



ENVISION CONTRA COSTA 2040

Environmental Justice, Community Health, and Sustainability Collaboration #1

Richmond Memorial Auditorium – Bermuda Room
403 Civic Center Plaza, Richmond, CA 94804
Monday, November 18, 2019

At this special meeting convened at the Richmond Memorial Auditorium on November 18, 2019, County staff, Supervisor John Gioia, and consultants presented an overview of Envision Contra Costa 2040, along with targeted material about the integration of environmental justice, community health, and sustainability. Following the presentation, participants worked in three small groups to discuss how the General Plan, Climate Action Plan, and Zoning Code intersect with environmental justice, health, and sustainability to address the needs of disadvantaged communities across the county. Meeting attendees were encouraged to collaborate and discuss their perspectives and emerging ideas in response to specific questions. The responses are summarized below.

What are the key environmental justice issues in the communities with which you work? (Note: participants added “or live” to the question.) Are there additional issues you’re aware of in the county as a whole? What are ways that the County can be most helpful or effective in responding to those issues?

- Air quality impacts from refineries, including associated highway and rail pollution
 - Separate the General Plan Safety Element into two elements that address natural hazards separately from human-made hazards (e.g., hazardous waste, hazardous material transportation, and pollution) to emphasize the difference in treatment needs and community risks.
- Transportation access
 - Work with BART to expand service (trains and lines).
 - Work with Amtrak to plan for anticipated sea level rise.
 - Establish a new passenger rail system that is similar to the Sonoma-Marin SMART Area Rail Transit.
 - Work with transit providers to set up universal transportation passes.
 - Work with transit providers to subsidize bus fares to be free for certain users.
 - Create dedicated bus lanes.
 - Increase access to the San Francisco Bay Trail along the Carquinez Strait and Suisun Bay.
- Public safety power shutoffs (PSPS)
 - Transition to smart electrical grids.
- Food access
- Access to recreation, parks, and open spaces
- Displacement and gentrification
 - Consider zoning and housing policies to avoid displacement and gentrification.
- Community engagement
 - Engage with a wide, diverse range of people.

- Hold community meetings in non-governmental buildings or churches.
- Establish an ongoing community advisory group to give a voice to the people on environmental justice topics (separate from the existing Sustainability Commission).

What are the most pressing health concerns in the communities with which you work? Are there additional issues you're aware of in the county as a whole? What are ways that the County can be most helpful or effective in responding to those issues?

- High blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, asthma, and mental health (including trauma, stress, and anxiety related to fires, climate change, and social isolation and loneliness)
 - Treat downstream diseases with upstream solutions, including by:
 - Improving access to healthy food, community gardens, and open spaces
 - Advocating for better air quality
 - Promoting job security
 - Ensuring financial stability, potentially through bill payment assistance
 - Use Urban Tilth as a model for improving food access.
 - Prioritize an immediate response to the urgent issues related to air pollution and children with asthma.
 - Study the geographic relationship between asthma rates, schools, and large industrial facilities, and establish a 2,500-foot buffer around large industrial facilities.
 - Plant trees and upgrade homes in areas adjacent to industrial facilities to mitigate impacts on residents.
 - Prohibit chemical refining and other potential proposals to expand the approved uses at refineries.
 - Phase out tolerance of industrial pollution over time, such as through a 50-year lease that would work towards this goal.
 - Conduct a study that would support the development of new, cleaner industry in Contra Costa County.
- Access to medical facilities, including hospitals and clinics, in West Contra Costa County
- Homelessness and access to safe and sanitary homes
 - Enforce County regulations to protect tenant living conditions.
 - Develop a rent control ordinance.
 - Pursue a bond measure to support housing.
 - Support tenant rights.
- Climate change and related displacement of refineries and communities
 - Consider changing the zoning on parcels projected to be impacted by climate change to proactively protect future buildings from later displacement.
 - Consider climate change, sea level rise, fire, and infrastructure constraints through the building permit process.
- Exposure to energy-related hazards
 - Ban natural gas in all new construction.
 - Require high energy efficiency in all new construction.
- The fossil fuel industry, including proposed dredging of the San Francisco Bay and Carquinez Strait to transport coal from the Port of Stockton
 - Oppose the proposed dredging project.
 - Ensure appropriate environmental review (e.g., the California Environmental Quality Act) is conducted for the proposed dredging project.

What is your greatest concern about how climate change may impact the communities with which you work and/or the county as a whole? What are ways that the County can be most helpful or effective in responding to those issues?

- Safety, including fire hazards and evacuation, especially in Rodeo, Crockett, North Richmond, and East Richmond Heights
 - Address climate change in the Safety Element.
 - Plan for risks of an industrial explosion combined with strong winds.
 - Work with utility districts to underground power lines.
 - Prohibit the use of natural gas in new construction.
 - Study the risk and liability associated with natural or industrial disasters.
- Sea level rise, including impacts from refineries on the water table
- Resilience of disadvantaged communities
- Urgency and magnitude of climate change impacts on human health
 - Take bold actions to respond, including:
 - Electrifying warehouses
 - Increasing transparency in the North Richmond waterfront project related to zero carbon
 - Build a coalition with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) to promote a comprehensive, multi-dimensional approach to climate change.

Review the draft map of disadvantaged communities. Does this map accurately capture the disadvantaged communities in Contra Costa County? If not, what areas should be added/removed and why?

- Consider adding Pacheco Pass as a disadvantaged community.
- Consider other sources that may capture other pockets including:
 - Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Communities of Concern
 - California Department of Public Health's Climate Change & Health Vulnerability Indicators for California (CCHViz)
 - Healthy Places Index (broader view)
 - Bay Area Environmental Equity Atlas
- Consider how these communities should be evaluated and updated over time. Plans should be dynamic to account for changes and should provide measurable results.

Are there examples of how other cities or counties have approached environmental justice, community health, and/or sustainability that you think the County should consider?

- Examples from other cities and counties:
 - City of Pittsburg: General Plan, outreach approaches, and information sharing (including publishing all raw data and summaries from community meetings)
 - City of Oakland: Equitable Climate Action Plan and Climate Equity Strategy Group (including language that resonates with community)
 - City of Berkeley: Building codes
 - Alameda County
 - City of Los Angeles: Green New Deal (including how the plan identifies outcomes)
 - San Diego County: Live Well San Diego (including food waste strategies and a cross-sector, co-benefits approach)
 - Health in All Policies (HiAP): Include health and climate impact analysis in all policies

- Kings County, Washington
- Scandinavian and Nordic countries: Visionary and bold strategies
- Other approaches to consider:
 - Planning for County tax income after fossil fuel phase-out
 - Fossil fuel risk bonds for polluting companies
 - Taxing refineries, power plants, and other industrial facilities, or taxing tankers and diesel trucks, to fund improvements in disadvantaged communities
 - Mitigating pollution of all kinds
 - Pursuing community solar options
 - Planning for PG&E outages/PSPS
 - Equitable access to parks (i.e., 10-minute walking distance)
 - Funding for future improvements