

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE  
-  
STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW  
FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES



## Sonoma County

# Safety Element Update & Environmental Justice Policies

## Stakeholder Interview – Environmental Justice

**Date:** March 1, 2023  
**Time:** 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM  
**Location:** Zoom

### Invitee List

Name			
Katrina Braehmer	Permit Sonoma	Project Manager	X
Bradley Dunn	Permit Sonoma	Policy Manager	
Reema Shakra	Rincon Consultants	Project Manager	
Saara Chaudry	Rincon Consultants	Project Planner/EJ Technical Lead	X
Sarah Howland	Rincon Consultants	Project Planner/Assistant Project Manager	X
Antonia Davetas	Rincon Consultants	Project Planner	X
Diana Mariscal	Legal Aid of Sonoma County		X
Herman G. Hernandez	Los Cien	Executive Director	X
Ellen Velazquez Muralles	Los Cien	Event and Community Engagement Coordinator	X
Santino Garcia	California Human Development		
Lorena Sotelo	California Human Development	Sonoma Field Office Manager	X
Mimi Enright	UCCE Sonoma County	Program Manager	
Unkown	Sonoma County Black Forum		
Alma Bowen	Nuestra Comunidad	Executive Director	X
Suzi Grady	Petaluma Bounty		
Joy Ayodele		Community Organizer	X

### Meeting Introduction

- Katrina Braehmer provided a brief description of the project background and purpose of the meeting.
- Each member introduced themselves and identified their agency, division, and role.
- Saara Chaudry presented the slide show which defined environmental justice, described the effected communities, and invited stakeholders to share their opinions on what issues are afflicting their communities.



## Discussion Questions

### **What environmental burdens or hazards most heavily impact members of your community?**

- Several participants stated that farmworkers are particularly impacted by the wildfire season and high housing costs in Sonoma.
- Participants generally felt that rising housing costs are a barrier to many community members. Some lower-income homes have unsafe conditions and are overcrowded.
- Participants shared general concerns regarding air quality and how pesticide pollution and wildfire degrade air quality in the area.
- Several participants noted that senior citizens are vulnerable to poor living conditions, extreme heat, and extreme cold.

### **What prevents your community from accessing public facilities, amenities, or resources?**

- Several participants reported that undocumented community members are afraid of accessing public funds or support due to concerns about how it may impact their citizenship.
- Participants agreed that language barriers, educational disparities, and low access to Wi-Fi and online knowledge act as major barriers to resource access.
- Several participants stated that public transit is unreliable and does not offer proper connections to all communities.
- One participant noted that a lack of sidewalks in unincorporated areas makes accessing resources challenging for community members.
- One participant stated that, in some cases, public officers dissuade community members from accessing resources.
- Several participants stated that community members working multiple jobs or having multiple responsibilities, creates limits on free time and makes it challenging to use amenities such as parks, libraries, etc.

### **How has your community organization had to step up to fill gaps in County services that could benefit Environmental Justice Communities in Sonoma County?**

- One participant noted that County translated documents aren't always accurate, and some community organizations retranslate documents.
- Several participants stated that their community organizations work to connect community members with financial resources and additional financial support.
- One participant noted that free legal council is provided to community members who need advocacy for safe, clean, and comfortable housing.
- One participant stated that their organization is collecting funding for public services and amenities such as a community library or cultural center.
- One participant stated that their organization is making efforts to install microgrids to reduce residents' reliance on PG&E and create easier access to the internet.

### **How can the County work alongside community organizations to better support local Environmental Justice Communities?**

- Several participants encouraged the County to continue to ask for input from community groups and residents.



- Several participants advocated for maintaining an open line of communication where community organizations may voice the demands of community members, ask questions, and share concerns.
- One participant suggested creation of a grant program for community groups to use to support their staff and the communities each group is connected to.
- One participant noted it's important to reward people for their efforts and provide stipends to nonprofit organizations who are working directly with impacted communities.

**What are the most effective ways the County could engage your constituents as part of this planning process?**

- Several participants agreed that tapping into schools and educational programs are effective ways to reach parents and other community members.
- One participant encouraged the County to connect with colleges and research groups who would be willing to share their research.

**Project Process and Next Steps**

- Katrina Braehmer discussed Next Steps.
- Slides will be distributed.
- Please email/call Katrina Braehmer with any additional questions or comments.



## Stakeholder Interview – Environmental Justice

**Date:** March 3, 2023  
**Time:** 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM  
**Location:** Zoom

### Invitee List

	Agency/Dept	Role	Present?
Katrina Braehmer	Permit Sonoma	Project Manager	X
Bradley Dunn	Permit Sonoma	Policy Manager	
Ross Markey	Permit Sonoma	Comprehensive Planning Manager	
Scott Orr	Permit Sonoma	Deputy Director	
Reema Shakra	Rincon Consultants	Project Manager	
Saara Chaudry	Rincon Consultants	Project Planner/EJ Technical Lead	X
Sarah Howland		Project Planner/Assistant Project Manager	
Antonia Davetas	Rincon Consultants	Project Planner	X
Janice Thomson			X
BC Capps	Regional Climate Protection Authority	Climate Change Program Specialist	
Dana Turrey	Sonoma County Transportation Authority	Transportation Planner	X
Steve Ehret	Sonoma County Regional Parks	Park Planner	X
Nora Mallonee-Brand	Sonoma County Department of Health Services	Commissioner	X
Laurel Chambers	County of Sonoma	Health Information Specialist	X
Denia Candela	County of Sonoma	Health Equity Officer	
Laura Turner	County of Sonoma Department of Health	Public Health Nurse	X
Martha Cheever	Community Development Commission	Housing Authority Manager	X
Marc Chandler	Community Development Commission	Community Development Assistant Manager	
Christopher Godley		Director of Emergency Management	
Michael Gause	County of Sonoma	Ending Homelessness Team Community Development Manager	
Nasim Bahadorani	County of Sonoma	IMDT Health Program Manager	X



## Meeting Introduction

- Katrina Braehmer provided a brief description of the project background and purpose of the meeting.
- Each member introduced themselves and identified their agency, division, and role.
- Saara Chaudry presented the slide show which defined environmental justice, described the effected communities, and invited stakeholders to share their opinions on what issues are afflicting their communities.

## Discussion Questions

### **What existing programs does your department/agency carry out to serve and empower low-income communities, communities of color, and other disadvantages groups in Sonoma County?**

- Several participants noted that organizations offer rental assistance or other forms for financial assistance to community members.
- One participant shared that the Department of Health and Human Services offers a lead poisoning program, connects unsheltered individuals with a social case worker, assists with CalFresh applications, and offers physical and behavioral health services.
- One participant shared that Regional Parks offers low-income, ADA, veteran, and senior park entry passes which they make available in public libraries.
- Several respondents reported collecting funding to improve transportation systems (transit, bicycle, and pedestrian) in the County.

### **What types of resources do people typically seek out from the County? Which existing public programs are most utilized or least utilized? Why are some programs more successful or effective than others?**

- Rental and other financial housing assistance is only successful when people are able to locate housing.
- Several respondents stated that housing for unsheltered individuals is most successful when pair with other supportive services.
- Several participants noted that barriers exist including language, documentation, lack of cultural responsiveness, and fear of ineligibility due to resident status.
- Participants agreed that the Covid Urgent Relief and Aide (CURA) program was utilized heavily in recent years due to the lasting impacts of the pandemic.
- One participant noted that environmental education and career pathways for park work are robust and well-used.
- Several participants agreed that nutritional education (i.e., SNAP-Ed) has been less effective.

### **What challenges does the County face in deploying existing programs?**

- Several participants noted that a lack of funding and staffing shortages were general concerns.
- One participant stated that there is a lack of data on community needs and some workers do not have the background needed to serve communities most effectively (cultural competence).
- Several participants noted that language barriers can present challenges in reaching and communicating with all community members.
- Several respondents noted that community members are unable to participate fully and understand all services offered due to time constraints.



**Where are there gaps in resources or programs to improve the following issues in Sonoma County communities?**

- Participants noted a need to support community gardens and additional healthy markets in areas that currently lack them.
- Several participants noted that there is limited ability for homeowners to harden homes to fires or floods
- Several participants noted that there is additional relocation assistance needed
- Several participants noted that there is inadequate electric vehicle infrastructure.
- Several participants noted that there is inequitable distribution of parks; very few transportation options to reach parks; inadequate bike lanes; and unsafe bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- One participant noted a lack of representation in elected officials; poor treatment of BIPOC residents by elected officials and community leaders.
- One participant stated that transportation is limited.
- Several participants noted that there is a need to pair different supportive services together.

**In past or current initiatives, has your department/agency had success partnering with local organizations? What were those initiatives and how was success measured?**

- Several participants noted that there is general success partnering with community-based organizations.
- Several participants stated that having partners within the County and collaborating with community partners have been instrumental for success.

**Project Process and Next Steps**

- Katrina Braehmer discussed Next Steps.
- Slides were distributed.
- Mural board remained open for the attendees.
- Please email/call Katrina Braehmer with any additional questions or comments.

SAFETY ELEMENT

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STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW  
FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

*Located in Attachment 4  
(Sonoma County Climate Change  
Vulnerability Assessment)*



SAFETY ELEMENT  
-  
SURVEY SUMMARY

*Located in Attachment 4  
(Sonoma County Climate Change  
Vulnerability Assessment)*

## POP-UP EVENTS AND MEETINGS SUMMARIES

## General Plan Safety and Environmental Justice Updates – Engagement Activity Summary

**EVENT:** Sonoma Valley Preparedness Fair 2023  
*Hosted by Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management, the Springs Municipal Advisory Committee, Springs Map Your Neighborhood, and Sonoma Immigrant Services*

**DATE:** May 9, 2023

**LOCATION:** Boyes Boulevard and Highway 12

### Activity Overview

Using adhesive dots, participants were asked to rank a selection of 6 key resources by their level of access (Poor, Moderate, or Good). Participants were also asked to place an adhesive dot on the Environmental Justice (EJ) Communities Board to identify where in the County they reside.

The activity was facilitated in English or Spanish depending on the participant's preference.

### Activity Results

- 29 residents of the nearby Springs area, one Santa Rosa resident, and one Petaluma resident participated in the activity for a total of 31 participants.
- Although this data was not explicitly collected, the vast majority were Spanish-speaking.

	Poor	Percent of Participants	Moderate	Percent of Participants	Good	Percent of Participants
Access to Transportation Options	8	25.81%	4	12.90%	19	61.29%
Access to Parks and Open Space	2	6.45%	10	32.26%	19	61.29%
Access to Nutritious Food or Groceries with Fresh Fruit/Vegetables	5	16.13%	13	41.94%	13	41.94%
Access to Air Conditioning	11	35.48%	4	12.90%	16	51.61%
Access to Emergency Preparedness and Evacuation Information	7	22.58%	14	45.16%	10	32.26%
Access to Reliable and Clean Water	3	9.68%	6	19.35%	22	70.97%

**GENERAL PLAN SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE UPDATES  
ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY SUMMARY**

**EVENT:** Sonoma COAD Food Access Committee Monthly Meeting  
**DATE:** September 13, 2023  
**LOCATION:** Virtual via Zoom

Overview

Sonoma County Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) is a collaborative network that builds the capacity and coordination of local organizations to both prepare for and respond to disasters in Sonoma County. Sonoma COAD's Food Access Committee is composed of representatives from various community organizations that work on food access issues.

The County project team attended the Committee's monthly meeting to introduce the project and have a focused discussion on food access policy priorities.

Summary**1. What are some desired outcomes (or specific objectives) for healthy food access, particularly during and after disaster events?**

- Diversified local farming with an increase in local food production.
- More opportunities for community-level food production.
- An actionable model or framework to implement micro-level solutions to identify and fill gaps which the current food system is not able to address.
- A comprehensive commitment to measuring and sharing data around food insecurity.
- A clear understanding of the needs and gaps in service.
- An established protocol for emergency food provision during disaster events.
- Reduced regulatory burden on food production.
- Policy that prioritizes water use for food production.

**2. What strategies would be most effective to address food access and achieve the desired outcomes?**

- Leverage partnerships with health providers or community organizations to hold mobile food markets or banks.
- Funding streams for research on food insecurity and gaps in food system to support policy and action.
- Adopting a local preference policy to incentivize local food production.
- Identify gaps in food service and where people are food insecure.
- Update zoning and land use regulations to encourage community-level opportunities for food production (e.g. community or neighborhood gardens). Streamline permitting and build in consideration for scope, scale, and public benefit in review of projects.
- Ease regulations on farmworker housing.
- Partner with Sonoma County Regional Parks or the Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District to create programs for community gardens on park or open space land.
  - See [County Lands for Food Production](#) report.

