



Contra Costa County 2045 General Plan and Climate Action and Adaptation Plan 2024 Update Open House Series: Summary

The Envision Contra Costa project team held five open houses throughout Contra Costa County to share the public review drafts of the Contra Costa County 2045 General Plan and 2024 Climate Action and Adaptation Plan Update and solicit feedback from community members. The open houses were held between December 2023 and March 2024 at the following locations, with the approximate number of attendees noted:

District 1 Open House

5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
February 21, 2024
El Cerrito City Hall
10890 San Pablo Ave.
El Cerrito, CA 94507
13 attendees

District 2 Open House

5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
December 14, 2023
San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church
902 Danville Blvd.
Alamo, CA 94507
13 attendees

District 3 Open House

5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
January 10, 2024
Knightsen Farm Bureau
3020 2nd St.
Knightsen, CA 94548
5 attendees

District 4 Open House

5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
January 22, 2024
Contra Costa Transportation Authority Board Room
2999 Oak Rd.
Walnut Creek, CA 94597
20 attendees

District 5 Open House

5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
March 14, 2024
County Administration Building, Room 110
1025 Escobar St.
Martinez, CA 94553
3 attendees

The two-hour events were organized in an open house format to allow community members to participate at their own pace. At the sign-in table, attendees received copies of a user guide and a longer booklet summarizing the draft documents, as well as a comment card. There were also printed copies of the public review drafts of the Contra Costa County 2045 General Plan, 2024 Climate Action and Adaptation Plan Update, and Community Profiles for viewing. There were seven stations placed around the room with banners presenting key background information and relevant policy topics in English and Spanish. Four of the stations represented the themes of the General Plan: community health, environmental justice, sustainability, and economic development. The three other stations included an overview of the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, Community Profiles, and the countywide land use

map. Each station was staffed by a facilitator who recorded comments from the participants, answered questions, and sought feedback to gauge community perspective on the draft documents. A Spanish-speaking facilitator was also available at each event to record comments and answer questions from Spanish speakers. There was also a station with a laptop to demonstrate how community members could comment on the documents using the online commenting tool.

Responses were gathered from the comment cards and station boards, and the combined input from all five open houses is summarized below. The input received from the open houses will inform the final edits to the Draft General Plan and Draft Climate Action and Adaptation Plan.

SUMMARY OF INPUT RECEIVED

Land Use

Open house participants voiced the need for homeownership opportunities and “family-friendly” housing. While the majority of comments recognized that more housing is needed, the sentiment regarding where new housing should be built and at what density was not universal. Some participants suggested putting more homes in high-resource areas with good air quality and health conditions instead of increasing density in areas that are burdened with pollution and other challenges. Others commented on the need to transition density from high to low in a way that aligns with existing neighborhood design. Finally, some felt land use changes were happening too quickly. There was concern about overflow parking in neighborhoods from nearby commercial centers and BART stations and a suggestion to increase residential parking in these areas, such as in Contra Costa Centre.

Environmental Justice

The comments on the Environmental Justice theme related to the placement of housing, with residents voicing concern that too much new housing was being sited in high-pollution areas. Participants suggested increasing residential density in affluent, low-pollution neighborhoods.

Community Health

Participants were supportive of policies that increased bicycle and pedestrian pathways throughout the county, especially those that created a complete bicycle network and reduced the need for cyclists to cross busy roads unprotected. There was also support for more libraries throughout the county to improve social cohesion as libraries serve as a gathering space and archive for the area’s history.

Economic Development

Comments received at the Economic Development station related to housing, open space, and local representation in governance. Participants suggested a diverse mix of affordable housing sizes and types, including those for young families. Others suggested developing single-family homes instead of more multi-family housing. Participants suggested that new open space in residential developments be at the ground level instead of on rooftops to ensure public accessibility. Participants also noted a feeling of a lack of representation, both from land use decisions made by adjacent incorporated jurisdictions and the viewpoints of elected County officials.

Sustainability

Participants voiced concern regarding water management and climate change as patterns of rainfall and therefore flooding could change. They suggested focusing on solutions for rainwater capture and groundwater management to prevent flooding.

