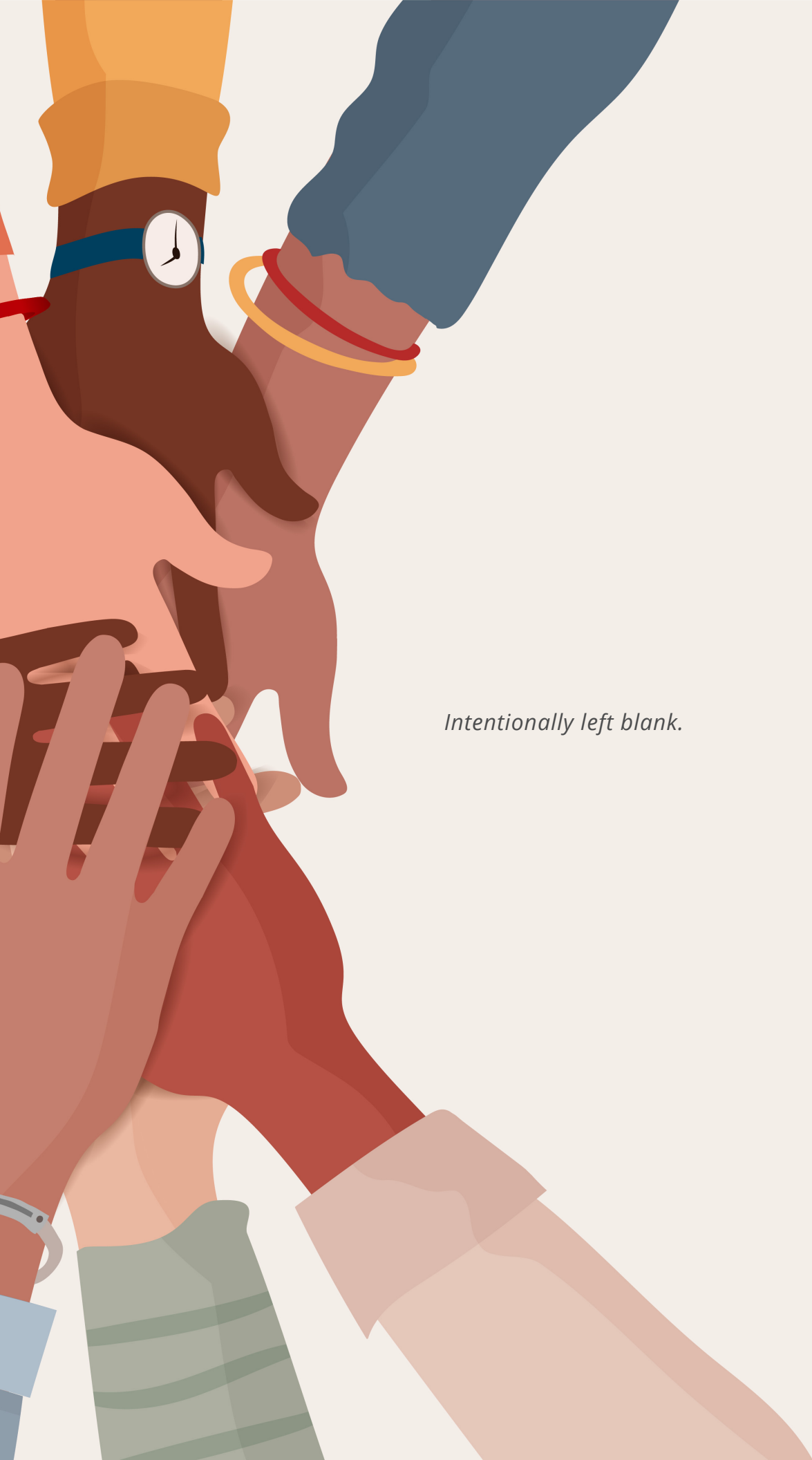


PREVIOUS OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

MAY 2023



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Introduction

Environmental Justice will be a new element added to the General Plan to enable and advance equitable distribution of benefits and limit environmental burdens in the city to promote healthy and livable communities for all San Diegans. This report summarizes valuable feedback collected from past outreach and engagement activities across multiple initiatives to inform the goals, policies, and objectives of the Environmental Justice Element. Throughout the life of the project, continuing opportunities for community input will be provided to build upon findings presented in this report.

