

# 3

## STRONG COMMUNITIES ELEMENT

### NOTES FOR ALL ELEMENTS

The General Plan will call out policies and actions that address specific topics of concern raised by the community. For the reader's ease, policies and actions related to these topics of concern are identified throughout the General Plan using the following icons. The policies and actions related to each topic will be compiled in an appendix to the General Plan.



Community Health



Environmental Justice



Economic Development



Sustainability

In addition, the draft policy guidance uses the term "Impacted Community" to identify what are called "disadvantaged communities" under Senate Bill (SB) 1000. SB 1000 defines these communities as low-income areas that are disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation.

## Goals, Policies, and Actions

### Goal SC-1

Equitable distribution of social and economic resources among all communities in the county so that Impacted Communities are not disproportionately burdened by environmental pollution or other hazards.

### Policies

#### SC-P1.1



In coordination with residents of Impacted Communities, workers, and business/industry, support transition from petroleum-refining industries to just, equitable, and clean industries that offer living-wage jobs.

#### SC-P1.2



Incentivize and streamline the permitting process for public and private investment in new development, redevelopment, and rehabilitation that promotes community goals in Impacted Communities, as identified in the community profiles.



### SC-P1.3

Support development of small-scale neighborhood nodes that provide a range of neighborhood-serving retail, public amenities, services, and related infrastructure to residents of Impacted Communities within walking distance of their homes.

### SC-P1.4

Support community-driven events, such as festivals, farmers' markets, block parties, and community service days, that support social connections and neighborhood identity.

### SC-P1.5

For projects negatively affecting an Impacted Community, pursue community benefits agreements that go beyond the inherent project benefits and achieve the community goals identified in the community profile, as negotiated with the community.

### SC-P1.6

Prior to approval of a major development project in or adjacent to an Impacted Community, require applicants to document how the project will promote environmental justice and health, including how the project will ensure the following:

- (a) It will not adversely impact the community;

- (b) It will provide benefits that support the community goals, as identified in the community profile and/or negotiated with the community;
- (c) It will provide economic opportunities for the community;
- (d) It will not directly or indirectly displace existing residents or businesses in the community; and
- (e) It will avoid direct or indirect negative impacts on the quality of life and health of residents within the community.

## Actions

### SC-A1.1

In coordination with residents of Impacted Communities, workers, business/industry, and the appropriate agencies, develop and implement a plan to transition from petroleum refining and other highly polluting industries to just, equitable, and clean industries that offer living-wage jobs. The plan should address site remediation responsibilities, timelines, and strategies to improve the health, safety, infrastructure, job opportunities, and revenue opportunities during the shift to a clean energy, zero emission economy, paying special attention to helping develop new opportunities for how Impacted Communities will realize economic, health, and other benefits.

### SC-A1.2

With input from residents of Impacted Communities, develop criteria to be used in the project review process to evaluate how new development supports the County's environmental justice and health goals and the environmental justice and

health-related community goals identified in the applicable community profile.

**SC-A1.3**



Revise the hazard scoring system in the Industrial Safety Ordinance to increase the score for projects that negatively affect Impacted Communities.

**SC-A1.4**



Upon each review of the General Plan [will cross reference a Land Use Element action related to regular reviews of the General Plan], review health outcomes data for Impacted Communities to evaluate the effectiveness of the County's environmental justice policies. During this review, assess any updated information related to the delineation of Impacted Communities in Contra Costa County. Based on these reviews, update the map of Impacted Communities and environmental justice-related goals, policies, and actions accordingly.

**SC-A1.5**



As part of the General Plan annual progress report to the Board of Supervisors, describe specific efforts to implement the General Plan policies and actions in each Impacted Community.

**SC-A1.6**



Submit a report to the Board of Supervisors on the feasibility of creating, participating in, or attracting a public bank or

other types of economic development and wealth-building tools to support local interests and community development in Impacted Communities.

**SC-A1.7**



Establish a process for the County to identify seed grants, micro loans, or similar funding available to community-based organizations or public-private partners to support improvements in Impacted Communities, such as murals and planting strips.

**SC-A1.8**



Establish funding mechanisms to create and maintain public art in Impacted Communities. Work with residents of Impacted Communities to ensure public art is appropriate for their community.

**SC-A1.9**



Establish a process to permit and facilitate partial and/or temporary street closures for amenities such as parklets, farmers' markets, or other community-driven events as initiated by community groups. Provide streamlined and timely processing of permits and assist applicants through the permit process.

