

# City of San Diego – Environmental Justice Element

Roundtable Meeting #7: “Discussion on Lessons Learned and  
Best Practices”

Meeting Summary Report

Feb. 28, 2024

Prepared by:

City Planning Department



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## Roundtable Meeting #7

### Meeting Objectives and Agenda

- Hold space for participants to share lessons learned and best practices to improve partnerships between community-based organizations (CBOs), managing consultants, and city staff.
- Share resources for storm preparedness and recovery in response to impacts of the storm on January 22, 2024.

Agenda	
Time	Section
2:00 – 2:05 PM	Resource Sharing
2:05 – 2:10 PM	Updates
2:10 – 2:20 PM	Engagement Learnings and Best Practices
2:20 – 2:35 PM	Feedback to KDI and the City of SD
2:35 – 2:45 PM	Overall Scope Review
2:45 – 2:50 PM	Next Steps

### Project Team Present at the Meeting

**Facilitator:** Christian Rodriguez, Senior Community Associate (Kounkuey Design Initiative (KDI))

Consultant Project Team: KDI

- Jorge Cañes, Planning Coordinator | Martin Gil, Community Coordinator

City Planning Department Project Team

- Paola Boylan, Senior Planner | Cristian Barajas, Senior Planner | Christopher Carrillo, Associate Planner | Audrey Rains, Management Intern

Community-Based Organizations

- Kim Heinle, Bayside Community Center
- Tyana Ortiz, Bayside Community Center
- Cynthia Tecson, Bikes del Pueblo
- Mathew Pendergraft, Bikes del Pueblo
- Alejandro Amador, Casa Familiar
- Jesse Ramirez, City Heights CDC
- Manny Rodriguez, City Heights CDC
- Carmina Paz, Urban Collaborative Project

### Summary

#### Storm Preparedness Discussion

Participants shared the challenges faced by their communities in the wake of the storm on January 22, 2024, and discussed concerns regarding flood preparedness and response. This included sharing how the flooding impacted housing, physical and mental health, and other issues that community members experienced. Facilitators acknowledged the role of the Environmental Justice Element in helping address inequities and challenges faced by EJ Communities.

## Updates

City Staff and KDI shared the anticipated timeline for the release of the Environmental Justice Element for public review and related Engagement Summary. A snapshot of engagement activities was shared with the group, which resulted in a total of 37 engagement events reaching 1,116 community members and hundreds of comments submitted.

## Engagement Learnings and Best Practices

Activity 1 – The group discussed the various engagement events held and shared their experiences to inform workflows and better support future city partnerships with community-based organizations.

### Discussion Questions

1. How effective were the various engagement activities? What activities worked well? Were there any ideas of what can be done in the future to have greater success or be more effective?
2. What aspects did not yield the desired result?
3. What strategies constitute best practices for effectively engaging residents in EJ communities?
4. In what ways can we enhance public participation levels?

CBOs were provided with an activity to support engagement efforts. This activity was called the **obelisk** and was used to introduce environmental justice topics to community members of all age groups in an approachable manner. This method shared a brief description of environmental justice issues along with examples of efforts undertaken by the City of San Diego to address the given issue. Images were shown under each topic to represent various priorities and participants were asked to choose two of their highest priority for each topic. This provided the space for deeper conversations to also take place. Overall, the obelisk worked as a tool that engaged participants and prompted informative discussions.



Participants shared that having visual representations of the various topics helped initiate conversations and gather input. Engaging people at existing events, places they already visit, providing an activity, offering food, and having city staff visibly present were useful strategies that led to successful interactions with people. Best practices included having multiple facilitators, having city staff present, and complementing pop-up activities with notetaking to capture keywords and reasoning behind feedback collected for those interested in providing further detail. CBOs also noted that in collaborating with the City, being given the flexibility to suggest where engagement events should be held yielded the best turnout.

