



## ENVISION CONTRA COSTA 2040

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### Online Environmental Justice Policy Survey Summary

#### INTRODUCTION

As part of Envision Contra Costa 2040 community engagement efforts, the County launched an online survey to obtain community feedback on [draft policy strategies](#) developed to address environmental justice issues in the county. The objective of the survey was to ensure the draft environmental justice policies reflect what the community envisions for its future.

The online survey asked open-ended questions on eight key policy issue areas pertaining to environmental justice: jobs and economy, housing, community engagement, transportation, infrastructure, healthy food, open space, and air quality and hazardous materials. Participants were asked to review each policy strategy and provide a response as to whether they agree with the strategy. The survey also provides space for participants to share other ideas or feedback. Because the survey asked open-ended questions rather than multiple choice questions with fixed responses, this summary describes responses qualitatively rather than quantitatively. The full text of all online responses can be viewed online [here](#) and hard-copy responses are [here](#).

The online survey began on Tuesday, November 10, 2020, and is still open. This summary covers responses through January 25, 2021, which includes a total of 375 comments. In addition to the online survey, a hard-copy version of the survey was distributed at local community events to reach community members who lack access to the internet. Those results are incorporated in this summary.

This summary presents the survey questions followed by responses from disadvantaged community (DAC) residents and responses from other County residents.

#### SURVEY RESPONSES

As part of Senate Bill (SB) 1000 the Contra Costa General Plan is required to prioritize improvements and programs for addressing the needs of DACs. There are six communities in the county that meet the legal definition for DACs per SB 1000. The communities that meet this definition include Bay Point; Bayview, Tara Hills, and Montalvin Manor (also known as “MonTara Bay”); Crockett; North Richmond; Rodeo; and Vine Hill/Mountain View.

The online survey asked participants to provide the name of the community they reside in. It is important to note that jurisdictional boundaries are often not clearly drawn or understood by the public and County staff, which may affect how participants identified their community of residence.

Out of 375 survey responses, 60 participants said they live in a DAC within the county. Most DAC respondents live in Rodeo, followed by Crockett and Bay Point. Some respondents also live in Hilltop, Tara Hills, and Mountain View. Most respondents who live outside a DAC are in Martinez, followed by Concord and El Cerrito. This group also includes participants who live in Richmond, Walnut Creek, and Pittsburg, in

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addition to other cities or communities within the county. Survey responses to each question are summarized below.

### Jobs and Economy

*Residents want clean industry jobs that earn a livable wage and support for small, locally owned businesses. We are proposing to:*

- » *Plan for phasing out fossil fuel industries and transition to just, equitable, and clean industries that offer good-wage jobs*
- » *Support retraining of fossil fuel-based workers for jobs in clean industries*
- » *Attract manufacturing businesses in the clean technology sector*
- » *Create incentives to spur new development and redevelopment in disadvantaged neighborhoods*
- » *Promote entrepreneurship and locally owned businesses in disadvantaged neighborhoods*
- » *Pursue loan programs that support small businesses in disadvantaged neighborhoods*

### DAC Resident Responses

Many DAC respondents express a desire for clean industry jobs that pay well. Job and economy policy strategy ideas shared by participants include job training programs, investing in public transit, incentivizing zero emission vehicles, and a business model that replaces welfare with County labor jobs. Some participants do not agree with phasing out the fossil fuel industry because they feel the refineries are already operating clean and provide good-paying jobs for members of the community. A few participants question whether the clean industries will offer comparable jobs with similar benefits as the refineries currently provide. Some participants support the Phillips 66 refinery's efforts to transition to renewable fuels. One participant is concerned phasing out fossil fuels will drive up cost of fuel for everyone. Most DAC respondents also support efforts to promote small, locally owned businesses. Some participants would like to discourage non-local developers from buying property in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Other ideas shared by participants to promote small local businesses include vetting loan programs to ensure small businesses are not provided private loans with high interest rates and offering better tax incentives to help small local businesses be successful. A few participants request incentives to improve storefronts and attract visitors. The incentives can include funding to support maintenance of buildings and providing good lighting and sidewalks. One participant disagrees with promoting small businesses only in disadvantaged communities and thinks small businesses in all communities should be supported. A few participants do not agree with efforts to support small businesses because they do not endorse government support in disadvantaged communities. Two participants note that the County closed existing small businesses due to Covid-19 related shutdowns. One participant questions how funding will be provided for programs to support small businesses.