**SC-A1.10**



Develop and sufficiently fund a program to assist applicants from Impacted Communities in navigating the project application and review process.



### SC-A1.11

Place appropriate contact information on the front page of the DCD website to maintain clear, simple lines of communication for residents to reach the County regarding code enforcement and nuisance complaints. Provide equitable, prompt responses to resident calls.

### Goal SC-2

Convenient access to comprehensive, co-located health services so residents of Impacted Communities can find the physical and behavioral health care services they need.

## Actions

### SC-A2.1

Collaborate with non-profit partners to establish medical clinics, behavioral health facilities, and pharmacies in Impacted Communities.

### SC-A2.2

Streamline zoning requirements for healthcare facilities to reduce barriers to their establishment in Impacted Communities.

### Goal SC-3

Convenient access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food in Impacted Communities.

## Policies

### SC-P3.1

Increase access to fresh food in Impacted Communities by allowing and encouraging local food production, micro agriculture, edible landscapes, rooftop gardens, community gardens, urban farms, farmers' markets, and community kitchens on vacant or underutilized lands, including County-owned land.

### SC-P3.2

Maximize multimodal access to fresh food in Impacted Communities, prioritizing bicycle and pedestrian access, by encouraging grocery stores, healthy corner stores, community gardens, and outdoor markets at key transit nodes and within transit-oriented developments.

### SC-P3.3

Encourage new residential development to incorporate community gardens into the project design.



**SC-P3.4**   

Provide temporary access to County land in Impacted Communities for farmers' markets and community gardens.

**Actions**

**SC-A3.1**  

Inventory and map food deserts in the county. As part of the inventory, account for walking, biking, and transit access.

**SC-A3.2**   

Update the Zoning Code to streamline permitting of grocery stores and markets, including co-ops, in Impacted Communities and food deserts.

**SC-A3.3**   

Adopt guidelines to support implementation and program management of micro agriculture, rooftop gardens, community gardens, and urban farms.

**SC-A3.4**  

Study the feasibility of restricting fast food restaurants near schools, parks, and other places where children gather.

**SC-A3.5**  

Every five years, review the existing Alcoholic Beverage Sales Commercial Activities Ordinance to ensure Impacted Communities are not experiencing disproportionate concentrations of or impacts from new bars and liquor stores. To support implementation of this ordinance, set up and maintain a shared data system between the Health Services and Conservation and Development departments that identifies the location of current establishments, along with information about public safety and health.

**Goal SC-4**  
Access to safe and sanitary homes in Impacted Communities.

**Policies**

**SC-P4.1**  

Ensure that future improvements in Impacted Communities will not produce a net loss of affordable housing or the displacement of residents, while seeking to increase the amount of affordable housing in the community.

**SC-P4.2**  

Coordinate with the Housing Authority of Contra Costa County, affordable housing developers, and other organizations to transition vacant, unentitled land in



Impacted Communities into affordable and transitional housing, which could include many types of innovative housing products. This should include homeownership opportunities to help residents build intergenerational wealth.

**SC-P4.3**  

Ensure rental housing is fit for human occupancy through ongoing and effective Code Enforcement, with priority given to rental properties in Impacted Communities.

**Actions**

**SC-A4.1**  

Develop and fund a land-banking program for future development of housing affordable to lower- and moderate-income households in Impacted Communities.

**SC-A4.2**  

In collaboration with nonprofit and for-profit developers, study the feasibility of establishing community land trusts serving each Impacted Community that will support long-term community ownership and housing affordability.

**SC-A4.3** 

Expand the County's first-time homebuyer program to provide more information and assistance, prioritizing outreach and marketing in Impacted Communities to spread awareness of the program.

**SC-A4.4**  

Create an inventory of available land for tiny homes or other types of innovative housing products as alternatives to accommodate people who lack housing.

**SC-A4.5**  

Collaborate with the Contra Costa Council on Homelessness to develop and implement a plan to provide transition facilities and services for people facing homelessness. Link homeless programs with supportive services such as behavioral health, substance abuse, and primary healthcare.

**SC-A4.6**  

Conduct periodic outreach to absentee owners of properties in Impacted Communities to inform owners of their legal obligations to maintain rental properties in safe and habitable condition. Keep tenants informed of these efforts, including by translating the information into languages other than English.

