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STRONGER 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, environmental and environmental justice stakeholders, community colleges, workforce development and training entities, local government, and other appropriate agencies, support transition from petroleum-refining industries to just, equitable, and clean renewable and sustainable industries that ~~offer~~ provide living-wage jobs.

SC-P1.2



Incentivize and streamline the permitting process for public

Commented [TS1]: April 2021 Committee Meeting: Goal SC-1: Agree with comment from CCHS; this should not just be just about increasing advantages, but also decreasing disadvantages.

Commented [TS2R1]: Staff response: The previous version of this goal referenced "social and economic advantages"; this version now references "social and economic resources." As part of the narrative introducing this section of the General Plan, we will explain that the goal of all of the related policy guidance is to reduce disadvantages in Impacted Communities.



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/walking districts~~ 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, ~~and~~ environmental stewardship.

SC-P1.5

For projects negatively affecting an Impacted Community, pursue community benefits agreements (CBAs) negotiated with the community and project applicant. The primary objective of these CBAs is to mitigate project impacts to the greatest extent possible, which could include mitigations exceeding the requirements of CEQA. Secondly, to compensate for impacts that cannot be fully mitigated, these CBAs should secure community benefits that exceed that go beyond the inherent project benefits and achieve support the community goals identified in the community profile, as negotiated with the community.

SC-P1.6

To support the findings necessary to approve large-scale Prior to approval of a major development project in or adjacent to an Impacted Community, require applicants for such projects to submit documentation demonstrating 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 otherwise expressed by negotiated with~~ the community;
- (c) It will provide economic opportunities for the community;
- (d) It will ~~neither not~~ directly ~~nor~~ indirectly ~~cause unwelcome, permanent displacement of~~ existing residents or businesses in the community; and
- (e) It will avoid direct ~~or and~~ indirect negative impacts on ~~health and~~ the quality of life and health of residents within the community.

Commented [TS4]: April 2021 Committee Meeting: While okay to require the applicant to provide information, staff should verify/confirm the findings.

Actions

SC-A1.1

In coordination with residents of Impacted Communities, workers, business/industry, environmental and environmental justice stakeholders, community colleges, workforce development and training entities, local government, and the other appropriate agencies, develop and implement a plan to transition from petroleum refining and other highly polluting industries to renewable and sustainable, just, equitable, and clean industries that offer living-wage jobs.

Commented [TS5]: April 2021 Committee Meeting: Add these additional stakeholders.

Commented [TS3]: April 2021 Committee Meeting:

Policy needs to place a primary value on first mitigating any negative impacts. Don't assume negative impacts will occur. While impacts may happen, the policy first needs to say that impacts will be mitigated.

While we need to pursue community benefits, they should be considered separately from any impacts and impact mitigation.

The plan should address site remediation responsibilities, along with timelines, and strategies to improve the health, safety, infrastructure, job opportunities, and revenue opportunities during the shift-transition toward a clean energy, net-zero emission economy, paying special attention to helping develop new opportunities for how Impacted Communities will realize economic, health, educational, 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 hazard scores for projects with potential to adversely that negatively affect Impacted Communities, as well as address ambiguities and antiquated terminology that complicate administration of the ordinance.

SC-A1.4  

Upon each review of the General Plan will cross-reference a see Land Use Element a Action LU-A# 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, and 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. Develop metrics/indicators for evaluating the effectiveness of the County's environmental justice policies and actions and include these in the report.

SC-A1.6 

Submit a report to the Board of Supervisors on the feasibility of creating, and/or participating in public-private partnerships, community land trusts, and/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 assist with obtaining easily accessed financial support, such as mini-identify seed grants, micro loans, or similar funding available to for community-based organizations or public-private partners to support physical improvements in Impacted Communities, such as murals, vegetative buffers, and planting strips.

Commented [TS7]: April 2021 Committee Meeting:

Sometimes health outcomes take longer to achieve. Don't want people who want to weaken regulations to point to a lack of change in health outcomes as justification for weakening or not strengthening policies.

Consult CCHS about the language and consider other metrics that can be used in addition to health outcomes.

Commented [TS6]: April 2021 Committee Meeting: The Industrial Safety Ordinance itself also needs other revisions because it is ambiguous and some terminology needs better definitions.



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

~~Dedicate staff in appropriate departments. Develop and sufficiently fund a program~~ to assist applicants from Impacted Communities in navigating the project application and review process ~~for projects in Impacted Communities~~.

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 safe local food production, micro agriculture, edible landscapes, rooftop gardens, community gardens, urban farms, farmers' markets, food trucks, and community kitchens on vacant or underutilized lands, including County-owned land, to the extent legally permissible and provided that funding is available.

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 and/or permanent access to County locations and 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.

Commented [TS8]: April 2021 Committee Meeting: Add "and/or permanent."



