
From: Yessenia Resendiz <resendiz.yessenia@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 15, 2024 9:28 AM
To: GeneralPlan <GeneralPlan@sonoma-county.org>
Subject: EJ SoCo General Plan Comments

EXTERNAL

Hello,

Thank you for sharing this with us. For the most part, I think this is pretty comprehensive and definitely a step in the right direction. I'd like to share some thoughts I had after reviewing the materials in the links and attached below.

In the Safety Element Document, they mention "Sensitive populations". After attending the GreenLatinos conferences these past two weeks, I believe Latines definitely fall into this category. The [Latino Climate Justice Framework](#) would be something worth doing a side by side comparison with the county's framework as it can help with serving multiple communities. Regarding the EJ Element Goals, I have some things I want to highlight. Under pollution burden, prioritizing trees near freeways and communities living next to these freeways is critical to mitigate air and noise pollution. For healthy food, community gardens were mentioned as a potential area of investment. Community input on what types of herbs/fruits/and veggies should be planted would be great as well as some composting systems as well. There are also gardens where community members are in charge of parts of the plot while there are others where a staffer is in charge of it and the community simply picks from it. Community input on which of the two they'd prefer or perhaps a mix would be great. For physical activity, more trees providing shaded sidewalks in disinvested communities will help with promoting walking on hot days as well as overall decrease in temperature in potential urban heat islands. An additional effort could be made partnering with local nonprofits on getting POC to do local hikes, and maybe the city can play a role in funding and promoting them, potentially with transportation to and from the hikes. Also having inexpensive or free days on the river, like kayaking at the Petaluma River, for low-income/POC communities in mind, would be a great introduction to outdoor recreation and

exercise as well. Regarding civic engagement, it should be clear that there is a focus on clarifying the public decision making process for folks regarding EJ issues throughout the documents, as some parts only mentioned civic engagement and I wasn't sure what they were referring to until I looked at another document. The city mentioned outreach conducted at farmer's markets, emergency preparedness fairs, and town halls. However, there can be improvement in BIPOC outreach as these can potentially be predominantly white spaces. Meeting BIPOC people where they are at can look like throwing community events at local parks in predominantly BIPOC areas every Friday for three weeks in a row with food and activities provided. There we can conduct surveys or pass along information with multilingual access.

In regards to indigenous populations, I found it interesting that their section was at the end of both the powerpoint and document of the policy framework. Indigenous voices should be at the forefront of the EJ movement due to their history with the land and harm perpetuated by the government and creation of this country. The Land Back movement puts land management back in the hands of those with the knowledge on how to do so. Stewards Point Rancheria, Kashia Coastal Reserve, and the Dry Creek Rancheria were designated by the state as disadvantaged communities. If land back is too strong of an initiative to get the city's support on, stronger language in this section regarding co management and not just stewardship would be a feasible compromise for the time being. The proposal mentioned Environmental Stewardship Outreach Programs. Stewardship moreso involves input whereas comanagement gives indigenous tribal leaders and EJ experts decision making powers regarding land use in partnership with the EJ government entity.

Additionally, updates on changes or finalizations to the Racial Equity Action Plan is something I hope the city makes a conscious effort of informing the SoCo NAACP branch on, as in one of the documents it said it was still under development. More water fountains and trees at these urban and hiking parks would be great. I also liked the idea of free yoga and group workout classes in the open air at local parks. This would encourage exercise and park use outside of the classes. I also want to uplift the suggestion proposed to provide technical assistance with grant writing for CBOs for capacity building. Potential funding by the city for the funding of capacity building for CBOs doing EJ work would also be beneficial.

Hope this helps,

Yessenia
Environmental Justice Committee Member
NAACP- Sonoma County Branch

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