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Background

The City of San Diego's Planning Department leads and partners to support various citywide and community specific initiatives and is always looking to gather meaningful public input through interactive and inclusive engagement. During the life of each initiative, staff works closely with stakeholders such as community-based organizations, non-profits, businesses, youth and local residents to gather feedback that can be reflected in guiding documents. This report summarizes findings from past engagement efforts and will be used to develop outreach strategies and engagement tools to guide and inform policies proposed for the Environmental Justice Element.



Past Initiatives

Feedback collected from initiatives conducted between 2015 and 2022 by the Planning Department and partner organizations was reviewed to identify common themes, topics, and general information relevant to the Environmental Justice Element. This section summarizes the purpose of each initiative and provides a snapshot of activities, meetings, and surveys conducted across these initiatives to collect feedback. For each initiative policies were revised based on public input to ensure they were relevant and resonated with San Diegans.



Build Better SD (February 2022) enables faster delivery of public spaces and buildings equitably and sustainably across San Diego. This initiative sets clear policies intended to create more opportunities for innovative, culturally relevant, and interactive public spaces by prioritizing investments in areas where the needs are greatest.



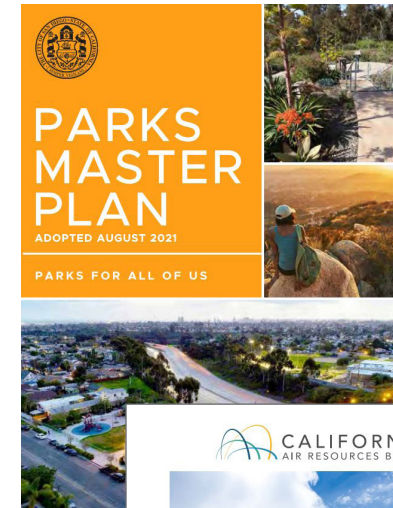
The Climate Action Plan (August 2022) is the City's policy commitment to set clear goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and details the collective strategies and actions that will be taken to make San Diego a more sustainable, healthy and thriving city.



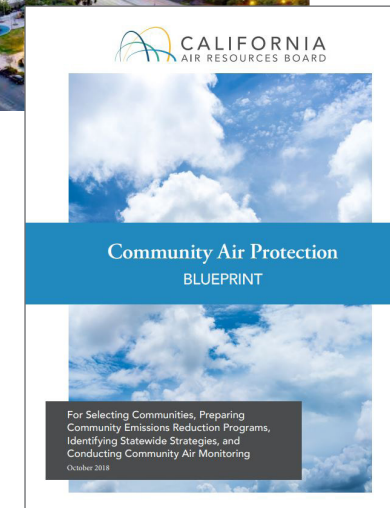
Climate Resilient SD (December 2021) is the City's climate adaptation and resilience plan, which provides strategies to prepare, respond to and recover from potential climate change hazards like extreme heat, wildfires, sea level rise, flooding and drought. It also provides strategies for how proposed climate adaptation investments can improve local communities.