- Require convenience stores, supermarkets, liquor stores, and neighborhood markets in food deserts to carry locally sourced fresh produce.
- The Department of Emergency Management should establish food procurement memorandums of understanding (MOUs) ahead of disaster events. Increase funding for shelf-stable food.
- Establish a public-private program for sharing data on food insecurity.

**3. What programs or policies have you seen work well for under-resourced communities? Why did they work well?**

- Mobile food markets
  - Examples: Food Link in New York; Mobile food bank held by Kaiser in Solano County

**4. General Comments**

- Local agricultural production is monoculture, focused on grapes and apples. If we grow more options for food locally, this protects us against supply and distribution issues during large-scale disaster events.
- Food waste is a huge issue.
- There are vulnerable senior populations living in the coast that struggle with daily healthy food access and even more so during disaster events.
- We need to address seasonal worker's compensation during the off-season. There is a large amount of food insecurity during the winter which undeniably is connected to income during those months.
- Seniors in the Sonoma Valley, particularly in the Springs, have high food insecurity.
- We need to look at food as medicine.
- Water access (including infrastructure) is a barrier to food production in remote areas.
- Even in ostensibly affluent areas, there is food insecurity.
- There needs to be a clear pipeline to get food to where it's needed during emergencies.
- The food system and climate resilience are inextricably related.
- Smaller, local markets need the infrastructure to hold fresh food, which requires funding.

## General Plan Safety and Environmental Justice Updates – Engagement Activity Summary

**EVENT:** Occidental Community Farmer’s Market  
**DATE:** October 29, 2023  
**LOCATION:** Downtown Occidental, on Main Street between 1st & 3rd streets

### Activity Overview

Permit Sonoma Planning staff set up a table with information available about the project including fact sheets and a map of the draft Environmental Justice (EJ) Communities in the unincorporated County. Staff engaged participants by inviting them to learn more about the General Plan Safety and Environmental Justice Elements, identify their community on the EJ Communities map, and participate in a strategy-vetting activity.

Participants were provided with four tokens to distribute among eight buckets labeled with different strategies that could be incorporated into the Safety or Environmental Justice Elements. Participants were asked to choose which four strategies of the eight they felt were most important for the County to implement. Participants were also able to fill out comment cards to share other strategies they felt were important for the County to implement or offer general feedback.

The strategy-vetting activity was facilitated in English or Spanish depending on the participant’s preference. All informational materials were available in English and Spanish. Activity participants were asked, but not required, to complete an anonymous exit survey for demographic information including whether they owned or rented their home, their household income, and their race/ethnicity.

### Activity Results

- Total number of activity participants: 43
- Of the eight strategies, organic farming, free well water testing, and community gardens were most frequently identified as priorities.

Strategy	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
<b>Clean Water and Homes</b>		
Free lead testing	12	6.9%
Free well water testing	25	14.5%
<b>Pollution Exposure</b>		
Buffers between solid waste facilities and residential uses	17	9.8%
Organic farming to reduce pesticide use	42	24.4%

<b>Healthy Food Access</b>		
Community gardens	24	55.8%
Mobile food banks	18	41.8%
<b>Emergency Preparedness</b>		
Neighborhood evacuation drills	19	44.1%
Evacuation transportation assistance	15	34.8%

#### General Comments Received

- Several participants shared with staff that they felt all of the strategy options presented were important.

#### Participant Demographics

Activity participants were asked but not required to complete an anonymous exit survey for demographic information including whether they owned or rented their home, their household income, and their race/ethnicity. Seventeen of the 43 participants completed an exit survey. The following summarizes the results of the exit surveys that were completed.

- **Owner or Renter**
  - 11 participants (64.7%) stated they own their home
  - 6 participants (35.2%) stated they rent their home
- **Annual Household Income**
  - 6 participants (35.2%) stated their household income was between \$150,000 and \$249,000
  - 2 participants (5.8%) stated their household income was between \$75,000 and \$149,000
  - 4 participants (23.5%) stated their household income was between \$50,000 and \$74,000
  - 2 participants (11.7%) stated their household income was between \$35,000 and \$49,000
  - 2 participants (11.7%) stated their household income was less than \$20,000
  - 1 participant (5.8%) did not specify
- **Race/Ethnicity**
  - 12 participants (70.5%) identified as White/Caucasian
  - 2 participants (11.7%) identified as Asian/Pacific Islander
  - 1 participant (5.8%) did not specify
  - 1 participant (5.8%) self-described their race/ethnicity as European American



**GENERAL PLAN 2020 SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE UPDATES  
ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY SUMMARY**

**EVENT:** Sonoma County Food System Alliance Monthly Meeting  
**DATE:** February 15, 2024  
**LOCATION:** Advanced Energy Center – 741 4th St, Santa Rosa

Overview

The Sonoma County Food System Alliance (FSA) is a county-based coalition of diverse stakeholders working collaboratively to envision, advocate for and create a vibrant local food system that increases the viability of agriculture and access to healthy food in our community. The FSA developed the Sonoma County Food Action Plan that provides a shared community vision and goals for the local food system.

The County project team attended the Committee's regular meeting time to introduce the General Plan Environmental Justice and Safety Element Updates project and have a focused discussion on food access policy priorities.

Summary

- 1. What are some desired outcomes (or specific objectives) for healthy food access both on a regular basis and during/after disaster events?**
  - More focus on sustainable food options.
  - Culturally appropriate food should be considered, not just calories and health.
  - There are variations in food insecurity data that can tell different stories about the severity of the issue. Better data is needed.
    - There is often data on the number of people being served but not the actual need. Funds should be allocated to better measure the need vs. service.
  - When discussing food insecurity, we should consider not just those who are currently struggling with food access, but those at risk of food insecurity because of cost of living.
  - The County needs to consider the availability and affordability of food, and whether that food is culturally appropriate.
  - The County needs to consider how our local food supply is vulnerable to climate change, and its stability or reliability during times of emergency (i.e. its resiliency).
  - Farmers are leaving Sonoma County. Can the County lease land for agricultural purposes and encourage mentorship programs to get more people involved in food growing?
- 2. What strategies would be most effective to address food access and achieve the desired outcomes?**
  - Funding to measure food insecurity, need, and food access.
  - More healthy food access (retail) that supports for working people who don't have time (e.g. community gardens).
  - Multi-pronged approaches that have co-benefits.
  - Broad-based community involvement and decision making.
  - Tighten existing policies with more concrete direction.
  - Factor in access to email, tech, etc. when figuring out how to get community feedback.



**3. What programs or policies have you seen work well for under-resourced communities? Why did they work well?**

- Continuation of the Sonoma County, [County Land for Food Production](#) program.
- Urban Tilth programs in Richmond.
- Using more county land for growing food.
- Growing food in home neighborhoods at the urban fringe. Local access to food would be more stable in times of crisis.
- Identifying lands for food growing.
- Examples from SLO County that support food availability.
- Santa Clara General Plan Health Element (e.g. social determinants of health).
- San Diego Food Systems Alliance.

**4. Which of the recommendations in the Food Action Plan would be strengthened or better implemented by including them in the County's General Plan?**

- The County's General Plan should address the intersection of issues. For example, agricultural workers don't live near work and don't have access to transit options, and that impacts the air quality of the neighborhood they live in.

**5. Other suggestions:**

- "Nutrition security" is a better term than "food security" as it encompasses cultural relevance and quality of food that is nourishing to folks. It is recommended the County use that term instead.
- "Food apartheid" is a better term than "food deserts." Think of alternative terms to fit the law definition of food desert, but using that term is not recommended.

## General Plan Safety and Environmental Justice Updates – Engagement Activity Summary

**EVENT:** Fire and Earthquake Safety Expo  
**DATE:** May 19, 2024  
**LOCATION:** Cloverdale Citrus Fairgrounds, Cloverdale

### Activity Overview

Permit Sonoma Planning staff set up a table with information available about the project including fact sheets and a map of the draft Environmental Justice (EJ) Communities in the unincorporated County. Staff engaged participants by inviting them to learn more about the General Plan Safety and Environmental Justice Elements, identify their community on the EJ Communities map, and participate in a strategy-vetting activity.

Participants were provided with four tokens to distribute among eight buckets labeled with different strategies that could be incorporated into the Safety or Environmental Justice Elements. Participants were asked to choose which four strategies of the eight they felt were most important for the County to implement. Participants were also able to fill out comment cards to share other strategies they felt were important for the County to implement or offer general feedback.

The strategy-vetting activity was facilitated in English or Spanish depending on the participant's preference. All informational materials were available in English and Spanish. Activity participants were asked, but not required, to complete an anonymous exit survey for demographic information including whether they owned or rented their home, their household income, and their race/ethnicity.

### Activity Results

- Total number of activity participants: 73
- Of the eight strategies, evacuation transportation assistance, organic farming, and free well testing were most frequently identified as priorities.

Strategy	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
<b>Clean Water and Homes</b>		
Free lead testing	33	11.3%
Free well water testing	42	14.4%
<b>Pollution Exposure</b>		
Buffers between solid waste facilities and residential uses	19	6.5%
Organic farming to reduce pesticide use	43	14.7%

<b>Healthy Food Access</b>		
Community gardens	31	10.6%
Mobile food banks	38	13%
<b>Emergency Preparedness</b>		
Neighborhood evacuation drills	40	13.7%
Evacuation transportation assistance	46	15.8%

#### General Comments Received

- Several participants shared with staff that they felt all of the strategy options presented were important.
- One participant shared that more emphasis should be placed on alert systems for people with disabilities, more public access to the river in Cloverdale, and shelter in place opportunities.
- One participant stated that drainage and ditch channels need to be cleaned out more frequently to reduce flooding.

#### Participant Demographics

Activity participants were asked but not required to complete an anonymous exit survey for demographic information including whether they owned or rented their home, their household income, and their race/ethnicity. 44 of the 73 participants completed an exit survey. The following summarizes the results of the exit surveys that were completed.

- **Owner or Renter**
  - 25 participants (56.8%) stated they own their home
  - 17 participants (38.6%) stated they rent their home
  - 2 participants (4.5%) did not specify
- **Annual Household Income**
  - 4 participants (9.1%) stated their household income was between \$150,000 and \$249,000
  - 15 participants (34.1%) stated their household income was between \$75,000 and \$149,000
  - 7 participants (15.9%) stated their household income was between \$50,000 and \$74,000
  - 4 participants (9.1%) stated their household income was between \$35,000 and \$49,000
  - 8 participants (18.2%) stated their household income was between \$20,001 and \$34,999
  - 4 participants (9.1%) stated their household income was less than \$20,000
  - 2 participant (4.5%) did not specify
- **Race/Ethnicity**
  - 22 participants (50.0) identified as White/Caucasian
  - 3 participant (6.8%) identified as Asian/Pacific Islander
  - 1 participant (2.3%) identified as Black or African American
  - 9 participants (20.5%) identified as Latinx
  - 5 participants (11.4%) identified as multiple ethnicities
  - 3 participants (6.8%) preferred to self-describe, 1 participant (4.5%) did not specify



## General Plan Safety and Environmental Justice Updates – Engagement Activity Summary

**EVENT:** West County Fire & Emergency / Public Safety Town Hall  
**DATE:** May 29, 2024  
**LOCATION:** Guerneville Elementary School, Guerneville

### Activity Overview

Permit Sonoma Planning staff set up a table with information available about the project including fact sheets and a map of the draft Environmental Justice (EJ) Communities in the unincorporated County. Staff engaged participants by inviting them to learn more about the General Plan Safety and Environmental Justice Elements, identify their community on the EJ Communities map, and participate in a strategy-vetting activity.

Participants were provided with four tokens to distribute among eight buckets labeled with different strategies that could be incorporated into the Safety or Environmental Justice Elements. Participants were asked to choose which four strategies of the eight they felt were most important for the County to implement. Participants were also able to fill out comment cards to share other strategies they felt were important for the County to implement or offer general feedback.

The strategy-vetting activity was facilitated in English or Spanish depending on the participant's preference. All informational materials were available in English and Spanish. Activity participants were asked, but not required, to complete an anonymous exit survey for demographic information including whether they owned or rented their home, their household income, and their race/ethnicity.

### Activity Results

- Total number of activity participants: 18
- Of the eight strategies, evacuation transportation assistance, neighborhood evacuation drills, and organic farming were most frequently identified as priorities.