SC-A3.5

Every five years beginning in 20##, review the existing Alcoholic Beverage Sales Commercial Activities Ordinance to ensure it protects Impacted Communities are not from experiencing disproportionate concentrations of, and 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.

County, affordable housing developers, and other organizations to transition vacant, unentitled land in Impacted Communities into affordable and transitional housing and shared equity models, 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 rental inspection and Code Enforcement services, with priority given to rental properties in Impacted Communities.

SC-P4.4

Encourage healthy indoor air quality and noise levels in existing and new housing. Support efforts to retrofit existing housing units with multi-paned windows, air filtration systems, low-emission building materials, equipment and appliances, and other improvements that reduce indoor air and noise pollution while at the same time working to improve energy efficiency.

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.

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 result in displacement of residents, while seeking to increase the amount of affordable housing in the community.

SC-P4.2

Coordinate with residents of Impacted Communities, community land trusts, the Housing Authority of Contra Costa

Commented [TS9]: April 2021 Committee Meeting: Strengthen this action. Policies should discourage new liquor stores in impacted communities. There's already an ordinance to prohibit liquor stores where there is a concentration of this use; this needs to be stronger.

Commented [TS10R9]: Staff note: In addition to the edits made here, liquor stores have been added to the list of discouraged uses in SC-P5.1.

Commented [TS12]: April 2021 Committee Meeting: Need to address indoor air quality; if not here, then ensure that it's addressed elsewhere in the GP.

Commented [TS13R12]: Staff note: See also Policy HS-P1.10 in the Health & Safety Element.

Commented [TS11]: April 2021 Committee Meeting: Add "Impacted Communities" to the list.



SC-A4.2  

In collaboration with nonprofit and for-profit developers, study the feasibility of establishing community land trusts and supporting existing community land trusts serving ~~each all~~ Impacted Communities 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 County-owned land for tiny homes or other types of innovative housing products as alternatives to accommodate people who lack housing or are facing housing instability.

SC-A4.5  

Collaborate with entities such as the Contra Costa Council on Homelessness and community land trusts to develop and implement a plan to provide transition facilities, permanent and longer-term housing, and services for people facing homelessness and housing instability. Provide adequate funding to maintain and/or abate homeless encampments and provide adequate security for the Coordinated Outreach, Referral and Engagement Teams (CORE). Link homeless programs with supportive services such as

behavioral health, substance abuse, and primary healthcare.

SC-A4.6  

On a yearly basis, inform ~~Conduct periodic outreach to~~ absentee owners of rental properties in Impacted Communities to inform owners of about their legal obligations to maintain rental properties in a safe and habitable condition. On a yearly basis, inform ~~Keep~~ tenants about their rights to a safe and habitable home, and informed of these efforts, including by translating ~~the~~ information into the most common languages spoken other than English.

SC-A4.7  

Create an online resource, in multiple languages, 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 eCode eEnforcement regulations.

SC-A4.8   

Obtain funding for and reduce barriers to participation in the County's Wweatherization ~~p~~Program and other similar programs like the Contra Costa Asthma Green and Healthy Homes Initiative and Neighborhood Preservation Program 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.

Commented [TS15]: April 2021 Committee Meeting: Add "permanent and longer-term 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 address issues on deal with vacant properties, such as derelict buildings, illegal dumping, and overgrown vegetation, and to reduce blight.

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.

SC-A4.10   

Create a bulk buying program or a revolving loan fund that allows people to purchase energy efficient electric appliances such as air conditioners, fans, air purifiers, heaters, and other electric appliances at wholesale prices or minimal cost, 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.

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-A4.11   

Partner with local solar companies, providers, or MCE, and/or PG&E 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.

SC-P5.1   

Welcome businesses, especially clean/green businesses, that provide desired goods and services in Impacted Communities, including food stores with fresh produce, healthcare, childcare, pharmacies, and other retailers, while discouraging predatory lenders, liquor stores, dollar stores, and fast-food restaurants. 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

Commented [TS16]: April 2021 Committee Meeting: Should also include the concept of clean businesses.

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, with emphasis on residents who are economically disadvantaged.

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 and respectful 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 on major projects are being considered in or adjacent to Impacted Communities. Conduct meaningful 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 supplemental outreach approaches that are appropriate for the participating community.
- Schedule, format, and locate community workshops

Commented [TS18]: April 2021 Committee Meeting: Add "and respectful" to Goal SC-6.

Commented [TS17]: April 2021 Committee Meeting: change to cover Impacted Community residents more broadly, with an emphasis on economically disadvantaged residents.

Commented [TS19]: April 2021 Committee Meeting: Add "meaningful."



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-participating community.

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 annual budgeting process. Provide translation-interpretation

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-A6.4

Increase the public notification distance for hearings concerning refineries from 300 feet to 3,000 feet.

SC-A6.5

Develop centralized outreach services to support all County departments with language interpretation, translation services for written documents, and sign language services for public meetings and interacting with the public.