### Contra Costa County Outside of DAC Responses

Many of these respondents agree with attracting clean industry jobs; however, there is a divide on whether the existing fossil fuel industries should be phased out. Some participants believe the goals and strategies for phasing out fossil fuels and attracting clean industry jobs are unrealistic and unachievable. Various participants feel the market should decide which businesses are in the county and some participants believe there is an existing demand for fossil fuels. Some participants would not like to see fossil fuels

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outsourced to other countries where there may not be as many environmental regulations to ensure safe refining of fossil fuels. There is a unified concern about job loss from phasing out fossil fuel businesses among the participants and some are concerned about the unions' support. Some participants recommend a two-part strategy to attract clean industry jobs while working with the existing fossil fuel industry to ensure they operate safely. Many respondents agree with policy strategies to support small local businesses. Participants would like to see grants offered to stimulate small business growth, and some participants express a desire for police surveillance to enhance safety while shopping at small businesses. Various participants wish programs to support small businesses are offered in all neighborhoods, not only in disadvantaged communities. A few participants support the policy strategies to support small businesses but request the businesses offer higher-paying jobs for the community. Some participants question funding sources and request taxes to remain the same. A few participants note that the County closed existing small businesses due to Covid-19 related shutdowns. Some participants believe the government should not be involved in efforts to support or discourage businesses.

## Housing

*Residents want safe, healthy housing. We are proposing to:*

- » *Ensure rental housing is safe and well-maintained through outreach and code enforcement*
- » *Enhance programs that improve housing livability, such as the County's weatherization program*
- » *Build an inventory of land available for tiny homes and similar forms of affordable housing*

### DAC Resident Responses

Many DAC respondents agree with efforts to support safe and well-maintained housing. Some participants recommend housing programs designed to support low-income families, homeless residents, and the elderly population. Other ideas shared by the respondents include supporting mixed-use communities affordable to households at varying socioeconomic levels with walkable access to efficient transportation and building apartments on the empty lots in Rodeo. One participant agrees with the strategies but believes renters are also responsible for maintaining their place of residence. Some participants do not agree with the strategies to promote safe housing because they believe developing more land is not a good idea or feel the county is already too densely populated with low-income housing. A few participants question how the strategies will be enforced. A few participants recommend removing hurdles to allow developers to build housing by streamlining the permitting process and lowering the cost to develop housing. One of the participants specifically requests lowering the permit cost for building accessory dwelling units. Finally, one participant requests each micro-housing project to be staffed with a team of social workers to provide services for transitional living.

### Contra Costa County Outside of DAC Responses

These participants recommend drafting rent control policies, providing housing opportunities for veterans and homeless people, and building denser housing near transit hubs. Some participants believe safe housing should be provided in all communities within the county, not only in disadvantaged communities. A number of participants are concerned about overcrowding and they hope new housing will provide ample space for families. A few participants express concerns about the existing substandard rental housing in the community and request that existing rental housing be safe and well-maintained. Other policy strategy

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ideas shared by participants include streamlining the permit process to build more housing, allowing motorhomes as accessory dwelling units, and building housing using shipping containers. A number of participants would not like their taxes to provide funding for housing, and many do not believe the government should be involved in building housing. There is a divide among respondents on whether tiny homes should be allowed. Various participants do not agree with the strategy to promote tiny homes because they feel multifamily housing, such as apartments or condos, are a better housing option. However, some participants would like to see tiny homes as a housing option. Some participants also request that the County provide shelters for the homeless. A few participants believe the current building and safety codes are sufficient to provide safe and healthy housing. Lastly, participants agree with energy efficiency programs, and they recommend including programs to lower utility bills and upgrade older residences in the community.