Strategy	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
<b>Clean Water and Homes</b>		
Free lead testing	6	8.3%
Free well water testing	5	6.9%
<b>Pollution Exposure</b>		
Buffers between solid waste facilities and residential uses	4	5.6%
Organic farming to reduce pesticide use	10	13.9%

<b>Healthy Food Access</b>		
Community gardens	6	8.3%
Mobile food banks	4	5.6%
<b>Emergency Preparedness</b>		
Neighborhood evacuation drills	18	25%
Evacuation transportation assistance	19	26.4%

#### General Comments Received

- Several participants shared with staff that they felt all of the strategy options presented were important.
- A participant provided a comment regarding the importance of educating the community on eradicating Scotch and French broom due to its invasive nature.
- A participant provided a comment requesting that there be more coordination with timing of construction and wildfire season.
- A participant provided concerns on the new tree ordinance inhibiting removing dead, dying, and leaning trees to reduce fuel hazards.

#### Participant Demographics

Activity participants were asked but not required to complete an anonymous exit survey for demographic information including whether they owned or rented their home, their household income, and their race/ethnicity. Seven of the 18 participants completed an exit survey. The following summarizes the results of the exit surveys that were completed.

- **Owner or Renter**
  - 5 participants (71.4%) stated they own their home
  - 2 participants (28.6%) stated they rent their home
- **Annual Household Income**
  - 0 participants (0%) stated their household income was between \$150,000 and \$249,000
  - 4 participants (57.1%) stated their household income was between \$75,000 and \$149,000
  - 1 participants (14.3%) stated their household income was between \$50,000 and \$74,000
  - 0 participants (0%) stated their household income was between \$35,000 and \$49,000
  - 1 participants (14.3%) stated their household income was between \$20,001 and \$34,999
  - 0 participants (0%) stated their household income was less than \$20,000
  - 1 participant (14.3%) did not specify (retired)
- **Race/Ethnicity**
  - 7 participants (100%) identified as White/Caucasian
  - 0 participants (0%) identified as Asian/Pacific Islander
  - 0 participants (0%) did not specify
  - 0 participants (0%) self-described their race/ethnicity as X



## General Plan Safety and Environmental Justice Updates – Engagement Activity Summary

**EVENT:** Sonoma Valley Emergency Preparedness Fair 2024  
**DATE:** June 1, 2024  
**LOCATION:** Larson Park, Sonoma

### Activity Overview

Permit Sonoma Planning staff set up a table with information available about the project including fact sheets and a map of the draft Environmental Justice (EJ) Communities in the unincorporated County. Staff engaged participants by inviting them to learn more about the General Plan Safety and Environmental Justice Elements, identify their community on the EJ Communities map, and participate in a strategy-vetting activity.

Participants were provided with four tokens to distribute among eight buckets labeled with different strategies that could be incorporated into the Safety or Environmental Justice Elements. Participants were asked to choose which four strategies of the eight they felt were most important for the County to implement. Participants were also able to fill out comment cards to share other strategies they felt were important for the County to implement or offer general feedback.

The strategy-vetting activity was facilitated in English or Spanish depending on the participant's preference. All informational materials were available in English and Spanish. Activity participants were asked, but not required, to complete an anonymous exit survey for demographic information including whether they owned or rented their home, their household income, and their race/ethnicity.

### Activity Results

- Total number of activity participants: 53
- Of the eight strategies, lead testing, evacuation transportation assistance, and neighborhood evacuation drills were most frequently identified as priorities.

Strategy	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
<b>Clean Water and Homes</b>		
Free lead testing	45	21.2%
Free well water testing	20	9.4%
<b>Pollution Exposure</b>		
Buffers between solid waste facilities and residential uses	12	5.7%
Organic farming to reduce pesticide use	21	10%

<b>Healthy Food Access</b>		
Community gardens	22	10.4%
Mobile food banks	28	13.2%
<b>Emergency Preparedness</b>		
Neighborhood evacuation drills	30	14.2%
Evacuation transportation assistance	34	16%

#### General Comments Received

- Several participants shared with staff that they felt all of the strategy options presented were important.
- A participant provided a comment with concerns on vineyard pollution and runoff into creek and well water.
- A participant requested that asbestos testing be provided.
- A participant provided comments on Sonoma Development Center (SDC) and requested that SDC be designated in scale with Glen Ellen and that evacuation routes be improved in this area.
- A participant provided comments on air quality control relating to commercial and industrial pollution and that there be more scrutiny when commercial and residential areas intersect.
- A participant provided a comment regarding burn bans.
- A participant provided a comment that the County create surveys that engage Community Based Organizations.

#### Participant Demographics

Activity participants were asked but not required to complete an anonymous exit survey for demographic information including whether they owned or rented their home, their household income, and their race/ethnicity. 35 of the 53 participants completed an exit survey. The following summarizes the results of the exit surveys that were completed.

- **Owner or Renter**
  - 18 participants (51.4%) stated they own their home
  - 16 participants (45.7%) stated they rent their home
  - 1 participant (2.8%) did not specify
- **Annual Household Income**
  - 3 participants (8.6%) stated their household income was between \$150,000 and \$249,000
  - 6 participants (17.1%) stated their household income was between \$75,000 and \$149,000
  - 7 participants (20%) stated their household income was between \$50,000 and \$74,000
  - 5 participants (14.3%) stated their household income was between \$35,000 and \$49,000
  - 3 participants (8.6%) stated their household income was between \$20,001 and \$34,999
  - 10 participants (28.6 %) stated their household income was less than \$20,000
  - 1 participant (2.9%) did not specify
- **Race/Ethnicity**



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[www.PermitSonoma.org](http://www.PermitSonoma.org)



## General Plan Safety and Environmental Justice Updates – Engagement Activity Summary

**EVENT:** Forestville Farmer’s Market  
**DATE:** June 7, 2024  
**LOCATION:** 6990 Front Street, Forestville

### Activity Overview

Permit Sonoma Planning staff set up a table with information available about the project including fact sheets and a map of the draft Environmental Justice (EJ) Communities in the unincorporated County. Staff engaged participants by inviting them to learn more about the General Plan Safety and Environmental Justice Elements, identify their community on the EJ Communities map, and participate in a strategy-vetting activity.

Participants were provided with four tokens to distribute among eight buckets labeled with different strategies that could be incorporated into the Safety or Environmental Justice Elements. Participants were asked to choose which four strategies of the eight they felt were most important for the County to implement. Participants were also able to fill out comment cards to share other strategies they felt were important for the County to implement or offer general feedback.

The strategy-vetting activity was facilitated in English or Spanish depending on the participant’s preference. All informational materials were available in English and Spanish. Activity participants were asked, but not required, to complete an anonymous exit survey for demographic information including whether they owned or rented their home, their household income, and their race/ethnicity.

### Activity Results

- Total number of activity participants: 22
- Of the eight strategies, organic farming, neighborhood evacuation drills, mobile food banks, and free well testing were most frequently identified as priorities.

Strategy	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
<b>Clean Water and Homes</b>		
Free lead testing	6	6.8%
Free well water testing	12	13.6%
<b>Pollution Exposure</b>		
Buffers between solid waste facilities and residential uses	7	8.0%
Organic farming to reduce pesticide use	20	22.7%



Healthy Food Access		
Community gardens	10	11.4%
Mobile food banks	12	13.6%
Emergency Preparedness		
Neighborhood evacuation drills	13	14.8%
Evacuation transportation assistance	8	9.1%

#### General Comments Received

- Several participants shared with staff that they felt all of the strategy options presented were important.
- A participant provided a comment regarding the lack of cell coverage and decent internet speeds, which makes it difficult to stay informed.
- A participant provided a comment on the importance of fire safety and funding required for thinning and burning wildfire fuels.

#### Participant Demographics

Activity participants were asked but not required to complete an anonymous exit survey for demographic information including whether they owned or rented their home, their household income, and their race/ethnicity. 18 of the 22 participants completed an exit survey. The following summarizes the results of the exit surveys that were completed.

- **Owner or Renter**
  - 14 participants (77.8%) stated they own their home
  - 4 participants (22.2%) stated they rent their home
- **Annual Household Income**
  - 4 participants (22.2%) stated their household income was between \$150,000 and \$249,000
  - 7 participants (38.9%) stated their household income was between \$75,000 and \$149,000
  - 2 participants (11.1%) stated their household income was between \$50,000 and \$74,000
  - 2 participants (11.1%) stated their household income was between \$35,000 and \$49,000
  - 1 participants (5.6%) stated their household income was between \$20,001 and \$34,999
  - 1 participants (5.6%) stated their household income was less than \$20,000
  - 1 participant (5.6%) did not specify
- **Race/Ethnicity**
  - 13 participants (72.2%) identified as White/Caucasian
  - 1 participant (5.6%) identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native
  - 3 participants (16.7%) identified as multiple ethnicities
  - 1 participant (5.6%) identified as Latinx/Hispanic



- 11 participants (3.1%) identified as White/Caucasian
- 1 participant (2.9%) identified as Asian/Pacific Islander
- 2 participants (5.7%) identified as Black or African American
- 17 participants (48.6%) identified as Latinx
- 1 participant (2.9%) identified as multiple ethnicities
- 3 participants (8.6%) preferred to self-describe



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**EQUITY WORKING COMMITTEE  
MEETING AGENDAS AND SUMMARIES**

## **EQUITY WORKING COMMITTEE**

Meeting #1 – December 13, 2022

Objectives & Agenda

### **Meeting Objectives**

- Introduce County project team and EWC members
- Set expectations for the group's role
- Provide an overview of the EJ Element project including scope of work and timeline
- Introduce and discuss the concept of environmental justice and what it means in the County
- Discuss and select a preliminary methodology for mapping EJ communities in the County
- Introduce the concept of climate change vulnerability, and discuss populations in the County that may be vulnerable to climate change impacts

### **Agenda**

<b>TIME</b>	<b>SECTION TOPICS</b>
<b>6:00 – 6:05 pm</b>	<b>Opening</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoom reminders</li> <li>• Welcome and introduction of County project team</li> </ul>
<b>6:05 – 6:25 pm</b>	<b>Overview of Equity Working Committee (EWC)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role of the group</li> <li>• Expectations</li> <li>• Introductions of EWC members and what EJ means to them</li> </ul>
<b>6:25 – 6:30 pm</b>	<b>Overview of EJ &amp; Safety Elements and Meeting #1 Objectives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project overview and schedule</li> <li>• Meeting agenda and objectives</li> </ul>
<b>6:30 – 7:00 pm</b>	<b>Environmental Justice — Mapping of EJ Communities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose of EJ mapping</li> <li>• State mapping methodology</li> <li>• Options to refine methodology</li> <li>• Group discussion on methodology</li> </ul>
<b>7:00 – 7:20 pm</b>	<b>Safety Element — Climate Change Vulnerability</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goals of Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (CCVA)</li> <li>• Sensitive populations</li> <li>• Social sensitivity index</li> <li>• Group discussion on sensitive populations</li> </ul>
<b>7:20 – 7:30 pm</b>	<b>Closing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next meeting</li> <li>• General Q&amp;A</li> </ul>

### **Welcome Packet**

1. Meeting #1 Agenda
2. Environmental Justice Fact Sheet (attached)
3. EWC and EJ Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) (attached)

## **EQUITY WORKING COMMITTEE**

Meeting #2 – January 24, 2023

Objectives & Agenda

### **Meeting Objectives**

- Reflect on the discussion from EWC Meeting #1 and how feedback has been incorporated
- Build consensus on the updated EJ Community/DAC Map
- Discuss the strengths, challenges, and priorities of EJ Communities in Sonoma County
- Review next steps for the EWC

### **Agenda**

TIME	SECTION TOPICS
6:00 – 6:05 pm	<b>Welcome Back and Reminders</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoom reminders</li> <li>• Expectations of EWC</li> <li>• Stipends and translation</li> </ul>
6:05 – 6:20 pm	<b>Meeting #2 Objectives and Reflection on EWC Meeting #1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Today's agenda and materials</li> <li>• What we heard</li> <li>• Updates to the Safety Element social sensitivity index</li> <li>• Updates to EJ Communities mapping</li> </ul>
6:20 – 6:40 pm	<b>Environmental Justice — Mapping of EJ Communities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refresher on EJ Communities mapping process</li> <li>• Review of updated EJ Communities map <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Comparison to other indices of health and vulnerability</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Large-group discussion on support of EJ Communities map</li> </ul>
6:40 – 7:20 pm	<b>Environmental Justice — Strengths and Challenges in EJ Communities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to EJ Technical Background Report</li> <li>• Breakout room discussions by geographic area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ North and west county (Russian River, coast, and Cloverdale)</li> <li>○ Santa Rosa and Rohnert Park</li> <li>○ South county (Sonoma and Petaluma)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
7:20 – 7:30 pm	<b>Next Steps and Closing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future meetings</li> <li>• General Q&amp;A</li> </ul>

## **Meeting Materials**

Attached are the following materials for reference prior to the second meeting:

- A. PowerPoint Presentation
- B. Updated EJ Community Maps
  - o Countywide map with & without inset maps
  - o Inset maps of Russian River/Coast, Santa Rosa/Rohnert Park, and Petaluma/Sonoma
- C. Updated Social Sensitivity Index Map
- D. Portrait of Sonoma County map of census tracts
  - o We will compare this index to the County's EJ Communities Map.
- E. CDC Social Vulnerability Index map of Sonoma County census tracts
  - o We will compare this index to the County's EJ Communities Map.
  - o Note: This map was obtained through the California Healthy Places Index mapping program and the map depicts each census tract as ranked in comparison to other Sonoma County census tracts.
  - o To learn more about the CDC Social Vulnerability Index and explore the data used, visit:  
<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/placeandhealth/svi/index.html>
- F. California Healthy Places Index map of Sonoma County census tracts (for comparison to the County's EJ Community Map)
  - o We will compare this index to the County's EJ Communities Map.
  - o Note: This map was obtained through the California Healthy Places Index mapping program and the map depicts each census tract as ranked in comparison to other Sonoma County census tracts.
  - o To learn more about the CA Healthy Places Index and explore the data used, visit:  
<https://www.healthyplacesindex.org/>

## **Meeting #1 Follow-Up**

### **Response to Comments**

Below is a list of common feedback we received during meeting #1 and in the feedback survey we sent to the EWC after the meeting.