**SC-A4.7**  

Create an online resource for tenants to understand their rights related to Building Code standards, landlord and tenant responsibilities, and how to request repairs or improvements to their home, including information that is specific to County housing and code enforcement regulations.



**SC-A4.8**   

Obtain funding for and reduce barriers to participation in the County’s weatherization program and other programs like the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative for extremely low-, very low-, and low-income homeowners; landlords; and renters. Focus these efforts on homes in Impacted Communities, and in particular rental housing and high-density housing.

**SC-A4.9**  

Consider the development of a vacant property registration ordinance that includes a fee to cover the costs for the County to deal with vacant properties and to reduce blight.

**SC-A4.10**   

Create a bulk buying program that allows people to purchase air conditioners, fans, air purifiers, heaters, and other electric appliances at wholesale prices and/or with zero-percent interest financing to increase energy efficiency and replace hazardous appliances. Work with volunteer groups to help people install air conditioners and other electrical appliances if they are unable to do so themselves, focusing on Impacted Communities and other areas with high levels of vulnerable people. Consider augmenting energy efficiency programs to reduce electricity use and help offset the cost of operating electrical appliances.

**SC-A4.11**   

Partner with local solar companies or MCE to enact a solar group buy program to purchase solar panels and battery storage in bulk for installation in Impacted Communities, including establishment and subsidization of community solar programs for joint membership, which aggregate multiple consumers’ electricity sourced from a single photo-voltaic solar location. The program should include an educational component to teach the community about the benefits and process of solar installation and give them the opportunity to sign up for the program at a discounted rate.

**Goal SC-5**  
Access to and expansion of job training, job opportunities, and economic stability in Impacted Communities so that residents can access safe jobs, earn a living wage to support their families, and build shared prosperity.

**Policies**

**SC-P5.1**   

Welcome businesses that provide desired goods and services in Impacted Communities, including food stores with fresh produce, healthcare, childcare, pharmacies, and other retailers. Balance community desires with comprehensive assessments of market demand to guide business attraction efforts.





### SC-P5.2

Promote entrepreneurship and locally owned businesses and enterprises in Impacted Communities to support economic self-sufficiency and stability, including through training and outreach to local small business owners and minimizing permitting and other fees.

## Actions

### SC-A5.1

Establish a First Source Hiring Program requiring developers, contractors, and employers to utilize good faith efforts toward employing economically disadvantaged residents of Impacted Communities.

### SC-A5.2

Explore strategies to establish a revolving loan fund, micro loans, or other economic development initiatives to support small businesses in Impacted Communities.

### SC-A5.3

Develop and sufficiently fund a program to offer one-on-one support to small businesses in Impacted Communities; through this program, provide guidance related to available grants, marketing, financing, and mentorship.

## Goal SC-6

Meaningful engagement with Impacted Communities so that residents have strong voices to communicate needs and solutions.

## Policies

### SC-P6.1

Notify and engage community members, organizations, and leaders when County planning decisions are being considered in or adjacent to Impacted Communities. Conduct outreach and engagement with Impacted Communities early in the planning process, as follows:

- Prepare public notices in the predominant language(s) spoken in the community and provide interpretation services at meetings as needed.
- Make public notices and other important documents easy to understand and available in print at local libraries, community centers, or other gathering places.
- Use a wide array of methods to inform community members of opportunities to participate, such as the County website, social media, texts, banners, mailers, and flyers.
- Use outreach approaches that are appropriate for the community.





- Schedule, format, and locate community workshops and meetings to be convenient for community members – both in-person and online.
- Use social media, virtual meeting platforms, recorded meetings, and other communication techniques for those without time or ability to attend public meetings.
- Consider data that reflects the economic, gender, age, and racial diversity of the affected population.
- Clearly explain potential adverse impacts of a proposed project in plain language that is easily understood by the target community.

annual budgeting process. Provide translation services at these meetings.

**SC-A6.3** 

Identify communities with a significant number of non-English speaking households and develop resources and strategies to better engage them.

**SC-P6.2** 

Support community-driven or community-led initiatives in Impacted Communities that work toward the policies and actions identified in the community profiles.

**Actions**

**SC-A6.1** 

Designate County staff to be liaisons to each Impacted Community.

**SC-A6.2** 

Hold semi-annually public meetings in each Impacted Community, including the County Supervisor representing the community and representatives from the full spectrum of County Departments, to hear from residents of these communities, and use that input to inform the County's