CBOs expressed that guidance on what questions and feedback to collect from community members was the most helpful and having that information up-front was valuable in planning events. Examples include outlining questions that provide direction for conversations, resources on the various topics addressed by the initiative, and clarity around specific feedback the city wants to collect. Overall, CBOs identified flexibility in identifying events, coupled with clear guidance on feedback desired, and being provided

activities, food, and giveaways to initiate engagement were among the best practices for supporting CBOs in gathering valuable feedback. These efforts should continue to be developed during future partnerships.

### **Feedback to KDI and the City of SD**

Activity 2 – Participants shared opportunities to improve communication between the managing consultant (KDI), city staff and CBOs.

#### **Discussion Questions**

- What aspects of the relationship were successful?
- What aspects were less effective?
- Would an anonymous survey or any other space or resource to provide feedback more comfortably be helpful?

CBOs shared roundtable meetings were helpful to exchange ideas, share findings, and learn more about on-going efforts by partner organizations. Interest in collaborating on events between CBOs when supporting future initiatives was expressed and roundtables were identified as a good place to foster these collaborations. At the same time, one-on-one meetings were identified as a helpful additional resource to discuss specific needs and were appreciated throughout the process. Participants also expressed that finalized templates were helpful when invoicing and determining engagement events reflected in the outreach and engagement plan. CBOs were asked to provide information, but the format was not always conducive to viewing information collectively, searching, and organizing based on different factors and that led to added work. Spreadsheets or similar methods were found to be the most useful to conduct these functions. Overall, finalized templates in these two areas would ensure a more streamlined process.

### **Scope Review**

Activity 3 – Participants further discussed what efforts best support meaningful engagement to be considered for future scopes of work.

1. What else could have been funded to support outreach and engagement?
2. What changes would you make to the scope?
  - a. What elements were lacking?
  - b. What aspects were unnecessary?

CBOs again noted that food, translation into commonly spoken languages in their neighborhood, and giveaway items (fans, lanyards, bags etc.) were valuable tools that facilitated meaningful community engagement. Additional time to hold events and to adjust for last-minute changes would be helpful if included in the scope.

### **Closing and Next Steps**

The Environmental Justice Engagement Report will be completed soon. Any updates and news about the Environmental Justice Element can be found on the [project webpage](#).

## Appendix A: Interactive Digital Whiteboard Activities

### activity 1

#### Engagement Learnings and Best Practices

1. How effective were the various engagement activities? What activities worked well? Where there any ideas of what can be done in the future to have greater success or be more effective?
2. What aspects did not yield the desired results?
3. What strategies constitute best practices for effectively engaging residents in EJ communities?
4. In what ways can we enhance public participation levels?

#### what worked

Having the proper visuals to help guide the conversation.

Trash cleanup was the most successful. people passing by also helped out.

The obelisk activity worked well. the pictures helped alot.