### Community Engagement

*Residents want a stronger voice in decisions that affect their community. We are proposing to:*

- » *Prepare public notices in the neighborhoods' predominant languages and provide interpretation at meetings*
- » *Schedule community meetings at convenient times and locations*
- » *Partner with local community organizations and leaders on outreach*

#### DAC Resident Responses

Most DAC respondents agree with the policy strategies and some recommend holding more meetings, partnering with local businesses, and allowing remote participation. Some participants believe the online survey was a great platform for community engagement and believe surveys should continue to be offered. A few participants request the outreach material be provided only in English. One participant requests diversifying the outreach process to reach the population without access to the internet.

#### Contra Costa County Outside of DAC Responses

Most respondents support community engagement efforts and agree with the policy strategies. Participants recommend collaborating with community partners to help spread the word, including local grocery stores, business owners, and schools. Some participants believe online surveys are a great method for reaching the population unable to attend meetings, and many request virtual meeting options through Zoom. A few participants request that outreach methods include online platforms, such as emails, social media, Nextdoor, Claycord.com, and other neighborhood forums. Additional policy strategy ideas shared by participants include providing free transportation to and from meetings, offering childcare services, providing sign language services, and educating the public about the decision-making process so they are aware about input opportunities. A few participants would like the County to encourage local community leaders to be more involved in meetings by allowing them to choose the topics for a meeting or providing them an opportunity to share their vision for a sustainable community. Some participants do not agree with the outreach strategies because they believe the materials should only be available in English or feel their input does not alter the ultimate decision made by decision-makers. A few participants believe public input should be limited in certain land use processes because they believe the voices that are typically heard come from people who disagree.

## **Transportation**

*Residents want to be able to walk, bike, exercise, and travel to school safely. We are proposing to:*

- » *Prioritize bikeway, sidewalk, road, park, landscaping, environmental, and other public improvements in disadvantaged neighborhoods*
- » *Increase lighting, crosswalks, and safety measures near schools, libraries, and parks*
- » *Prioritize street lighting improvements in disadvantaged communities*
- » *Generate new funding sources for public facilities and services in disadvantaged neighborhoods*

### *DAC Resident Responses*

Most DAC respondents support the transportation policy strategies. One participant asks if the strategies include regular trash clean up and maintenance. A few participants recommend cleaning up Rodeo Beach and one participant recommends cleaning up Downtown Rodeo. Other policy ideas shared by participants include adding shuttles to BART, connecting and enhancing the San Francisco Bay Trail, and providing more bike lanes. One participant recommends a partnership effort with local construction contractors and the Building Trades Union to provide people from underserved areas an opportunity to join union apprentice programs and work on County improvement projects. A few participants do not agree with funding new public facilities, such as bus shelters, because they believe they would attract homeless people and feel the disadvantaged community should be educated on how to maintain the area to be safe and clean. Some participants do not support prioritizing transportation improvements in disadvantaged communities and ask the County to fix all roads and sidewalks instead. A few participants are concerned about funding sources.

### *Contra Costa County Outside of DAC Responses*

Most participants support the transportation policy strategies outlined above. Many participants believe the transportation strategies should not be exclusive to disadvantaged communities and instead be extended to include the entire county. Participants wish trails and bike travel paths could be interconnected as part of one network. A few participants are concerned about light pollution and some request maintenance along the existing trails in the county. A number of participants express concerns for their safety, specifically on the Ohlone Greenway Trail in Richmond and El Cerrito. A few participants request an increase in police presence or community volunteers to enhance safety along the trails. Other policy strategy ideas shared by participants include adding charging stations for electric vehicles, building sidewalks, conducting a public infrastructure survey to identify needs, and addressing homeless and safety issues along the trails. One participant also requests prioritizing audible signals at intersections for the visually impaired. Some people do not agree with the transportation strategies because they feel people commute by car and they would not like taxes to be increased to fund the transportation improvements. Finally, a few participants request that the County consider road maintenance improvements as well.