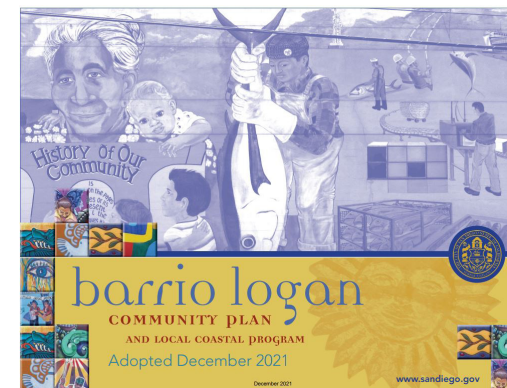
The Age-Friendly San Diego Action Plan (December 2021) is led by the City of San Diego's Park and Recreation Department and works to identify and promote ways to increase livability for all San Diegans with a focus on supporting an aging population. The Plan sets a strategic path to provide older adults with better access to healthy food, technology, and recreation opportunities at local parks and public squares.



The Parks Master Plan (April 2020) envisions bringing the many benefits of great parks and recreational opportunities to all City residents and visitors. The Plan addresses existing inequities in the park system with the goal to ensure that regardless of which neighborhood you live in, everyone in the City has access to safe, clean, and enjoyable park spaces.



The Community Air Protection Blueprint (October 2018) was established by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) in response to Assembly Bill 617. Program Blueprint specifically outlines the process for identifying impacted communities, statewide strategies to reduce emissions of criteria air pollutants and toxic air contaminants, as well as criteria for the development of community emissions reduction programs and community air monitoring plans.



Community Plans build upon citywide policies established in the General Plan with policy recommendations that apply at the community and neighborhood level. The Barrio Logan (December 2021), Encanto Neighborhoods (November 2015), and Southeastern San Diego (October 2015) Community Plan Updates - ensure consistency between the General Plan and a community's land use policies and infrastructure strategies.

Participation

7,317

Respondents across seventeen surveys.

1,096

Participants across twenty-four workshops.

1,007

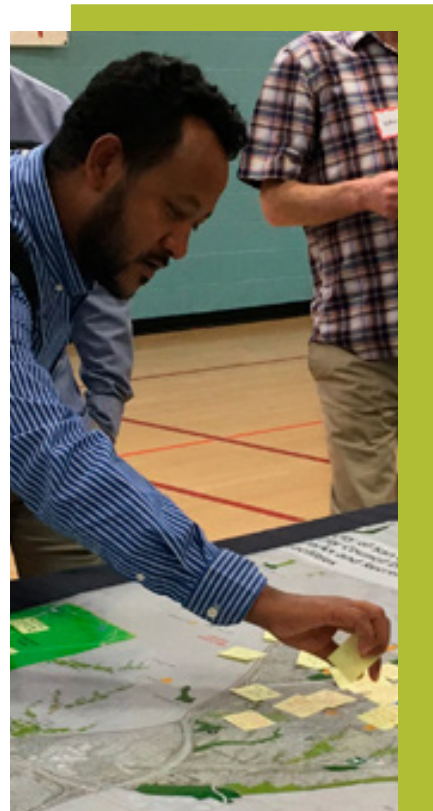
People reached through pop-up events.

10,000

Youth activity books shared.

1,300

Door-to-door flyers distributed.



Information Sharing & Non-traditional Engagement Activities



Project Websites



Public Hearings



Newsletters & Project Updates

Stakeholder Interviews

36 People from various organizations were interviewed to gather input to further guide the various policies and initiatives.

Phone Banking

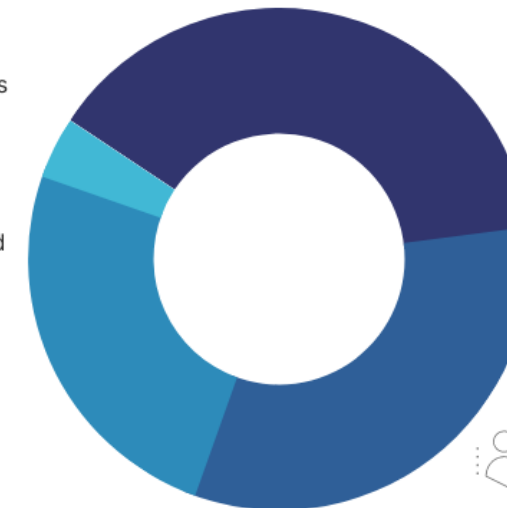
346 Conversations provided community input and helped develop policies that are well-informed.