- **Materials should be provided several days in advance.**
  - o County response: The County will make every effort to provide materials no later than the Friday before Tuesday evening EWC meetings.
- **The maps needed more geographic context to easier locate neighborhoods and communities within the County.**
  - o County response: Additional context has been added to the updated EJ Community maps for better understanding, including community and City labels, certain roadway labels, and local green space and waterbody landmarks.
- **The EJ Community maps may not "tell the whole story."**
  - o County response: While the mapping process is a legal requirement by the State with the goal of identifying low-income areas that are *disproportionately* burdened by pollution and other health issues. The mapping process is not meant to minimize the complexities of environmental justice issues or reduce community experience into yes/no determinations of impact. Mapping is an important first step before we can talk about solution-oriented policies



and programs to advance health in designated EJ Communities in addition to broader Sonoma County.

- **Communities at the margins, or “pockets” of disadvantage in larger census tracts may be left out.**
  - County response: The project team explored the suggestion from EWC members to perform our EJ Community screening analysis using census block groups instead of census tracts. Data is very limited at the census block group level, particularly in the State-required analysis categories such as pollution. A Countywide analysis at the block group level would be an expensive and time-consuming process. With limited financial and data resources available, the project team has determined the most appropriate path is to proceed with census tract level analysis. Using relevant data combined with the EWC’s input, EJ Community mapping should include all areas of disproportionate disadvantage. Policy can also be a helpful tool to ensure that disadvantaged communities along the fringe of mapped EJ Communities are not neglected. When the project reaches the policy development step, the project team looks forward to exploring policy concepts with the EWC to address health concerns in areas adjacent to and within EJ Communities, as well as within Sonoma County more broadly.
- **Smaller breakout rooms would be helpful.**
  - County Response: The project team will plan for smaller breakout rooms to help ensure every member’s input is fairly heard.
- **Some EWC members took more than their fair share of discussion time in breakout rooms.**
  - County Response: The project team will seek to improve facilitation so that everyone’s voices are represented. We will also explore other ways to facilitate more meaningful and fair discussions, including smaller breakout rooms and technological collaboration tools.

**EQUITY WORKING COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING 2 - BREAKOUT SESSION**

EJ COMMUNITIES IN WEST COUNTY, THE RUSSIAN RIVER AND THE COAST

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• West County Health Centers</li> <li>• Russian River Senior Center</li> <li>• Great open space engagement</li> <li>• Non-profit support for climate resilience</li> <li>• A “coalition of do-gooders” within the community</li> <li>• River to Coast Children’s Services supports the Latino community</li> <li>• St. Elizabeth’s Church is a connector</li> <li>• Graton Day Labor Center</li> <li>• Social service/community-focused non-profits</li> <li>• Local food production – Sonoma COAD has a food group</li> <li>• Farmers markets in Timber Cove</li> <li>• Points of connection for mutual support</li> <li>• Culture, and resident gatherings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flooding impacts (e.g. disruption of food services during flood events)</li> <li>• Wildfire</li> <li>• Wood smoke pollution</li> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Communication vulnerability</li> <li>• Lack of high school, forcing local youth to travel outside of the area to Analy High School</li> <li>• The West County and Russian River distinction</li> <li>• Lack of broadband internet</li> <li>• Tourist traffic during the summer</li> <li>• Latino stores are in Santa Rosa and transportation is difficult</li> <li>• Low-income individuals often rent garages that flood</li> <li>• High housing costs, driven by tourism</li> <li>• Homelessness</li> <li>• Unpermitted construction because the County permitting office is far away</li> <li>• Lack of housing options that are nonstandard (e.g. multiple families)</li> <li>• Flooding of unpermitted housing displaces renters because they can’t hold landlords accountable</li> <li>• Mold remediation is needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve communication between the supportive organizations</li> <li>• People are scared of enforcement agencies</li> <li>• The community doesn’t trust the County</li> </ul>





**EQUITY WORKING COMMITTEE**

**MEETING 2 - BREAKOUT SESSION**

**EJ COMMUNITIES IN SANTA ROSA & ROHNERT PARK**

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Catholic charities</li><li>• The Moorland Neighborhood Action Team's coordination with different government agencies and non-governmental organizations such as the Food Bank and Safe Routes to School</li><li>• Sonoma County Indian Health is moving into the old K-Mart location</li><li>• Mobile crisis units have launched</li><li>• Community resilience – the creation of community threads</li><li>• Faith-based support, including fostering/caring for children</li><li>• Ongoing outreach with youth groups<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ "If you treat youth like leaders they will become leaders."</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Education disparity between different areas of the City</li><li>• Lacking access to areas to grow food</li><li>• Housing quality and affordability</li><li>• The permitting process is too expensive to expand housing</li><li>• Taylor Mountain is the only option for recreation</li><li>• Poor sidewalk accessibility along Santa Rosa Avenue</li><li>• People visit the area to shop then leave</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Investment in south Santa Rosa area:</li><li>• Sidewalks, trails, amenities, and parks</li><li>• Better access to transportation</li><li>• Opportunities for young adults participate in the public decision making process</li><li>• Improvements for walkability</li><li>• Public art and murals</li></ul>

**EQUITY WORKING COMMITTEE**

**MEETING 2 - BREAKOUT SESSION**

**EJ COMMUNITIES IN SONOMA AND PETALUMA AREA**

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The working class</li> <li>• Families and cultural belonging</li> <li>• Nearby to parks and open spaces</li> <li>• Lots of non-profits, particularly Food For All / Comida Para Todos, Sonoma Overnight Support (SOS), Homeless Action Sonoma,</li> <li>• New grassroots non-profit VIDA</li> <li>• Sonoma City Council's "valley-level view" and openness to work with the County on shared services</li> <li>• Neighbor to neighbor response</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High standing groundwater</li> <li>• Unsheltered community</li> <li>• Some organized shelters have unsanitary conditions</li> <li>• Language access still lacks</li> <li>• Undocumented communities not part of the conversation</li> <li>• Information from the government is often skewed and doesn't represent the whole picture</li> <li>• Low wages and high-cost burdens</li> <li>• Insecure housing – threat of displacement</li> <li>• Traveling to parks and open spaces can be difficult for some groups (e.g. people with disabilities, those without a car)</li> <li>• Creeks/streams cause drainage issues</li> <li>• Transportation to/from rural areas – access to medical services and during emergency evacuation</li> <li>• Internet access is poor in rural areas</li> <li>• Power outages</li> <li>• Lost a major taxi provider in the area and Uber isn't effective since there is not enough drivers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A library in the Springs area</li> <li>• Better access to healthier and culturally appropriate food</li> <li>• More opportunities to hear community stories, particularly from underrepresented communities (e.g. people with disabilities, Latinos)</li> <li>• Safe and sanitary homes</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sonoma Valley feels like an island that isn't actively engaged by the County and is often represented by groups that aren't connected with people most affected</li><li>• Cell phone reception is poor and should be priority for safety reasons</li><li>• Overcrowding is a known issue in Sonoma Valley</li><li>• Not enough partnerships and coordination among non-profits/community-based organizations for more effective service</li><li>• Lack of culturally competent community-based organizations</li><li>• Low-educational attainment</li><li>• Public transportation and paratransit are difficult during flooding</li></ul>	
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## **EQUITY WORKING COMMITTEE**

Meeting #3 – April 11, 2023, at 6 pm

Objectives & Agenda

### **Meeting Objectives**

- Report out on EJ Technical Report, Survey Launch and Los Cien Event
- Build consensus on which communities should be engagement priorities
- Solicit and understand best practices for public participation that the project team can use as it sets up engagement in the future.
- Review next steps for the EWC

### **Agenda**

TIME	SECTION TOPICS
6:00 – 6:05 pm	<b>Welcome Back and Reminders</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Zoom reminders</li><li>• Expectations of EWC</li></ul>
6:05 – 6:10 pm	<b>Report Out</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Survey Launch</li><li>• Los Cien Event</li></ul>
6:10 – 6:15 pm	<b>Policy making framework</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Report out on EJ Technical Report</li><li>• How should EWC lead the policymaking in conjunction with staff?</li></ul>
6:20 – 6:40 pm	<b>Communities of focus for engagement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understanding our mandates from the State for public participation</li><li>• How should we apply an equity lens to our public participation</li></ul>
6:40 – 7:00 pm	<b>Learning from the EWC: Best Practices for Engaging on the EJ/Safety Element</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Best activities</li><li>• Best communication tools</li><li>• Best places to go assignment</li></ul>
After 7:00 pm	<b>Parking lot questions (optional)</b>



## **EQUITY WORKING COMMITTEE**

### **Meeting 3 Summary Highlights**

#### **Pop-Ups**

- Make our set-up attractive
- Have something to keep kids entertained – popsicles, toys, etc.
- Locations/Events/Partners
  - May 9th Preparedness Fair in Sonoma Valley
  - Booker Hall – partner with La Luz
  - Foodbank Days, partner with Food for ALL
  - Farmer's markets (Wednesday night markets in Santa Rosa)
  - Juneteenth event in South Park
  - [Promotores](#) in Cloverdale

#### **Focus Groups**

- Use for hard-to-reach groups (e.g. farmworkers, individuals with reduced literacy)
- Partner with trusted organizations
- Make it a hybrid format if possible to maximize participation
- Have an incentive (e.g. stipends, gift cards, food)
- A focus group is best option to connect with people with disabilities
- Connect with community health workers from the Department of Health Services

#### **General Outreach/Promotion Comments**

- Utilize local radio stations – do an interview and advertise pop-up event
- Offer to hold presentations on the project to community organizations (COAD and Graton Day Labor Center offered to host us)
- Many community organizations doing work in similar spheres already have data/information on the same questions – don't hesitate to reach out and see if they have background they can share as a better jumping off point than starting from scratch
  - Hold a listening sessions with these organizations (NBOP, LatinX student congress)
- Community health workers would be a great source of information
- Asset mapping is a great exercise

#### **Surveys**

- Less of a priority than focus groups or pop-ups
- Have a "how did you hear about this survey" question at the end
- Survey literacy is a barrier for some who can't read or write
- Need a better elevator pitch explaining why taking this survey may benefit them
- Utilize community organizations and EWC members' networks to send out survey links
- Burbank housing survey distribution

## EQUITY WORKING COMMITTEE

Meeting #4 – August 1, 2023, at 6 pm

Objectives & Agenda

### Meeting Objectives

- Refresher and update on work completed to date
- Provide an overview of the policymaking process
- Review 9 policy issue areas for the Safety and EJ Elements, and discuss desired outcomes and strategies to achieve those outcomes
- Review next steps for the EWC

### Agenda

TIME	SECTION TOPICS
6:00 – 6:05 pm	<b>Welcome Back and Reminders</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoom reminders</li> <li>• Expectations of EWC</li> </ul>
6:05 – 6:15 pm	<b>Report Out</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admin. Draft Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment</li> <li>• Admin. Draft Environmental Justice Technical Background Report</li> </ul>
6:15 – 6:30 pm	<b>Policy making Frameworks and Process</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EWC Role</li> <li>• Tonight: Discuss 1) Policy issues and opportunities, 2) desired outcomes, and 3) strategies to address policy issues</li> <li>• Next meeting: Review refined policy concepts and discuss resources to support policy implementation</li> </ul>
6:30 – 6:55 pm 6:55 – 7:20 pm 7:20 – 7:50 pm	<b>Breakout Discussions on Policy Topics (3 rounds)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the desired outcomes (e.g. specific objectives) for this policy issue?</li> <li>• What strategies would be most effective to address this policy issue and achieve the desired outcomes?</li> <li>• What programs or policies have you seen work well for under-resourced communities?</li> <li>• Report Out</li> </ul>
7:50 – 8:00 pm	<b>Next Steps</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EWC Meeting 5</li> <li>• Pop Ups</li> </ul>
8:00 – 8:10 pm	<b>Questions (optional)</b>

## **Meeting Resources**

- *Administrative Draft Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment*
- *Administrative Draft Environmental Justice Technical Background Report*
- *Safety Element Policy Framework*
- *EJ Element Policy Framework*

## **Pre-Meeting Preparation**

1. Review the Executive Summary and Section 6 of the draft *Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment*.

Review the Introduction and the key takeaways in Sections 5-10 in the draft *EJ Technical Background Report*. Tables 1 and 2 in the *EJ Report* provide an overview of EJ Communities in the County.