## **Infrastructure**

*Residents want improved community clean-up and maintenance. We are proposing to:*

- » *Clean up illegal dump sites in disadvantaged neighborhoods*
- » *Improve code enforcement and public works practices, emphasizing community-identified issues*

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» *Hold community clean-up days in disadvantaged neighborhoods*

### DAC Resident Responses

Most DAC respondents agree with the strategies outlined to help clean up neighborhoods. Ideas shared by the participants to support cleanup efforts include engaging and educating students about dumping and littering, regularly emptying trash cans in public spaces, and placing cameras at known dumping sites. One participant recommends incentivizing participation by allowing extra credit for high school student participation. Some participants question why illegal dumping sites have not been cleaned up yet, and one participant asks how the strategies would be funded. Some respondents wish the County would address illegal urban camping and homeless camping. A few participants would like the entire county to be cleaned up, not just disadvantaged communities.

### Contra Costa County Outside of DAC Responses

Most of these participants agree with the strategies to clean up neighborhoods and some request clean up in specific areas of the county including the top of Clark Road, Franklin Canyon, Pinole Valley, and Carriage Hills. Some participants recommend video surveillance in known dumping sites, issuing fines or penalties, and educating the public about the life cycle of waste and the benefits of properly disposing waste. Participants also recommend installing more public trash receptacles or dumpsters and keeping public bathrooms clean. Many participants would like the entire county to be cleaned up, not just disadvantaged communities. A few participants believe the cleanup days should not replace the County's responsibility to clean up the communities and some question how funding will be provided for cleanup efforts. Some participants also believe cleanup efforts should address illegal camping, homeless encampment sites, and graffiti. A few participants recommend offering an employment program that provides a job for homeless people who pick up trash and clean up the community. Some participants request fee waivers or lower dumping costs for low-income families to make dumping sites affordable. Finally, various participants recommend community involvement in clean-up efforts, including partnering with community groups and local schools. One participant recommends a certificate program for high school students to earn credit as a part of a service program.

## Healthy Food

*Residents want access to healthy food. We are proposing to:*

- » *Support community gardens, farmers markets, and similar ways to grow and distribute food locally*
- » *Make it easier to open new grocery stores*
- » *Encourage fresh food stores at major transit stops*

### DAC Resident Responses

Many DAC respondents support efforts to increase healthy food access. Policy strategy ideas shared by participants include supporting programs to teach disadvantaged families how to prepare fresh foods, encouraging people to grow their own food, and allowing a worker-owned co-op. Participants also request organic food stores and a supermarket in Rodeo. A few participants disagree with the healthy food policy

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strategies because they believe disadvantaged communities may not take advantage of healthy food sources. One participant asks why these strategies are not occurring yet.

### Contra Costa County Outside of DAC Responses

Many of these respondents agree with the strategies to increase access to healthy food. Some participants recommend focusing on educational programs to increase awareness about healthy and sustainable eating options. Participants recommend integrating nutrition into the school curriculum, providing grants for school gardens to grow food for the community, and partnering with nurseries in the areas to help educate young farmers. Other policy strategy ideas shared by participants include eliminating land use permit requirements for food trucks, providing mobile fresh food trucks, holding a year-round farmers market in Pittsburg, and dropping off excess food for food distribution events. A few participants are aware food deserts exist in the county, and one participant recommends identifying the food deserts and prioritizing community gardens and grocery stores in those areas. A number of participants would like to see grants to help existing grocery stores provide fresh food and subsidize food markets. A few participants request programs that deliver fresh food to those who are homebound. Some people do not believe the County should be involved in encouraging access to healthy foods, indicating that the market should decide instead. A few participants feel access to plenty of healthy food options already exists and do not believe additional food sources are needed.

## Open Space

*Residents want safe parks and open spaces and more trees. We are proposing to:*

- » *Identify which neighborhoods are short on parks and open space and what kinds of recreation options people want*
- » *Prioritize spending on recreation, open space, and street trees in disadvantaged neighborhoods*
- » *Prepare a strategy to plant and take care of more street trees*

### DAC Resident Responses

Many DAC respondents agree, and some participants believe their neighborhood needs more open space, trees, or greenery. Policy strategy ideas shared by participants include planting fruit or nut trees, providing better access to public restrooms and park facilities, and utilizing the amphitheater area at Refugio Valley Park to host events in collaboration with local businesses, school performing arts programs, and nonprofits. One participant recommends converting the shoreline in Crockett into a park, and another requests that the County protect open space areas from rezoning. Some participants are concerned about maintenance, and a few respondents do not agree with the strategies because they believe there is already sufficient open space or believe the county should have food forests instead. Two participants request the roads be maintained, and another participant believes the strategies should apply to all communities.