Listening Activities

223 People participated in listening sessions and theatre-based activities to create a new channel of communication between the city and its residents.

Community Installations

291 Responses received through a living wall, feedback tree, suggestion box, and community chalkboard. Installations established a stronger visible connection between the everyday spaces and daily occurrences to collect valuable feedback.

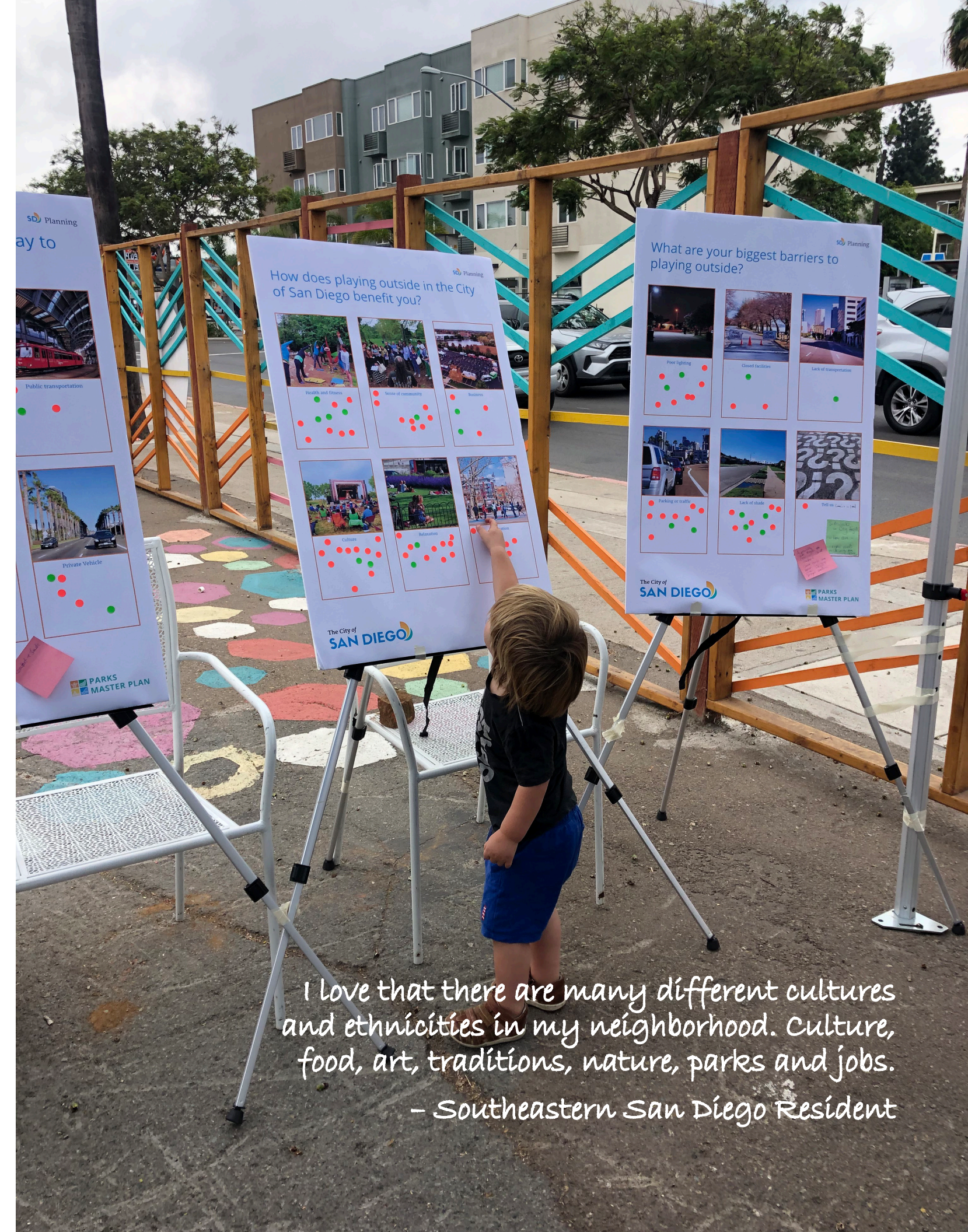


Summary of Findings

The Environmental Justice Element will work to incorporate feedback from past initiatives mentioned above into the General Plan to ensure consistency across existing and future guiding documents. Feedback collected from these initiatives is summarized under six categories and grouped by theme to facilitate readability, as follows:

1. Civic Engagement in the Public Decision-Making Process
2. Pollution Exposure and Air Quality
3. Climate Change and Resilience
4. Public Facilities and Physical Activity
5. Healthy Food Access
6. Safe and Sanitary Homes

These categories capture information related to topics that must be covered in the new element per state guidelines to address environmental justice. These efforts will help identify existing gaps and use interactive methods to gather information and limit engagement fatigue.



I love that there are many different cultures and ethnicities in my neighborhood. Culture, food, art, traditions, nature, parks and jobs.
 - Southeastern San Diego Resident



Civic Engagement in the Public Decision-Making Process

As part of the feedback gathered through various initiatives, community members expressed that they want to be consulted as goals, policies, and objectives are developed. This includes building a transparent process to foster trust and ensure efforts are made to gather feedback from under-represented communities to capture a more inclusive sample of community demographics. This report is a direct result of feedback provided and is meant to be used as a building block for the Environmental Justice Element and future initiatives.

THEME(S)	KEY ISSUE(S)
Community Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members want to participate and be directly involved in designing solutions for their communities. • Ensure transparency throughout the entire process of designing and implementing programs. • Work with community members to identify the best ways to make information accessible and user-friendly. • Provide improved land use tools and guidance to support community education and advocacy. • Provide more outreach to reduce barriers faced by our vulnerable populations.



**WHAT
DO YOU
IMAGINE
FOR YOUR CITY?**

Photo Credit: Peter Schrock | Imagine: Brave Spaces



Pollution Exposure & Air Quality