More translation services for improvment

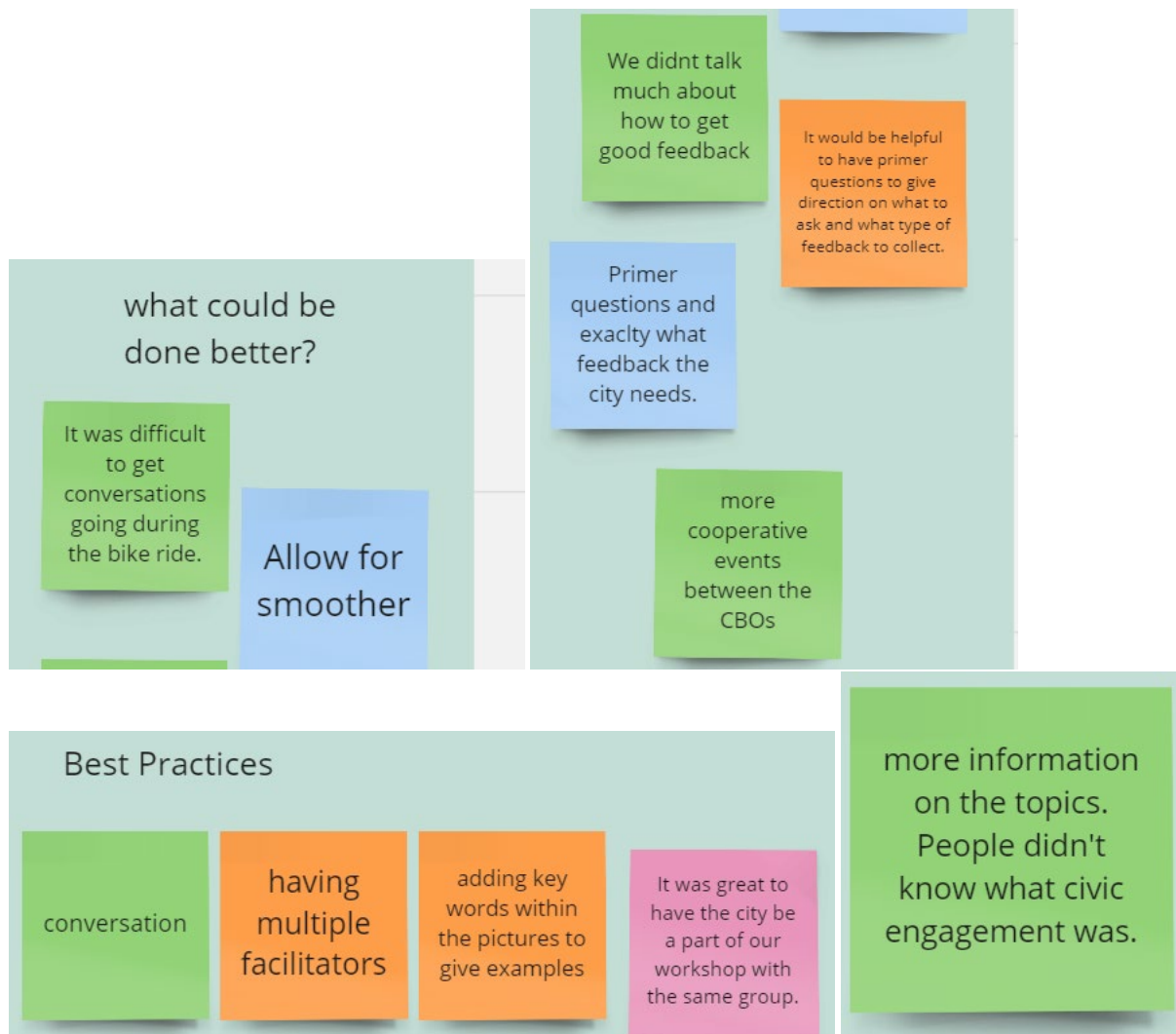
farmers market was most successful. Events where people where already at where most successful for community input

Having food for the community helps a lot. Allowing funds to be used for food.

flexibility of where the CBOs held the workshop

Having city staff members works very well

talking about EJ but also having participants do something in the workshop that is related. Gomper's tree planting



## activity 2

### Feedback to KDI and the City of SD

- What was the dynamic between CBOs, KDI, and the City?
  - What aspects of the relationship were successful?
  - What aspects were less effective?
  - Would an anonymous survey or any other space or resource to provide feedback more comfortably be helpful?

In the beginning it was rough. KDI and the city were still working out some details. The uncertainty made it harder.

Start the process sooner to give enough time for everything to fit in the timeline.

Martin was very accessible but not everyone has the same accessibility. We need to get on the same page on the best forms of communication.

great having a point of contact with Martin.

wish we could have coordinated more collaborative event

Having the roundtable meeting helped out and the 1:1 check ins with martin.

One suggestion: make sure the engagement plan stays consistent.



## activity 3

### Overall Scope Review

1. What else could have been funded to support outreach and engagement?
2. What changes would you make to the scope?
  - a. What elements were lacking?
  - b. What aspects were unnecessary?

making the flexibility more apparent in case there are last minute changes.

Scope was good but more time to be able to do the engagements outlined in the scope.

Food!  
make sure to add food to the budget for engagement.

more SWAG  
(fans, lanyards, bags)

Would like to see the information that the other CBOs relayed to compare themselves.

Didn't know that the engagement plan needed to be approved, touching on what CHCDC mentioned. more time to plan out the 8 engagements