These reports helped the County project team identify policy issue areas for the Safety Element update and new EJ Element.

2. Review both the *Safety and EJ Policy Frameworks*. These documents provide an overview of each of the policy issues we will be discussing at EWC Meeting 4, and offer examples of desired outcomes and strategies to help us start brainstorming potential policies during the breakout discussions.

The frameworks are provided in Microsoft Word format so that EWC members may use them as worksheets (if desired). Filling out the frameworks is not necessary to participate in the meeting, but we ask that, at minimum, EWC members review them beforehand to get familiar with what we'll be discussing.

# Sonoma County Safety Element Update & Environmental Justice Policies

## Safety Element Policy Framework (Equity Working Committee Draft Version 1)

### Extreme Heat, Air Quality, Drought

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#### Issues and Opportunities

##### Issue 1: Extreme Heat and Air Quality Protection

All communities in Sonoma County are significantly exposed to poor air quality from wildfire smoke, including socially sensitive populations and Environmental Justice (EJ) Communities, which will experience disproportionate impacts because of the systemic inequities that they face. Changes in annual average maximum temperature by the end of the century will increase across the entire County with more frequent incidences of extreme heat. Impacts from extreme heat events are expected to compound poor health outcomes already being experienced by sensitive populations and EJ communities, particularly for those located near Feters Hot Springs-Agua Caliente, southwest of Santa Rosa, Forestville, Cloverdale, and south of Windsor. Impacts include heat-related illness, such as heat stress, heat stroke, and dehydration, which can be life threatening. During poor air quality and extreme heat events, cooling centers, hospitals, and emergency personnel are in high demand and these critical resources may be affected by power reliability, staffing, and inequitable community access to emergency facilities.

##### Desired Outcome

Example - Reduce the number of community members and workers exposed to poor air quality and extreme heat conditions. (Supported by EWC)

##### EWC Outcome Ideas –

- Community awareness of the impacts of extreme heat
- Resources to support renters – most incentives are for owners, not renters
- Adequate resources and support to be safe during extreme heat/cold events

##### Strategies

##### Example – Retrofit Homes

- Create a County-wide program that provides owners and renters with the ability to improve their living conditions to create a healthier space. Partner with community-based organizations to deploy program in areas of highest need, including high social sensitivity and environmental justice communities. (Supported by EWC)

##### Example - Adapt Critical Facilities

- Prioritize weatherization improvements in critical facilities through the capital improvement planning process.





### EWC Strategy Ideas –

- Programs to promote worker safety in extreme heat
- Financial assistance with utility costs during extreme heat/cold events
- Criteria for when to provide cooling and warming centers
- Resource provision at cooling/warming/evacuation centers such as battery/electricity for C-PAP machines, insulin refrigeration in case the power gets shut off, and N95s, etc
- Free public transit during extreme heat/cold events for easier transportation (e.g. to the Russian River, to warming/cooling centers)
- More public green space, shade for relief from heat
- Playgrounds should have shade trees (particularly those within or near high density residential developments) and should be designed with heat in mind to prevent burning

### Issue 2: Water Reliability and Consumption

Water supply infrastructure, such as pipelines and pump stations, can be damaged by climate hazards, impacting water reliability throughout the County which has direct implications on wildfire mitigation, community members, agricultural production, and critical services. Extended drought conditions that impact availability of water supply can increase the cost of water and affect water quality, resulting in disproportionate impacts to socially sensitive populations and EJ communities. Water levels in groundwater basins throughout the County have declined in recent years due to lower-than-average rainfall and in some cases overdraft. This can result in reduced water availability, problems with existing wells, higher concentrations of water pollutants, and in some cases, intrusion of seawater into the aquifer, mainly along the southernmost parts of the County. Groundwater users that are not within a basin subject to the California Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) may have fewer options to address diminished groundwater resources.

#### Desired Outcome

Example – Maintain safe and reliable water sources for all community members, emergency services, and agricultural operations. **(Supported by EWC)**

### EWC Outcome Ideas –

- Transparency, clarity, and awareness about water supply
  - Concerns: there is misinformation about water supply
- Equal access to information about water supply
  - Concerns: the Press Democrat and Sonoma Water post information about water supply and water levels, but not everyone has access to the newspaper or the internet. The Sonoma Water website is also difficult to navigate.
- Transparency of water usage from different industries and water rights
- Affordable water rates
- Adequate noticing about changes to local water regulations that affect well owners
- Fair pricing of water that does not penalize larger families
- Provide free water conservation buckets to households (Santa Rosa does this)



### Strategies

#### Example - Provide Safe and Reliable Water to the Community

- Provide resources to community members to incentivize water conservation and efficiency techniques. Expand educational outreach to include drought tolerant landscaping, low-flow appliances, and leakage repairs. **(Supported by EWC)**

#### Example - Secure locally Sourced Water for Emergency Services

- Identify areas with inadequate fire flow under extreme conditions to target improvements for supplementary water supplies.
- Provide County-wide water efficiency upgrades to divert and guarantee water for emergency services.

### **EWC Strategy Ideas –**

- Utilize school districts and local churches (particularly Spanish masses) for messaging about water supply and drought conditions
- Engaged County staff should attend community events to share information about water
  - Concerns: Staff that conduct outreach need to be adequately prepared and ready to engage with all populations
- Expand messaging about incentives for water conservation and efficiency (example: Sonoma Water's quarterly newsletter)
- Send early messaging about drought conditions before we've reached emergent conditions; do not utilize fear tactics

## **Emergency Preparedness & Response**

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### **Issues and Opportunities**

#### **Issue 1: Alerts and Evacuation**

Emergency communications and timely evacuations are an essential part of emergency operation planning and community safety. Barriers to evacuation can stem from deficiencies in the electrical grid, transportation system, telecommunication systems, emergency facilities and services, evacuation locations, as well as inequitable access and distribution of resources. Inability to evacuate in a timely fashion during a hazardous event can create direct impacts to health and safety and exacerbate chronic health problems with socially sensitive populations and EJ communities at highest risk. Most Safety Element Survey respondents reported having taken steps to prepare for wildfires; however, over 40% reported financial constraints as one of the largest barriers to adequate preparation. Historically there have been several climate hazard events that prompted evacuations including but not limited to recent fires of Walbridge, Glass, and Kincade. Wildfire evacuations have typically affected northeast and eastern portions of the County.

### Desired Outcome

Example - Increase the ability of the community to evacuate safely and timely from hazard zones using reliable infrastructure and systems. **(Supported by EWC)**

Example - Broaden the reach of emergency alerts to include all community members, particularly for those that face systemic inequities. **(Supported by EWC)**



### EWC Outcome Ideas –

- Emergency preparedness not reactivity
- Cell coverage is spotty; need other source of information distribution
- Early and more communications about potential emergency events and the potential need to respond

### Strategies

#### Example - Prepare the Community for Evacuation

- Facilitate neighborhood evacuation capacity assessments and evacuation preparedness drills in collaboration with community-based organizations.
- Address language and ADA-related barriers for accessing emergency preparedness resources and distribute resources in areas with high social sensitivity and EJ communities through partnerships with community-based organizations. **(Supported by EWC)**
  - Targeted outreach to those areas
  - County transportation plan for those specific groups or community/neighborhood level support
  - AFN committee – county transportation assessment

#### Example - Retrofit Critical Services to Better Evacuate the Community

- Create redundant and frequently tested back-up power systems and communication systems not reliant on electricity to alert and mobilize community members during evacuations. **(Supported by EWC)**

### EWC Strategy Ideas –

- Develop specific standards for alerts about controlled burns
- Nixle alerts need to be more widely distributed (people live and work in different areas)
- Neighborhood evacuation drills
- Promote emergency support resources, particularly who to call for help in different scenarios (911)

## All Hazards/General Public Safety

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### Issues and Opportunities

#### Issue 1: Equitable Community Safety

As climate change impacts occur, virtually all populations in a community will be affected; however, some individuals will be disproportionately impacted by climate hazards due to inequitable systems and structures. Areas of Sonoma County with the greatest concentration of socially sensitive populations are in the Cloverdale area, directly southwest of Santa Rosa, and around Fethers Hot Springs-Agua Caliente. Inequitable access to, and distribution of resources, critical services, and resilient infrastructure systems decreases the ability for sensitive populations to prepare for, cope and recover from climate impacts. Safety Element Survey respondents identified the following barriers to adequately preparing for climate



change: financial constraints, fear of rent increases if requesting home upgrades, physical limitations or disabilities or illness, social isolation, and language barriers.

#### Desired Outcome

Example – Resources, funds, infrastructure investments, and services will be equitably allocated based on greatest sensitivity and need. **(Supported by EWC)**

#### **EWC Outcome Ideas –**

- Easy, accessible information about transportation resources available for evacuation
- Clear understanding of where there are evacuation transportation needs within the County and plan to respond to those needs during emergency events
- Increased access to health care during and post-emergency events
- Culturally responsive emergency planning and response (DHS during covid did a good job)
- Prioritize not just equity, but diversity and inclusion in all emergency planning and response
- Safe and accessible (for people with disabilities) pedestrian and bicycle network

#### Strategies

Example - Provide Resources for Hazard Prevention

- Create a program to provide low- or no-cost assistance for wildfire mitigation actions such as vegetation clearing for low-income, elderly, and differently abled community members.

Example - Increase Access to Healthcare Services

- Partner with the fire protection districts to provide affordable basic health care services during climate hazards events such as extreme heat events by setting up fire house clinics. **(Supported by EWC)**

Example - Create Centers of Community Resilience

- Partner with community-based organizations to establish weatherized resilience hubs with backup power to provide shelter and refuge from wildfires and extreme heat and offer resources and services related to emergency preparation, healthcare, and job opportunities. **(Supported by EWC)**

Example - Prioritize Equity in the Capital Improvement Process

- Prioritize investments in resilient infrastructure based on risk and the needs of socially sensitive populations and EJ communities.

#### **EWC Strategy Ideas –**

- Neighborhood evacuation drills
- Build neighborhood/community-level capacity by training community leaders on disaster preparedness so they can provide resources and support within the neighborhood as trusted members of the community
- Promote emergency preparedness resources



- Staff involved with emergency planning should be more diverse and speak different languages
- Better support and involvement of Sonoma COAD and similar organizations in emergency planning processes and during response, particularly for communications
- Warming centers



## Sonoma County

# Safety Element Update & Environmental Justice Policies

## Environmental Justice Policy Framework (Equity Working Committee Draft Version 1)

### Healthy Environments (Pollution Burden)

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#### Issues and Opportunities

##### Issue 1: Pollution Exposure

Pollution exposure stems from various factors in Environmental Justice (EJ) communities, including exposure to solid waste sites, pesticides associated with agricultural uses, and lead from paint used on older housing. Although several EJ communities have practically no impacts (2.5th percentile or lower) from solid waste sites, 13 EJ Communities scored above the 75th percentile for impacts, indicating a high exposure to pollution sources. The areas most impacted by solid waste sites are in the central and southern portions of the county. The Taylor Mountain EJ Community has significant levels of Diesel Particulate Matter relative to other census tracts in California. Additionally, EJ Communities in the Russian River Valley, Shiloh South, and Sonoma City South/Vineburg have moderately elevated levels of pesticides compared to other census tracts in California. Pesticide use was identified as a concern during EJ stakeholder group interviews, along with wildfire smoke. Lead exposure from housing also varies across EJ Communities, with some census tracts in the southern portion of the County scoring low and the East Cloverdale EJ Community scoring notably high.

##### Desired Outcome

Example - Reduce pollution exposure and protect people from its effects. **(Supported by EWC)**

##### **EWC Outcome Ideas –**

- Protect farmworkers from pollution (air quality from wildfires, pesticide exposure, impaired water)
- Address noise pollution

##### Strategies

Example - Use Land Use Controls to Safely Locate Uses

- Use land use strategies to ensure sources of pollution are located away from EJ communities. **(Supported by EWC)**
- Require buffer zones around residential uses in EJ communities for locating uses that have the potential to harm the environment or residents.
- Implement measures on new development to avoid significant health risks related to pollution.