Recommendations to address pollution exposure and air quality included increasing greenery, reducing vehicle miles traveled, and limiting truck routes in residential neighborhoods. Two suggestions that stood out were to (1) engage small businesses to incentivize emission reductions and (2) establish baselines to track and improve the monitoring of health indicators. In general, there was interest in the potential expansion for the use of electric vehicles, improving transit systems, as well as walkability and bikeability. A more detailed account of the received feedback can be found by the themes below and will be considered as the Environmental Justice Element is developed.

THEME(S)	KEY ISSUE(S)
Community Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that emissions do not increase in communities that are already heavily impacted. • Maximize emission reductions, while considering cost-effectiveness and feasibility. • Focus on immediate action in most impacted communities. • Reduce the number of emission sources that are located too close to sensitive populations. • Provide assistance through funding programs and ensure the focus of these programs reflect a community-driven process and community priorities. • Focus community grant funding on communities impacted by pollution exposure and compromised air quality and ensure funding is expended in accordance with community priorities.

THEME(S)	KEY ISSUE(S)
Transportation Mitigation Efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce dependence on freeways. • Encourage programs to ensure people can work closer to where they live and reduce commuting. • Trucks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Enforce regulations that prohibit trucks in residential neighborhoods. ◦ Reroute trucks to reduce pollution exposure. ◦ Limit air pollution from diesel trucks and other polluting industries. • Invest in programs to incentivize a transition to electric vehicles (EVs). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Incentivize EVs and charging stations. ◦ Provide subsidies for solar and EV, especially for low-income households. • Bike usage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Accommodate more bike usage. • Increase public transportation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Provide more zero-emission public transportation options. ◦ Electrify city-owned trucks, buses and cars. • Support the Pilot of new energy technologies.
Increase Greenery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase tree canopies for shade, improved air quality and neighborhood beautification. • Create buffer areas with vegetation and trees to protect the community from particulate matter. • Plant more trees to clean the air and mitigate the heat island effect. • Introduce green streets and quality public spaces that connect and complement parks. • Plan for green infrastructure that combines environmental, social, and economic value. • Increase actions targeting San Diego's carbon sequestration.

