging

The data point on not feeling able to be one’s authentic self sparked meaningful dialogue. Groups highlighted:

- The importance of creating emotionally safe spaces
- The need to focus on populations reporting lower belonging.
- The opportunity for ambassadors to model inclusive leadership

Volunteering & Connection

Volunteering was statistically associated with health scores, and emerged as a powerful connector. Ideas included:

- Making volunteer pathways more visible and easier to access
- Creating clearer “get involved” entry points across age groups
- Some groups noted that middle-aged residents may feel particularly stretched and less civically engaged.

Revisit the Deck

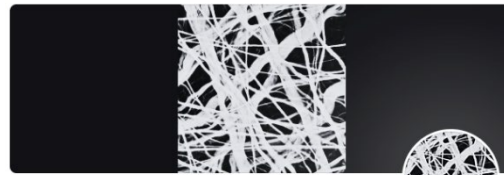


[Slide Deck from February Meeting HERE](#)

Want to learn more? Email List-Serves

Connective Tissue

Connective Tissue is a thoughtful and accessible newsletter exploring the relationships, ideas, and practical actions that strengthen community, deepen belonging, and renew civic life.



Connective Tissue 
@connectivetissue

A newsletter on the connections, communities, and commitments that bind us together.

Listen First Project

Listen First Project supports a national coalition of 500+ organizations working to bridge divides and build trust across America, and shares a monthly “10 Best Things We’ve Seen” roundup from the bridging field.



Network Members Corner

Coming Soon:

- A survey inviting your Pleasanton Connects brand/logo feedback



Next Month



How are communities elsewhere strengthening social connection through neighborhood and community gatherings? What approaches would work best in Pleasanton?

Our next meeting will be held on **March 24** from **5:30–7:30pm** (location TBA). Stay tuned!