Example - Promote Safe Pesticide Use Practices

- Partner with local agricultural community members to reduce pesticide pollution through connecting them to grant opportunities and resources to implement best practices.
- Work with agricultural providers near EJ communities to implement organic growing practices by offering incentives and promotional programs.



### **EWC Strategy Ideas –**

- Policies to prevent fumes from pesticides from entering households
- Policies to protect groundwater from fertilizer, pesticides/herbicides
- Disaster pay for farmworkers in hazardous conditions
- Free lead tests to households (San Francisco does this)
- Partner with the Russian River Alliance, Sonoma County Health Action

## **Issue 2: Clean Water and Environmental Stewardship**

EJ Communities in Sonoma County have relatively moderate impacts from impaired water bodies, with two-thirds of EJ Communities scoring between the 50th and 72nd percentile, indicating these communities are near local bodies of water that are contaminated with pollutants, although drinking water contamination is not considered impacted. Nine EJ Communities have elevated levels of threats to groundwater from leaking underground storage tanks, and only four EJ Communities scored below the 60th percentile for groundwater threats from this issue. The Petaluma Airport/Arroyo Park census tract has the highest score.

### Desired Outcome

Example - Achieve safe ground water and surface water standards in EJ Communities.

### **EWC Outcome Ideas –**

- Safe drinking water for everyone
- Accountability for pollution of groundwater
- Prevent pollution run off during storms

### Strategies

Example - Promote Environmental Stewardship in Sonoma County

- Partner with local organizations and schools to hold regular cleanup events at and around local creeks and waterways. **(Supported by EWC)**
- Develop a multi-lingual outreach campaign that educates and trains residents and businesses on preserving and maintaining healthy watersheds.

Example - Minimize Waterway Pollution and Runoff

- Identify ways to minimize agricultural pollution spray and runoff, including organic farming methods, bioswale and groundcover vegetation plans, and field location and orientation. **(Supported by EWC)**

### **EWC Strategy Ideas –**

- Incentivize well water testing in EJ Communities
- Create a pesticides/herbicides testing program for groundwater and well water
- Ensure robust enforcement to make sure spills are cleaned up and not hidden
- Grant program to filter water and improve quality in homes



- Policies that prevent contamination rather than mitigate
- Incentive programs to remove or better manage underground storage tanks
- Utilize CBOs for community water contamination outreach
- Partner with native communities, and community organizations like the Russian Riverkeeper and the Russian River Alliance on programs

## Healthy Public Facilities and Physical Activity

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### Issues and Opportunities

#### Issue 1: Parks and Open Space Access

Developed and/or publicly accessible open space and park areas are limited in some areas throughout the county. The EJ Communities located at the West Cotati/Penngrove, Taylor Mountain, Downtown Cotati, and Feters Spring/Agua Caliente West census tracts are all considered deficient. Although much of the areas surrounding these communities are open space and agricultural in nature, privately owned land restricts access to these areas and a lack of developed open space areas may create parking, trail access, and safety challenges as well as prevent access to people with disabilities, children, or to those who are elderly. Participants in the EJ stakeholder group interviews also expressed a concern with the inequitable distribution of parks. Barriers to accessing parks and open space flagged during the interviews included lack of transportation options, poor outdoor air quality, and limited time available due to multiple responsibilities.

#### Desired Outcome

Example - Increase access to parks and open space in Sonoma County EJ Communities in order to meet the established criteria of one acre of accessible parkland or open space per 1000 residents.

#### **EWC Outcome Ideas –**

- Make parks financially accessible for lower-income communities
- Provide/improve transportation options to/from parks for all, especially people with disabilities

#### Strategies

Example - Improve Ease and Comfortability of Access

- Evaluate existing Complete Streets system gaps within EJ Communities and prioritize resources to provide necessary improvements. **(Supported by EWC)**

Example - Encourage Use of Existing Facilities

- Encourage the use of park spaces for community events and activities, hosted by local businesses and organizations.

Example - Increase Greenspace Availability and Maintenance

- Identify underutilized rights-of-way within EJ Communities to be converted into parklets or other recreational facilities.
- Identify private and public landowners in or accessible to EJ Communities conducive to joint use agreements.





### **EWC Strategy Ideas –**

- Free Sonoma County Parks Pass for food-insecure, low-income households
- Make parks more physically accessible through improved transportation options to/from, and inclusion of features for people with disabilities
- Ensure park/trail maintenance and planning considers improvements for people with disabilities
- Conduct park planning outreach and engagement at local food pantries, churches, etc.
- More green space and trees should be required for higher density residential housing and in industrial areas
- Maintain existing parks
- Improve active transportation connections to parks

## **Community Health**

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### **Issues and Opportunities**

#### **Issue 1: Physical Health**

Exposure to environmental health hazards has a direct impact on physical health, including increased rates of asthma, cardiovascular disease, and low birth weight. For example, areas with poor air quality due to the presence of Diesel Particulate Matter (DPM), toxic releases, pesticides, or wildfire smoke may increase the risk of respiratory diseases such as asthma. Similarly, areas with poor environmental quality limit residents' ability to participate in safe and healthy outdoor activities, increasing their risk from other health impacts. Both the Wright and Bellevue EJ Communities, located in the central portion of the county, score above the 75th percentile for asthma, as well as score the highest for cardiovascular disease.

#### Desired Outcome

Example - Improve the public health outcomes related to environmental health hazards for residents of EJ Communities. **(Supported by EWC)**

#### **EWC Outcome Ideas –**

- Consistent health-related resources across jurisdictions to support more fair health outcomes
- Improve bicycle and pedestrian safety
- Improve inequitable health outcomes

#### Strategies

Example - Raise Awareness About Risk and Risk Reduction

- Create a County-wide program to raise awareness about local asthma risks and at-home mitigation strategies to reduce asthma risks.
- Create a County-led home safety education program providing residents with information on risk of lead from housing, retrofits for maintaining healthier households, and programs to support other at-home mitigation practices.
- Partner with schools to develop an in-school early detection asthma screening program.



#### Example - Improve Environmental Conditions

- Broaden availability and accessibility of County-sponsored public recreation programs to provide opportunities for physical activity for all members of the community.
- Reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides and herbicides on County-owned parks and publicly accessible open spaces.
- Identify and work with organizations to assist residents and landlords in securing funding for private building rehabilitation, including removal of lead paint, interior air quality improvements, and gas appliance replacement.

#### EWC Strategy Ideas –

- Update the EJ Element based on changes in community conditions
- Communicate and align Sonoma County jurisdictions on health policy, programs, and planning
- Conduct outreach, particularly with the working class, to understand extent of health issues
- Provide accessible green space within/near high density residential areas

## Civic Engagement

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### Issues and Opportunities

#### Issue 1: County Connections with Community Based Organizations (CBOs)

Residents in EJ Communities face a variety of challenges when it comes to participating in civic engagement and the government decision-making process, as do communities that have a higher proportion of residents who are elderly, non-English speakers, or lack sufficient broadband internet access. Establishing meaningful partnerships with CBOs could aid the County in bridging the gaps in communication and building trust with residents to increase participation. CBOs play a unique role in each EJ Community and can therefore represent and communicate the needs of the people they serve. By adopting a collaborative approach to outreach that involves CBOs, more effective and meaningful engagement with the community can be fostered. In addition, forging these connections with CBOs facilitates the development of rapport and mutual trust between the organizations, residents, and County. Participants in the EJ stakeholder group interviews expressed support for creating additional opportunities for connection with CBOs as it has been successful in the past.

#### Desired Outcome

Example - Establish meaningful and long-lasting relationships with Community Based Organizations to increase engagement of EJ communities in local government decision-making processes. **(Supported by EWC)**

#### EWC Outcome Ideas –

- Embed CBOs in County decision-making process
- Improve capacity for CBOs to partner with the County
- Build language justice in County operations



### Strategies

#### Example - Improve Existing and Future Partnerships

- Establish criteria for selection, a budget, and memorandum of understanding protocols for CBO stipends for participation in engagement, focus groups, and other mutually beneficial activities.
- Identify key CBOs that operate effectively within EJ Communities and meet the criteria for selection.
- Partner with respected CBOs to review the CBO partnership program to ensure it is fair, beneficial, and includes locally recognized and knowledgeable CBOs.

#### **EWC Strategy Ideas –**

- Embed CBOs in County decision-making process using the method used for the County Emergency Operations Center
- Create pathways for funding to support CBO capacity to work with the County
- Provide direct pathways of communication from CBOs to the Board of Supervisors and County leadership including CAO/Department heads
- Utilize CBOs to staff County Advisory Boards
- Provide technical assistance (particularly on grant applications) to increase CBO capacity to engage in County program implementation
- Create job opportunities and procurement opportunities for CBOs and BIPOC-led businesses through implementation of County plans or programs such as the EJ Element
- Streamline County contracting process for CBOs
- Provide stipends for participation in County efforts
- Compensate CBOs for partnering and staffing
- Conduct after-action/program evaluation sessions with CBOs to see
- Build relationships with frontline staff in the community
- Work with CBOs to create service hubs that include both County and CBO services
- Participatory budgeting



## **EQUITY WORKING COMMITTEE**

Meeting #5 – August 29, 2023, 6 to 8 pm

### **Objectives & Agenda**

#### **Meeting Objectives**

- Review the project's policymaking process
- Review 9 policy issue areas for the Safety and EJ Elements, and discuss draft policy ideas
- Learn from the EWC about community priorities and ways to improve draft policy ideas

#### **Agenda**

TIME	SECTION TOPICS
6:00 – 6:05 pm	<b>Welcome Back and Reminders</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Zoom reminders</li><li>• Expectations of EWC</li></ul>
6:05 – 6:10 pm	<b>Report Out</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reminder on Background Reports</li><li>• Project Outreach</li></ul>
6:10 – 6:15 pm	<b>Policymaking Process</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• EWC Role</li><li>• <i>Policy Concept Papers</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tonight: 1) Review refined policy concepts and 2) Discuss resources to support policy implementation</li></ul></li></ul>
6:15 – 6:45 pm 5 minute report out 6:50 – 7:20 pm 5 minute report out 7:25 – 7:55 pm 5 minute report out	<b>Breakout Discussions on Policy Topics (3 rounds)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does the goal for this policy topic reflect community priorities?</li><li>• How can the policy ideas be improved or expanded upon to better align with community needs and priorities?</li><li>• What existing or potential resources could be leveraged to implement the policy ideas?</li><li>• Are there additional policy ideas that could help us reach this goal?</li><li>• Which policy ideas are most important or most urgent?</li><li>• Report Out</li></ul>
7:55 – 8:00 pm	<b>Next Steps</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• EWC Meeting 6</li><li>• Pop Ups</li></ul>
8:00 – 8:10 pm	<b>Questions (optional)</b>

#### **Meeting Resources**

- *Safety Element Policy Concepts Paper*
- *EJ Element Policy Concepts Paper*

### **Pre-Meeting Preparation**

Review both the *Safety and EJ Policy Concept Papers*. These documents provide an overview of each of the policy issues, draft goals and policy concepts, and associated resources for the EWC to provide input.

The *Policy Concept Papers* are provided in Microsoft Word format so that EWC members may use them as worksheets (if desired). Filling out the *Policy Concept Papers* is not necessary to participate in the meeting, but we ask that, at minimum, EWC members review them beforehand to get familiar with what we'll be discussing.

## Sonoma County

# Safety Element Update & Environmental Justice Policies

## Safety Element Policy Concept Paper (Equity Working Committee Draft Version 2)

### Definitions

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**Issue:** The topic of concern being addressed.

**Goal:** Recommended goal to strive toward.

**Policy Concepts:** Policy ideas for each goal that will guide the development of final policies and action items for the Safety and Environmental Justice Elements.

**Resources:** Existing or potential local, regional, State, or federal resources that could be leveraged to implement the policies and reach the desired goal.

### Extreme Heat, Air Quality, Drought

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#### Issue 1: Extreme Heat and Air Quality Protection

All communities in Sonoma County are significantly exposed to poor air quality from wildfire smoke and more frequent and severe extreme heat events, especially populations rendered vulnerable by systems and EJ communities, which will experience disproportionate impacts because of the systemic inequities that they face. This exposure will compound health issues for these communities. Heat-related illnesses can become life-threatening, increasing the demand for cooling centers, hospitals, and emergency personnel. Emergency services will face challenges providing adequate services due to power interruptions, staffing shortages, and inequitable community access to emergency facilities.