### Contra Costa County Outside of DAC Responses

Many of these participants agree with the open space strategies and would like to see more trees planted. Policy strategy ideas shared by participants related to trees include planting fruit trees and trees with large canopies, holding a tree planting event, and incorporating a tree soil strategy that utilizes compost for soil

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application. A few participants request that the County plant native trees. Some participants urge the County to clean up existing parks and provide more sports recreation facilities such as bocce ball, baseball, soccer, and tennis. Some participants are concerned about maintenance of existing parks and request allocation of appropriate funding be provided for maintenance of existing and new parks. Some people would like the open space efforts to apply to the entire county, not only in disadvantaged communities. Many participants express concerns about safety at parks and believe funding for safety efforts should be a priority. Respondents request police foot patrol, bright lights, or other safety measures be installed at parks. Some participants would like to see plans to prevent parks from turning into homeless encampments. A few participants believe there are enough parks in the county and oppose an increase to taxes to fund new open space park facilities. Finally, a few respondents do not like development occurring on undeveloped lands in different areas of the county.

### Air Quality and Hazardous Materials

*Residents want to breathe clean air and know that the water and soil in your neighborhood is safe. We are proposing to:*

- » *Require new industrial projects to meet stringent air quality standards for any operations in or near disadvantaged communities*
- » *Work with regulators to keep residents safe from industrial pollution and accidents, prioritizing disadvantaged neighborhoods*
- » *Work with polluters to clean up contaminated sites in disadvantaged neighborhoods*

### DAC Resident Responses

Many DAC respondents agree with the strategies, and some participants believe the refineries should be closed or heavier fines should be enforced for violations. Some participants do not agree with the strategies because they feel the current air quality regulations are already stringent and believe taxing or regulating the industrial businesses are not the solution. A few participants request the County apply the policy strategies to all communities, not only in disadvantaged neighborhoods. One participant supports the strategies as long as they do not result in a loss of jobs. Another participant is an employee of Phillips 66 refinery and notes that neither they nor their coworkers have health problems connected with their work in the refinery to date.

### Contra Costa County Outside of DAC Responses

Many of these respondents agree with these strategies; however, there are many participants who believe the State already has stringent air quality standards. Participants who agree that new industrial projects should meet stringent air quality standards request the strategies be applied universally to all industrial projects in the county, not limited to disadvantaged communities. Some participants urge the County to provide buffers between homes and industrial projects. A few participants request hefty fines or carbon taxes for companies who emit pollutants. Other policy strategy ideas shared by participants include providing job training programs and educating the community about their role in maintaining clean air. A few participants believe refineries should be required to clean up the site or provide funds for remediating the site once they leave. Some participants do not support the strategies because they feel there is too much regulation and government oversight. Lastly, a few participants request the County include members from the existing industries when discussing regulations since they could be impacted.

## **Additional Feedback**

The final survey question asked respondents to share additional feedback or ideas.

### *DAC Resident Responses*

A few respondents wish to know more about how the programs will be funded. There are a few respondents who are concerned about crime and request increased police visibility, while another participant requests to defund the police and fund schools. A few participants would like to see Phillips 66 refinery continue to operate.

### *Contra Costa County Outside of DAC Responses*

Some participants believe the environmental justice policy strategies are a step in the right direction. Many people urge the County to not phase out fossil fuels because they provide jobs for the community. Various participants are concerned about a tax increase to provide funding for executing the strategies. Some participants believe companies and residents are leaving California due to an increase in oversight. A few participants feel there is a homeless problem in the county and request the County to better support homeless residents. Some participants believe the policy strategies should be applied across the entire county, not only in disadvantaged communities. Finally, a few respondents request better schools for their children.