THEME(S)	KEY ISSUE(S)
Community Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide access to amenities within the community to decrease vehicle miles traveled. Amenities may include high-quality food markets, job-centers, recreation areas and high-quality parks. • Create community hubs that are climate resilient and act as places to escape the extreme heat and toxic air.
Home Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer grants for homeowners to invest in air filtration systems to keep pollution out of homes. • Promote programs to replace gas stoves with electric. • Use less natural gas in buildings and homes. • Provide more renter/multifamily Solar to reduce barriers faced by our vulnerable populations.
Wildfires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about how air quality could be negatively affected by wildfires.
Business Owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include incentives for small businesses that are part of the community to support efforts to reduce emissions. Enhance outreach efforts to connect small business owners to available resources and funding opportunities. • Elimination of heavy industrial use altogether to provide more space for housing and reduce the amount of pollution. • Consider more remote work options (when appropriate) to reduce VMTs and improve air quality.



THEME(S)	KEY ISSUE(S)
Implementations Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on air monitoring that will equip residents with information about their community and support actions to reduce emissions and exposure within communities. Establish criteria for developing and implementing community air monitoring in order for data to support sound decision-making and action. • Ensure a strong technical- and science-based foundation for addressing the most significant emission sources that contribute to elevated health risk. • Include a core regulatory focus through new rulemaking commitments by both CARB and air districts, including a priority for zero-emission technologies, to ensure the Program does not rely on incentives alone. • Incorporate a strong focus on public health, including the tracking of health data, identification of data gaps, and improving the availability of information for the decision-making process. • Reduce emissions by working from home at least once a week.



Climate Change & Resilience

Expanding San Diego’s tree canopy network is a commonly identified suggestion for reducing heat exposure while also positively contributing to air quality. Discussions around environmental sustainability speak to the desire for efficient energy use, waste reduction, increased education and training, and building a balance between infrastructure and nature. All with the purpose of improving quality of life for San Diegan’s and beyond.

THEME(S)	KEY ISSUE(S)
Tree Canopy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase tree canopies for shade, improved air quality and neighborhood beautification. • Trees are affordable and amazing ways to cool neighborhoods, implement Climate Action plans, reduce water and air pollution, and retain stormwater. • Increased tree canopy coverage and green roofs as their primary strategy choices for combating the effects of extreme heat. • Actions targeting San Diego’s tree canopy were requested. • Financial burden of watering the trees available from the City’s Free Tree SD program was identified as a barrier to participation.

THEME(S)	KEY ISSUE(S)
Transit Usability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve public transit options including faster and more frequent bus and trolley service, and more stops. • Make transit efficient and affordable, including no-cost or lower-cost transit passes, youth bus passes, etc.
Transit Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce public transit cost burdens on Communities of Concern through reduced fares and low to no-cost transit passes. • Promote working from home to make it easier for people to get around without a vehicle. • Expand programs like Circuit (free downtown shuttle). • Few transportation options designed for older adults and specialized transportation for older adults is not widely known or used (approximately 36% of respondents stated that transportation for older adults was available in their communities) • Accessibility—increase wheelchair accessibility, pedestrian curb ramps for seniors with carts.
Transit Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns over automobile traffic and pedestrian safety—create bus stops or trolley stops that are out of the way from automobile traffic. • Include public restrooms at all trolley stations.
Transit Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A way to connect airport to public transportation. • Integration of parks, open spaces, natural areas, scenic views, and art and cultural landscapes within an overall Citywide network. • Promotion of non-vehicular access to parks and programming, including active transportation links and transit.
Greenery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green streets and quality public realm to connect and complement parks. • Network linkages and community green spaces.

