



Coachella Community Health and Wellness General Plan Element Wellness Advisory Committee Meeting #7 Minutes

Thursday, March 14, 2013 3:30-6:00 p.m. City Hall

Luis Lopez, City of Coachella Development Services Director opened the meeting and welcomed participants. Participants went around the room and introduced themselves stating their name and organization or affiliation.

Attendees

Fifteen WAC members, four California Endowment Partners, and six project staff attended the meeting. The following is a list of meeting attendees' names and organizations. Attendees who failed to sign-in at the meeting are not included in the lists below.

WAC Members in Attendance	
Organization	Name
Augustine Band of Cahuilla Indians	David Saldivar
Center Coachella	Abel Zarate
Coachella Resident	Abraham Ramirez
Coachella Resident	David Lopez
Coachella Resident	Jean Martines
Coachella Valley Unified School District	Maria Estrada
CURM	Oleas Betancourt
Riverside County Department of Public Health	Esther Hernandez
First 5 Riverside	Arturo J Hernandez
Galilee Center	Lupe Torres
Hidden Harvest	Sandra Carroll
New Life Family Worship	Ramona Zarate
Sunline Transit	Anita Petre
Walgreens	Christine Ramos
Walgreens	Mark Lardenoit

The California Endowment Building Healthy Communities Eastern Coachella Valley Partners in Attendance	
Organization	Name
Building Healthy Communities	Elizabeth Toledo
California Rural Legal Assistance	Blaz Gutierrez
Inland Congregations United for Change	Karen Borja
Riverside County Department of Public Health	Miguel A. Vasquez

Community Health and Wellness Element Project Staff in Attendance	
Organization, Role	Name
City of Coachella, Assistant City Manager	Noeila Chapa
City of Coachella, Development Services Director	Luis Lopez
City of Coachella, Senior Planner	Gabriel Perez
City of Coachella, Planning Intern	Rosa Montoya
Raimi + Associates, General Plan and Community Health and Wellness Element Consultant	Beth Altshuler
Raimi + Associates, Coachella General Plan Project Manager	Matt Burris

Meeting Objectives:

- Understand the contents of the General Plan
- Create an outreach and education strategy for the public draft release
- Set priorities and establish partnerships for tracking and implementation
- Celebrate our accomplishments

Public Draft General Plan Overview and Discussion of Next Steps

Matt Burris and Beth Altshuler from Raimi + Associates gave a presentation on the City’s General Planning Process, and provided an orientation to the format and content of the Plan (see PowerPoint slides).

Below are some of the questions and answers from this part of the meeting:

Q (Question) 1: On the Road Network Vision Map, why are the future roads in the hills curvy instead of a walkable grid pattern?

A (Answer) 1: The roads are curved so they can respond to the topography changes. Building straight roads on a hill can be costly, dangerous or infeasible, and more harmful to the natural environment than roads that respond to the natural slopes and curves.

Q2: I understand that the General Plan will help decide what types of neighborhoods develop where, but will the General Plan help the City decide how/what/where things should locate?

A2: Yes, the general plan land use designations and policies will help with that.

Q3: Does this General Plan consider Coachella's jobs-housing balance, and how many residents can work in the City rather than commute out?

A3: Yes, this Plan does address that. We want to end up with more jobs that can specifically employ current residents.

Q4: Is it typical for a General Plan to have a 20-year timeframe?

A4: Yes. General Plans are typically prepared with a 20-30 year horizon in mind. In most cases, the City will do a moderate or comprehensive update to the Plan halfway through that period.

Q5: Regarding climate change, how can the community get information about Coachella's existing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions?

A5: Both the forthcoming Coachella Climate Action Plan and the EIR will have information on GHG levels.

Q6: Are there other ways to submit EIR scoping comments other than attending tonight's scoping meeting? How can we obtain a copy of the scoping documents, to circulate to friends/residents/community?

A6: You can obtain the scoping documents here:

Notice of Preparation

http://cityofcoachellageneralplanupdate.weebly.com/uploads/1/2/1/2/12129446/coachella_nop_3_1_13.pdf

Initial Study

http://cityofcoachellageneralplanupdate.weebly.com/uploads/1/2/1/2/12129446/coachella_initial_study_3_4_13.pdf

Anyone can email, mail, fax, or hand deliver written comments to:

Luis Lopez, Development Services Director

City of Coachella – Development Services Department

1515 Sixth Street

Coachella, CA 92236
Tel: (760)398-3102
Fax: (760)398-5421
LLopez@coachella.org

Additionally, feel free to post these links and this information on Facebook and in group emails.