Community Profiles

Feedback received on the Community Profiles was specific to individual communities, often the one where the Open House was hosted or nearest to. Most of the comments received were related to housing and land use. Some residents expressed concern over increasing density in their community while others encouraged it. Participants suggested focusing on homeownership as a community goal. They also suggested clustering development of housing, both single-family and multi-family, and including buffer areas between areas of high and low density. Finally, there was a suggestion to improve pedestrian safety.

Climate Action and Adaptation Plan

In relation to the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, participants commented on specific activities that produce or reduce emissions and on the concept of public education around environmental issues. There was a suggestion to reduce emissions from wastewater processing. There was concern regarding the negative health impacts of artificial turf. There was a suggestion to provide more education on zero-emission modes of transportation and transportation planning assistance to encourage residents to switch from personal gas-powered vehicles. There was also a suggestion to create an “integrated communication plan” for sharing climate action commitments and progress with residents. There was concern around streets being too narrow for compost service in specific neighborhoods. Finally, there was concern regarding rising home insurance costs due to wildfire and other hazard risks.

DETAILED NOTES

Below are the verbatim notes from the banner stations and comment cards.

Land Use

Do parks fall under the 65 or the 35 for the 65/35 land preservation standard?

Need ownership residential (including Cherry Lane).

Need family-friendly housing.

Provide enough parking for residential to keep overflow out of neighborhoods.

Cut through traffic on Cherry Lane.

Have set-backs stepped back (include landscape).

Cherry Lane/Las Juntas density from high to medium/low. Transition the density.

High density housing access from Santos Lane (not Cherry Lane).

Preserve bike/ped path.

Land use changes are happening too quickly.

Honeytrail condo del hombre conversion.

Highest density increases are in polluted, heavy-industry areas. We should put homes where it's healthy to live.

Put more homes in high-resource areas.

Environmental Justice

Put new homes in affluent, low-pollution neighborhoods.

Community Health

More protected bike lanes going east to west to access Iron Horse Trail. Example: Stone Valley Rd. to Iron Horse Trail.

More libraries as they can support social cohesion.

Economic Development

Diverse housing mix of affordability levels, sizes, including for young families (e.g. townhomes).

We don't need more apartments.

Feel lack of representation.

New open space should be accessible at ground level, not rooftop.

Sustainability

Flooding, groundwater capture.

Water management and climate change: cisterns to capture rainwater and/or groundwater?

Community Profiles

Display the district's community profiles at open house for physical viewing.

Provide land use map of Alamo for viewing at open house.

Focus more on homeowners in single-family areas in Contra Costa Center.

Cluster homes, townhomes (not just apartments).

Cherry Lane site: avoid over-zoning.

Keep Cherry Lane road configuration the same (no widening).

Buffer densities between low-medium and high density and single family.

Feasible zoning and fees.

Avoid spillover BART parking in neighborhoods.

Maintain/improve pedestrian safety.

Too many new high-density housing zones being added east of BART.

Disproportionate assignment of density to Contra Costa Center area.

Climate Action and Adaptation Plan

Add mixed-use/commercial in Alamo east of the freeway.

Concern: home insurance costs are increasing or homes are uninsurable due to fire hazard areas in Alamo. Help!

Reduce emissions from wastewater.

Trash collection service in Canyon doesn't collect compost because the trucks are too big and the roads too narrow. Doesn't do big item pick up.

Concern from citizens about how to be engaged and promote meaningful action. How do we know that the commitments are "real"?

Evaluate the impacts of increased utilization of artificial turf (off-gassing, microplastics, temp increase, killing of microbiome, reduction of wildlife and pollinator habitat).

Transportation coaching (multimodal education/personalized transportation planning).

Integrated communication plan.

Other

Context-sensitive street classifications; see examples from FL and MD; Bill Hattaway; DOT.

Increase bicycle parking and make it easy and convenient within 50' of entrances.

Thanks for a great setup! Please continue to upzone this area and allow more people to live here. We'd love to see more mixed-use development and greater biking and walking opportunities. There's currently no public commercial allowed east of the freeway. That's wrong on so many levels, in my opinion. Thanks for all your work!