#### *Resources (Existing and Potential)<sup>1</sup>*

- **Partners:** Bay Area Air Quality District; Northern Sonoma County Air District; California Air Resources Board (CARB); CAL FIRE; Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E); Community Development Commission
- **Funding Sources:** California's Strategic Growth Council Community Resilience Centers Grant Program; CARB Community Air Grants; EPA Air Sensor Loan Program; CAL FIRE Urban and Community Forestry Grants
- **Programs:** CARB Wildfire Smoke Clean Air Centers for Vulnerable Populations Incentive Pilot Program\*; CalHHS Emergency Resource Guide; California Natural Resources Agency Urban Greening Program; PG&E Medical Baseline Program; PG&E Self-Generation Incentive Program; PG&E Automated System

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<sup>1</sup> Resources specific to addressing the needs of populations rendered vulnerable by systems are denoted with an asterisk throughout this document



## Goal 1

Community members and workers are protected from poor air quality and extreme heat conditions due to increased resources and investments.

### Policy Concepts

- Create a County-wide programs that provides incentives to landlords to improve indoor air quality and indoor temperature control to protect residents from wildfire smoke and extreme weather conditions. Partner with Sonoma County Housing authority and community-based organizations to deploy programs in areas of highest need, including areas with high concentrations of populations made sensitive by systems and Environmental Justice Communities. Consider lending library models for folks to borrow air purifiers and cooling devices, recognizing cooling centers may not feel safe for everyone.
  - **Addition:** Promote “DIY energy efficiency toolkits.”
    - **Examples:** [Sonoma Clean Power](#); [Sonoma County Home Resilience Guide](#)
- Broaden the functionality and expand the locations of resilience centers, beginning in systemically impacted communities. Resilience centers should provide refuge from extreme heat, extreme cold, and wildfire smoke, while also offering multilingual support services, uninterrupted power supply, food and medical treatment, economic development resources, and other services identified by populations made sensitive by systems and EJ Communities. Identify and address gaps in public awareness of resilience centers and transportation opportunities to centers.
  - **Comment:** The County needs to establish criteria for when to open resiliency centers.
  - **Comment:** Program should include development of a public notification plan that provides timely and effective alerts when resiliency centers open.
  - **Comment:** High priority.
- To increase access to resilience centers, create a partnership with Sonoma County Transit identifying transportation options that have low- to no-cost fares, particularly during extreme weather events, bad air quality days, or hazardous events such as wildfires, floods, and landslides.
  - **Comment:** The County should look for other partners in addition to Sonoma County Transit to support transportation needs.
  - **Comment:** High priority.
- Increase green spaces, shading, and access to water in parks, near transit stops, and along active transportation routes in areas with populations made sensitive by systems and EJ Communities.
- Promote temporary clean air refuge centers during wildfire smoke events for outdoor workers by distributing technical and funding resources to major employers and streamlining permit processes and associated fees.
  - **Revision:** Provide and distribute technical and funding resources to major employers to promote the creation of temporary clean air refuge centers. Streamline permit processes and associated fees.



- To increase protections for workers' health and safety during extreme heat events and bad air quality days, coordinate with Cal/OSHA to increase enforcement and trainings for employers of outdoor workers and warehouse workers.
- Resource community-based organizations that advocate on behalf of workers to support increased employer compliance with Cal/OSHA standards and County programs.
- Explore funding streams to implement hazard pay during hazard events.
- Work with Cal/OSHA to establish thresholds for work stoppage orders during extreme heat events and bad air quality days.
- **New Policy Suggestion:** Improve communication between public agencies across the County for better service provision.

## Issue 2: Water Reliability and Consumption

Climate hazards can damage water supply infrastructure like pipelines and pump stations, impacting water reliability in the County. This has direct consequences for wildfire mitigation, communities, agriculture, and critical services. Extended drought conditions further exacerbate water supply problems, leading to increased water costs and diminished water quality, disproportionately affecting populations made sensitive by systems and EJ communities. Groundwater levels have also declined due to lower-than-average rainfall and overdraft, resulting in reduced availability, well issues, higher water pollutant concentrations, and potential seawater intrusion in the southern parts of the County.

### *Resources (Existing and Potential)*

- **Partners:** Sonoma Water, Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA), Petaluma Valley GSA, Sonoma Valley GSA
- **Funding Sources:** California Department of General Services Water Grants Program; California Water Recycling Funding Program; California Department of Water Resources Grants and Loans; Sonoma County Rainwater Harvesting Rebate Program
- **Programs:** California Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program; Sonoma County Energy Independence Program; California Save Our Water Public Outreach Campaign

### *Goal 1*

Water sources are safe, affordable and reliable for all community members, including populations rendered vulnerable by systems and EJ Communities. Emergency service providers have adequate and reliable water sources to fight increasingly severe wildfires.

### *Policy Concepts*

- In partnership with water providers, provide resources to community members to incentivize water conservation and efficiency techniques without displacing renters or sensitive populations. Expand programs and associated educational outreach to include drought tolerant landscaping, low-flow appliances, greywater capture and reuse, leakage repairs, and financial and technical resources to subsidize costs to landlords and low-income households.



- **Comment:** The types of incentives are key to effectiveness of policy. Need to pair education with a benefit (i.e. carrot).
- **Comment:** Water providers should prioritize and actively create opportunities to assist low-income households through outreach, new programs, etc.
- Identify areas with inadequate water supply for fire emergency response needs to target improvements for supplementary water supplies.
  - **Revision:** Supplement water supplies and prioritize improvements for capacity in areas with inadequate water supply for fire emergency response needs and high fire hazard.
  - **Comment:** High priority. Urgent.
- To guarantee water across the community during drought years, implement drought contingency supplies for those dependent on well water.\*
  - **Comment:** High priority. Urgent.
- To avoid inequitable outcomes in water rate structure changes, water supply deficiencies, and water distribution disruptions that may be induced by climate change, collaborate with water agencies to increase transparency in water agency decision-making.
  - **Revision:** To avoid inequitable outcomes in water rate structure changes, water supply deficiencies, and water distribution disruptions that may be induced by climate change, establish a foundation/plan to collaborate with water agencies to increase transparency in water agency decision-making.
  - **Comment:** Water rate fee are currently structured based on use vs. square footage – this impacts smaller houses, often with a greater number of people, disproportionately. Pricing should consider population density as a factor in a way that does not impact low-income, high density households.
  - **Comment:** High priority.
  - **Comment:** Consider fee structure based on zipcodes that reflect economic realities of populations.
- **New Policy Suggestion:** Create a program to assist well owners with testing their wells for contamination.

## Emergency Preparedness & Response

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### Issue 1: Alerts and Evacuation

Emergency communications and timely evacuations are crucial for community safety and emergency operation planning. Evacuation barriers can arise from deficiencies in the electrical grid, transportation, telecommunication systems, emergency facilities, and inequitable resource distribution. Failing to evacuate promptly during hazardous events directly impacts health and safety, especially for populations made sensitive by systems and EJ communities. Financial constraints were reported by over 40% of Safety Element Survey respondents as a major barrier to adequate wildfire preparation. Past climate hazard events, including recent fires like Walbridge, Glass, and Kincade, have historically prompted evacuations, mainly affecting the northeast and eastern portions of the County.



## Resources

- **Partners:** Northern Sonoma County, Bodega Bay, and Russian River District Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT); Sonoma Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD)\*
- **Funding Sources:** CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention Grants; FEMA Grants
- **Programs:** County of Sonoma Emergency Readiness, Response, and Recovery Webpage, including emergency alert programs (e.g., nixle) and neighborhood programs.

## Goal 1

Community members, especially those that face systemic inequities, can evacuate safely and timely due to resilient infrastructure, accessible and effective emergency alerts, and improved access to financial resources.

## Policy Concepts

- Led by the Department of Emergency Management and in partnership with community-based organizations, facilitate culturally responsive **neighborhood evacuation capacity assessments**, evacuation preparedness drills, **community leader trainings**, and improved access to evacuation financial resources. Community leaders can help serve as a trusted conduit to County resources and support for members of their community.
  - **Comment:** Keep community leader trainings short, but frequent, during the day, in appropriate languages.
- Address language and ADA-related barriers to accessing emergency alert programs and emergency preparedness resources. Increase awareness of such resources in areas with populations made sensitive by systems and EJ Communities by coordinating with and providing resources to community-based organizations that serve those communities. Include multilingual promotion of emergency support resources as part of general County outreach efforts.
- Increase redundancy in emergency evacuation communication systems in the event of an electric outage through a variety of measures, including back-up power for telecommunication towers and other critical facilities, distributing information via radio channels, promoting ownership of hand cranked radios, and other means. Regularly test alert systems for potential evacuation scenarios.
- Enhance enforcement of the Ag Pass program that allows agricultural workers to report to work within mandatory evacuation zones to prioritize worker health and safety, including potential exposure to wildfire smoke and extreme heat. Identify and implement strategies that address disruption in pay and enhance evacuation protocols for workers inside evacuation zones.
  - **Revision:** Maintain and improve Ag Pass Program with minimum requirements, and create a working group to assess needs and implement additional requirements, with a focus on worker safety. Review the process on a regular basis to highlight/prioritize worker health and safety.
  - **Comment:** Worker safety does not seem like a priority in the Ag Pass Program.

- Conduct a transportation needs assessment to identify what areas and populations within the County need transportation assistance during evacuation.
- **New Policy Suggestion:** Require mobile home parks to create evacuation plans.
- **New Policy Suggestion:** Create a Farmworker Safety Commission (similar to County's Human Rights Commission).
- **New Policy Idea:** Perform regular alert system testing in various languages to ensure alerts go through in preferred languages.
- **New Policy Idea:** Develop a campaign on evacuation planning (not just Know Your Zone). Address "what to expect" during evacuation, difference between evacuation warning and order, how to prepare to evacuate, how to find resources to help you evacuate, etc. Train community members on this information to support intra-community preparation.
- **New Policy Suggestion:** Create Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with transportation service providers for evacuation needs and make them publicly accessible.

## All Hazards/General Public Safety

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### Issue 1: Equitable Community Safety

Climate change impacts will affect virtually all populations in a community, but systemically vulnerable communities will be disproportionately impacted due to inequitable systems and structures. The Cloverdale area, southwest of Santa Rosa, and around Fetters Hot Springs-Agua Caliente have the highest concentration of populations made sensitive by systems. EJ Communities throughout the County, with the highest concentrations in the west, south, and central regions, are also at risk of disproportionate impacts from climate change. Inequitable access and active barriers to resources, critical services, and resilient infrastructure hinders the ability of populations made sensitive by systems populations to prepare for, cope with, and recover from climate impacts. Barriers identified by Safety Element Survey respondents include financial constraints, fear of rent increases, physical limitations or disabilities, social isolation, and language barriers.

### Resources

- **Partners:** Sonoma County California Free & Income Based Clinics\*; Sonoma COAD\*
  - **Additions:** Disability Services and Legal Center; the County's AFN Committee; Sonoma County Transit (paratransit for evacuation)
- **Funding Sources:** Urban Areas Security Initiative, Emergency Management Performance Grant Program\*, State and Local Implementation Grant Program, California Health Center Security Grant Program, School Communications Interoperability Grant Program.
- **Programs:** Sonoma County Strategic Plan 2021-2026 Racial Equity and Social Justice Pillar, Goals 1-4\*; FEMA Independent Study Program; Sonoma County CERT training programs.

### Goal 1

County resources, funds, infrastructure investments, and services are equitably allocated based on greatest sensitivity and need.



### Policy Concepts

- Engage with health care providers to develop a strategy to augment health care capacity in areas with populations rendered vulnerable by systems and EJ communities during emergencies.
  - **Revision:** Engage with health care providers to develop a strategy to augment physical and mental health care capacity in areas with populations rendered vulnerable by systems and EJ communities during emergencies.
  - **Addition:** Consider the use of mobile units (example program: Santa Rosa's In Response team/program).
- Prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion in emergency planning processes, including hiring practices, staff trainings, and community engagement and outreach protocols in alignment with the Sonoma County Strategic Plan Racial Equity and Social Justice Pillar so that emergency planning and response is culturally appropriate, encompassing of the needs of all community members, and reflective of the diversity of the communities they serve.
  - **Comment:** This policy should apply to the Department of Emergency Management, Sheriff's Office, and Fire Districts.
- Engage with and provide resources to collaborative networks and community-based organizations in emergency planning processes and during emergency response, particularly on communications with the community, to increase access to emergency resources for those who experience barriers, including financial, physical limitations or disabilities, social isolation, and language barriers.
- **New Policy Suggestion:** Integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) principles in EOC operations.
- **New Policy Suggestion:** Coordinate with Fire Districts, the Department of Emergency Management, and the Sheriff's Office to identify priority neighborhoods that may need assistance with evacuating.
- **New Policy Suggestion:** When County job opportunities are created for new climate-focused programs, prioritize hiring using DEI principles.