THEME(S)	KEY ISSUE(S)
Waste Reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce policies to reduce waste. • Reducing landfill should be prioritized. • Increase composting to reduce barriers faced by our vulnerable populations. • Increase composting/provide curbside composting. • Implement measures to reduce plastic use and promote recycling. • Reduce waste from restaurants and industries.
Education & Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide education and bins for composting programs. • Introduce actions to improve workforce development and quality jobs. • Prioritize technical training and assistance
Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change action to improve savings on energy and water bills. • Building electrification should be prioritized. • Distributed energy resources should be prioritized. • Action to reduce financial barriers to facilitate participation in clean energy programs, while continuing to improve information sharing.
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce and prioritize infrastructure that combines environmental, social, and economic value. • Strive to strike a balance between the preservation of habitat and sensitive resources and the designation of active recreation areas and access.





Public Facilities & Physical Activity

Feedback gathered around public facilities and physical activity spoke to people’s desire to expand the useability of existing parks and recreational spaces with additional programming. There was support for acquiring additional space for recreational activities wherever possible, especially in low-resource areas. Common themes around pathways and roads indicated people would like to see connections to job centers and desirable destinations strengthened. Furthermore, a desire for public spaces that are safe and accessible to everyone is also expressed. Feedback provided will facilitate conversations around promoting physical activity and providing public facilities that better serve the public to aid the development of the Environmental Justice Element.

THEME(S)	KEY ISSUE(S)
Transit-Oriented Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support City development that encourages low-carbon methods of transportation. • Create more comprehensive transportation infrastructure that connects Communities of Concern to job centers and amenities.
Active Transportation Access & Usability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better define and promote pedestrian and cycling pathways to promote active transportation. • Make streets friendly for pedestrians, including implementing sidewalks and protected bike lanes. • Provide safe/easily accessible active transportation options.

THEME(S)	KEY ISSUE(S)
Active Transportation Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve safety for people on bikes and pedestrians, mitigating freeway impacts, rerouting trucks, and enhancing north/south transit connections. • Improve safety for people on bicycles and pedestrians: broken sidewalks, fast moving vehicles, and lack of adequate benches, lack of infrastructure: bike lanes, traffic calming measures, etc. • Improve lighting infrastructure. • Improve cleanliness as trash, litter, and unpleasant aesthetics impedes active transportation. • Increase safe active transportation infrastructure. • Improve safe pedestrian and bike routes to parks, open spaces, and trails. • Address concerns over safety after dark/at night due to lack of streetlights, burglaries and security enforcement in both affluent and low-income neighborhoods. • Better segregate bike paths and walking paths to improve safety.
Park & Recreation Opportunity Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve connection to natural bodies of water. • Target actions to support San Diego’s wetland and native habitat restoration. • Support climate change actions to improve natural spaces. • Increase pocket parks to provide green space in urban areas such as City Heights. • Increase public spaces to congregate such as local parks, and recreation centers to prevent people from having to drive long distances to areas with better public amenities. • Increase small parks with shaded areas for seniors.

THEME(S)	KEY ISSUE(S)
<p>Park & Recreation Expanding Programming</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish community gardens. • Prioritize programming investments to expand recreational offerings with a focus on fitness and wellness, adult and senior recreation, hiking and nature-based learning as well as special events. • Prioritize facility investments with a focus on beaches and shoreline parks, small pocket or neighborhood parks, trails, off-leash dog parks, and aquatic complexes (swimming pools). • Provide flexible and reconfigurable recreation facilities with technology and gathering spaces that can meet emerging recreation needs, including unscheduled recreation and activities geared towards social interaction and health and wellness. • Establish an active social media presence and mobile platform to promote recreational programming and facilities. • Promote park facilities to older adults to help facilitate more outdoor activity. • Increase opportunities for intergenerational activities. • More urban agriculture, community farms and community gardens. • More recreation for youth to be active.
<p>Park & Recreation Safety & General Improvements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centering safety and access in mobility: Improving safety for pedestrians and people on bikes, mitigating freeway impacts, rerouting trucks, and enhancing north/ south transit connections. • Improve lighting infrastructure. • Bridge safety. • Create more accessible and safe public green spaces, parks and green recreational areas within the communities. • Improving cleanliness of public spaces. • Strong support for more trees, green spaces, and safe active transportation infrastructure. • Include more comfortable seating and shaded areas in parks.