Q7: How are you planning to incorporate health into the EIR?

A7: Health concerns will likely be incorporated into the alternatives analysis, but we are open to additional suggestions.

Q8: How does this Plan help Coachella's homeless population. The Rescue Mission saw 2,228 homeless coming 2012, and 216 in the first 2.5 months of this year. Are you creating transitional or permanent affordable housing?

The Coachella Valley Rescue Mission has a clinic as well. It has received homeless population from this zip code, and has information to use when ready. (This can be used in the housing element). The Mission also has land adjacent to existing facilities, and is planned for affordable apartments for homeless. Currently 145 people live at the Mission, and stay for 9-15 months. This includes families.

*Coachella Valley Rescue Mission
47470 van Buren St, Indio CA 922201*

A8: This issue would be in the Housing Element (which will be updated during 2013), and state mandate that requires an emergency housing ordinance or emergency shelter. The Health Element also contains some policies related to homelessness.

Q9: How does or how can the Plan support the relationship between long term employment goals and resources for individuals to accomplish whatever employment goals (e.g., library services, job search tools, enhance reading skills, professional development, resume building, etc.... She sees it at a long-term investment for community members.

A9: The plan includes policies on library services, but mainly workforce development programs will be located in the Implementation Actions chapter. Additional comment on Q9 from Planning Commissioner Rudy Gutierrez, who works at a local staffing company: My company partners with the local schools and the Coachella Adult School to provide training, resume workshops and other support services. It will take collaborations of public-, private-, and the non-profit sectors to improve workforce development. Successful job creation is on everyone's mind.

Q10: Significant conversations about mobility and transportation, how is this plan going to alleviate challenges people have expressed about transportation, and that it is too far to go to school, shopping, and clinics. How will the plan address this?

Q10: As the undeveloped areas grow, there are stricter specifications on proximity to uses. Design guidelines to make feel like trips are shorter than they are by making the walk or bike ride safer and more enjoyable. Additionally the Land Use element requires developers to create complete neighborhoods, not just housing or just offices.

Implementation and Evaluation

The group discussed some criteria to select, prioritize the actions. Prioritize actions that:

1. have visible progress – possibility to build enthusiasm, and motivation from community members. (Early wins).
2. encourage, support, and expand community participant in the implementation of the Plan. Empowerment through community-based implementation may be a tool for success.
3. solidify, improve, or expand programs or infrastructure that is already in place. People are more likely to be familiar what is already in place, and pay more attention to those existing programs/organizations/ getting better.
4. improve existing neighborhoods. For example, if new developments call for quality street lighting, improve lighting in older neighborhoods that do not have lighting. Without street lighting there is no safety or motivation to go outside in the evening or early morning to exercise. Also, maintain neighborhood amenities and ensure existing lighting or other infrastructure functions properly.

There was strong support in the room to see citywide recreation events such as an Annual 5k and a Ciclovía (close off some streets for celebration, walking, bicycling, dancing, safety education, etc.)

Health Element Process Evaluation

Keep your eyes on your inbox. The Department of Public Health will create a short survey to evaluate the Coachella's Health Element process. The City, the California Endowment, and the County Health Department want to understand what worked well and what could be improved. This information will help Coachella to continue this health work and can serve as a model and learning tool for other communities.

Many in the groups were interested in continued involvement with the Health Element adoption and implementation. It might be possible for the Council to create an ad-hoc committee on Health and/or to encourage WAC members to join existing commissions to ensure the health lens is taken into consideration.

Community Engagement for the General Plan EIR and Adoption

- Engagement without the use of technology
 - Mail notices (maybe through the water bill again)
 - Newsletter announcements
 - Consider translating the Health Element and/or highlights of the General Plan into Spanish

- Get feedback at the City's Cinco De Mayo event, possibly a short questionnaire. Also look into the Dia de los Niños event.
- The following folks volunteered to help with signage / and circulating notices related to General Plan EIR hearings and adoption meetings:
 - Schools (Karen Borja)
 - Laundromat bulletin boards / other community boards (Karen Borja)
 - Temporary Murals (Funding: Kickstarter? Paint donation from local hardware store) (Miguel Vasquez)
 - Send Walgreens pdf of flyers and they will print them and stuff in customer bags (Mark from Walgreens)
 - Sunbus Platform space that will inform people about the plan (Anita from Sunline/Marketing will look into this)
- Art Outreach (Gabriel)
 - Local Schools can make chalk or other art to promote meetings and celebrate Plan
 - Community art programs/organizations
 - Promotion during the Hue Art Festival