## Sonoma County

# Safety Element Update & Environmental Justice Policies

## Environmental Justice Policy Concept Paper (Equity Working Committee Draft Version 2)

### Definitions

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**Issue:** The topic of concern being addressed.

**Goal:** Recommended goal to strive toward.

**Policy Concepts:** Policy ideas for each goal that will guide the development of final policies and action items for the Safety and Environmental Justice Elements.

**Resources:** Existing or potential local, regional, State, or federal resources that could be leveraged to implement the policies and reach the desired goal.

### Healthy Environments (Pollution Burden)

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#### Issue 1: Pollution Exposure

Thirteen EJ Communities scored above the 75th percentile for pollution exposure. The areas most impacted by solid waste sites are in the central and southern portions of the county. The Taylor Mountain EJ Community has significant levels of Diesel Particulate Matter. The Russian River Valley, Shiloh South, and Sonoma City South/Vineburg have moderately elevated levels of pesticides. Lead exposure from housing also varies across EJ Communities with the East Cloverdale EJ Community scoring notably high.

#### *Resources (Existing and Potential)*

- **Partners:** Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures; Bay Area Air Quality District (BAAQMD); Northern Sonoma County Air District; SPI Integrated Waste Division; Zero Waste Sonoma; Sonoma County Fire Prevention & Hazardous Materials Unit; Sonoma County Environmental Health; CalRecycle; Permit Sonoma Code Enforcement
- **Funding Sources:** California Strategic Growth Council, CalEPA, California Air Resource Board (CARB)
- **Programs:** Ag, Weights, and Measures Pesticide Use Enforcement Program and Hazardous Materials Program; Zero Waste Sonoma Household Hazardous Waste Program; Bay Area Healthy Homes Initiative; Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention

#### **Goal 1**

Reduce pollution, protect communities from pollution exposure, and mitigate health impacts.



## Recommendations

- Protect residents from the health impacts of solid waste by establishing a minimum distance between new solid waste sites and residential and other sensitive uses within EJ Communities.
- In areas impacted by unauthorized trash sites, partner with CalRecycle and Recology to share educational information regarding free curbside Bulky Items Recycling collection and reduced waste services cost for low-income households by using in-person, virtual, and mailed communications.
- Pursue grants through the CalRecycle Solid Waste Disposal and Co-disposal Site Cleanup Program to assist in removal of existing solid waste sites and facilitating remediation projects.
- Reduce public pesticide exposure by developing a five-year plan to phase out non-organic pesticide use on County-owned spaces, such as public parks and along County-owned roadways.
- Develop and promote a County-led program to provide free lead tests to households using funding from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's Lead-Based Paint Hazard Control Grant Program (LBPHC) and provide resources to remove lead in homes when found.
  - **Comment:** Program should be designed with easy, incremental steps that households can take to evaluate lead exposure then remove lead, with incentives at each step to encourage follow through.
- Develop a targeted inter-departmental communications campaign that identifies Sonoma County housing at risk of lead paint presence and provides educational materials on do-it-yourself renovations and repairs, repainting, and lead paint removal resources.
- Reduce presence of lead in homes by pursuing grants such as the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's Healthy Homes Production Grant to assist homeowners in funding the removal of lead paint and repainting of homes, as well as other health improvements such as air filters and mold removal.
- **New Policy Suggestion:** Pursue grants and other funding to create free (to residents) programs to test water for contaminants and hold landlords responsible for providing clean and safe drinking water at no cost to the tenant.
- **New Policy Suggestion:** Pursue grants and other funding to create a program to help landlords pay for water safety upgrades. Priority should be given to landlords that rent to low-income households.
- **New Policy Suggestion:** Provide more education and engagement about how recycling works to make it more effective.

## GENERAL COMMENTS

- Policies addressing lead and pesticides are most important.

## Issue 2: Clean Water and Environmental Stewardship

EJ Communities in Sonoma County have relatively moderate impacts from impaired water bodies, although drinking water contamination is not considered impacted. The Petaluma Airport/Arroyo



Park census tract has the highest score for groundwater threats heavily impacted by underground leaking storage tanks.

### ***Resources (Existing and Potential)***

- **Partners:** Sonoma County Environmental Health; Sonoma County Ag & Open Space; Sonoma County Ag, Weights, and Measures; Sonoma Water; Community Clean Water Institute; UCCE Sonoma County; Sonoma and Gold Ridge Resource Conservation Districts; Russian Riverkeeper; Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs); Permit Sonoma Code Enforcement

### ***Goal 1***

Water sources in Sonoma County EJ Communities are safe for household and business use.

### ***Policy Concepts***

- Reduce surface water pollution by partnering with the Russian Riverkeeper Clean Team and local schools to host bi-annual cleanup events at and around impacted creeks and waterways in EJ communities.
- Seek to reduce contaminated runoff by assisting agricultural providers near EJ Communities with organic farming transitions by connecting them to resources for technical assistance and grants, such as those offered through the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Organic Transition Pilot Program.
- Minimize agricultural pollution intrusion by connecting agricultural operators to technical resources and trainings that promote minimization of agricultural pollution spray and runoff, including organic farming methods, bioswale and groundcover vegetation plans, and field location and orientation.
- Pursue grants from the Office of Sustainable Water Solutions grant programs to construct water infrastructure and filtration improvements in EJ Communities.
- Secure funding through State and Federal water grant programs to provide free well water testing through the County Department of Health Services, in coordination with local water providers. For communities with impaired well water, seek resources from organizations such as the Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC) to identify communities eligible for the RCACs Individual Well Program and Household Water Well Loans/Grants program to refurbish, replace or construct household water wells.
  - **Comment:** High priority!
- Promote local environmental stewardship programs or activities, like the [Community Clean Water Institute](#) citizen monitoring program, by distributing educational materials in schools, community centers, and online postings to the County website.

## **Healthy Public Facilities and Physical Activity**

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### **Issue 1: Parks and Open Space Access**

The EJ Communities located at the West Cotati/Penngrove, Taylor Mountain, Downtown Cotati, and Feters Spring/Agua Caliente West census tracts are all considered deficient in open space.



Privately owned land restricts access to these surrounding open space areas and a lack of developed open space areas may create parking, trail access, and safety challenges. Barriers to accessing parks and open space include lack of transportation options, poor outdoor air quality, and limited time to access facilities.

### **Resources (Existing and Potential)**

- **Partners:** Sonoma County Regional Parks; Sonoma County Ag & Open Space District; City agencies; Sonoma County Regional Parks foundation
  - **Additions:** Sonoma Ecology Center; Local businesses
- **Programs:** Regional Parks' Outreach Programs; RCPA's Vision Zero; RCPA's upcoming Active Transportation Plan

### **Goal 1**

Park and open space access is equitable and plentiful in EJ Communities through improved transportation options, increased availability, and better ADA access.

**Revision:** Park and open space access is equitable, safe, and plentiful in EJ Communities through improved transportation options, increased availability, and better ADA access.

### **Policy Concepts**

- Improve active transportation options by prioritizing resources toward closing gaps in EJ Communities' Complete Streets system through the County's Capital Improvement Plan and other active transportation planning activities.
  - **Revision:** Improve active transportation options by prioritizing resources toward closing gaps in EJ Communities' Complete Streets system through the County's Capital Improvement Plan and other active transportation planning activities, including Vision Zero.
- Identify State funding, such as the California Department of Parks and Recreation Outdoor Equity Grants Program and Statewide Parks Program, to improve parks and open space within EJ Communities. Create a prioritized list of parks and open space projects to direct funding and investment in EJ Communities, so that when such funding is secured improvements can be implemented quickly.
- Increase the availability of accessible open space by identifying underutilized rights-of-way within EJ Communities to be converted into parklets or natural open space, particularly in areas near existing or planned high density residential uses.
  - **Revision:** Increase the availability of accessible open space by identifying converting underutilized rights-of-way within EJ Communities to be converted into parklets or natural open space, particularly in areas near existing or planned high density residential uses.
- Promote low-cost and free open space recreation opportunities in the county, as well as the reduced cost application for Sonoma County Regional Parks Passes to low-income and food insecure households.
  - **Revision:** ~~Promote~~ Provide low-cost and free open space recreation opportunities, including parking, in the county, as well as the reduced cost application for





Sonoma County Regional Parks Passes to low-income and food insecure households. (perhaps 2 parks at a time or one park/district if not possible to provide free/reduced access to parks)

- **Comment:** High priority.
- Identify opportunities to improve transit access in EJ Communities and utilize Parks California's [Route to Parks](#) grants program to connect EJ Communities with parks and open space.
- Improve equitable access to County-managed parks by working with Sonoma County Regional Parks to improve ADA access barriers at Sonoma County Regional Parks.
- **New Policy Suggestion:** Improve the bicycle and pedestrian facilities to accommodate those with disabilities. Explore funding sources.
  - **Comment:** High priority.
- **New Policy Suggestion:** Direct staff to meet frequently and discuss policy and program success and potential updates.
- **New Policy Suggestion:** Explore ways to incentivize businesses to host picnic days, team building events, etc. to promote parks.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

- Explain what equitable means for parks and open spaces.
- Explain how these spaces can be managed and maintained to be safe for everyone.
- As much as possible, make policies actionable.

## **Community Health**

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### **Issue 1: Physical Health**

Areas with poor air quality due to the presence of Diesel Particulate Matter (DPM), toxic releases, pesticides, or wildfire smoke may increase the risk of respiratory diseases such as asthma. The Wright and Bellevue EJ Communities score above the 75th percentile for asthma and cardiovascular disease.

#### ***Resources (Existing and Potential)***

- **Partners:** Sonoma County Department of Health Services; Sonoma County Health Action; school districts; Sonoma County Regional Parks
- **Programs:** Regional Parks' Outreach Programs.

### ***Goal 1***

Sonoma County EJ Communities have equitable health outcomes through improved environmental conditions, reduced hazards, and preventative health measures.

### **Policy Concepts**

- Partner with schools, community organizations, and Sonoma County Department of Health Services to disseminate information on asthma triggers and early detection.
- Work with State and regional agencies to identify funding sources, such as those available through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and BAAQMD, to assist residents and landlords in securing funding for private building rehabilitation, including removal of lead paint, interior air quality improvements, and gas and wood burning appliance replacement.
- Identify internal Sonoma County department staff to engage in ongoing quarterly community health and equity program implementation discussions to ensure alignment across County efforts and resources.
- **New Policy Suggestion:** Improve the bicycle and pedestrian facilities to accommodate those with disabilities.
- **New Policy Suggestion:** Provide measures to reduce heat islands.
- **New Policy Suggestion:** Increase green and natural vegetation in communities near highways, high traffic areas, and in areas with higher potential for pollution exposure.
- **New Policy Suggestion:** Increase the amount of green and open spaces near higher density residential housing.

## **Civic Engagement**

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### **Issue 1: County Connections with Community Based Organizations (CBOs)**

Residents in EJ Communities face a variety of challenges when it comes to participating in civic engagement and the government decision-making process, including communities that have a higher proportion of residents who are elderly, non-English speakers, or lack sufficient broadband internet access. It is imperative to establish meaningful partnerships with CBOs to bridge the gaps in communication and build trust with residents to increase participation.

#### **Resources (Existing and Potential)**

- **Partners:** Office of Equity; community organizations; County Administrator's Office; All County Departments
- **Programs:** Office of Equity's upcoming Language Access Plan and Community Engagement Plan

### **Goal 1**

Create meaningful and long-lasting relationships with Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to increase engagement of EJ communities in local government decision-making processes.

### **Policy Concepts**

- Develop a CBO partnership program that includes criteria for partnership participation, funding for participant compensation, and a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to facilitate CBO partnerships in County-led engagement and other mutually beneficial activities.



- Establish pathways of communication between CBOs, County leadership, and the Board of Supervisors by identifying a CBO liaison in each department.
  - **Addition:** Host regular listening sessions with members of the Board or department staff/leaders.
- Utilizing CBO and EJ Community input, develop outreach and communications strategies that leverage the strengths of individual unincorporated communities and integrate the strategies into County engagement campaigns.
  - **Addition:** Create a list of goals for CBO engagement that guide County work.
- **New Policy Suggestion:** Connect with libraries and other safe/trusted community space to host meetings and pop in sessions.
- **New Policy Suggestion:** Create funding pathways for engagement with equity priority communities.
- **New Policy Suggestion:** Provide transportation vouchers to encourage people to attend County meetings in person.
- **New Policy Suggestion:** Address equity issues and discuss community feedback in staff reports.