Healthy Food Access

Community gardens were identified as spaces that provide an opportunity to both generate fresh produce and expand educational opportunities for the surrounding community. A desire to increase locations for public water sources and access to healthy food options was also expressed. In addition, community members observed that there may be opportunities to better understand the different ways people source food as well as the value of tracking this type of data. Part of the Environmental Justice Element will focus on championing healthy food access.

THEME(S)	KEY ISSUE(S)
Community Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund existing and new urban gardens. • Provide educational opportunities for the community to learn how to create a garden and grow fresh produce. • Establish/Increase number of community gardens. • Encourage and organize volunteers, to support projects like creating a community garden.



THEME(S)	KEY ISSUE(S)
Fresh Food Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide access to healthy food options, such as promoting supermarkets like Whole Foods or Trader Joe's. • Nine respondents also linked climate change to food insecurity, explaining that extreme weather limited agriculture production (especially for local producers) which ultimately impact residents' access to fresh, healthy, and culturally appropriate foods. This is especially concerning for residents who live in food deserts and food swamps. • Increase of livable areas -housing with no food deserts. • Increase food access to reduce barriers faced by our vulnerable populations. • Expand facilities that offer food for older adults. • Increase drinking fountains. • Prioritize Food Sourcing. • Majority not worried about running out of food, and 88% of respondents were currently food secure— however, 33% of respondents either sometimes or often worried about it. • Perception of food insecurity differed by race.





Safe & Sanitary Homes

Community members expressed that there are many factors that go into selecting a home including affordability, home features, energy efficiencies, and the overall state of a unit. Feedback collected around housing gave insights into the different attributes that people consider when selecting a home and made recommendations to advance the livability of homes in San Diego. This included suggesting home safety audits as a monitoring tool to ensure the livability of units. Additionally, amenities such as heating and cooling options, as well as grab bars were encouraged to make homes more accessible to people of different physical abilities. However, affordability and displacement were identified as common concerns. Feedback indicated support for a variety of housing at different income levels and increasing the housing stock. There was also support for programs that address deficiencies in older homes and those owned by low-income families to enable upgrades and deferred maintenance. In general, there is an opportunity to gather further feedback and better understand what factors contribute to a safe and sanitary home to better inform the Environmental Justice Element.



THEME(S)	KEY ISSUE(S)
Housing Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain affordable housing. • Ensure an increased percentage of future housing is affordable. • Increase affordable housing through infill development. • Ensure rent stabilization strategies, policies, and new development requirements for affordable housing. • Concerns over high rent costs, fear of becoming homeless, and lack of Section 8 housing to ease housing difficulties; additionally, Social Security benefits don't sufficiently address high housing costs.
Housing Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more livable urban areas - housing with no food deserts. • Explore efficient park design solutions to reduce development impact fee burden on housing affordability. • Need for more accessible homes for people with different physical abilities can be addressed by increasing amount of affordable home improvement services, such as grab bars, adequate heating/AC, and home safety audits.
Housing Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support maintenance of older homes. • Provide support for unhoused community members. • Give low-income families the opportunity to be homeowners. • Coordinated, comprehensive outreach strategies to engage people experiencing homelessness. • Hold landlords responsible for maintaining living conditions for renters.

 **Equity
FORWARD**
Environmental Justice

