

## Coachella General Plan Community Health and Wellness Element Wellness Advisory Committee Meeting #3 Minutes–October 25, 2011

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Linda Guillis, 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**

Seventeen WAC members, seven California Endowment Partners, seven project staff, and two additional City employees attended the meeting. Simultaneous Spanish translation was provided by George Iñiguez via headsets. The following is a list of meeting attendees' names and organizations.

<b>WAC Committee Members in Attendance<sup>1</sup></b>	
<b>Organization</b>	<b>Name</b>
Augustine Band of Cahuilla Indians	David Saldivar
Coachella Certified Farmers' Market	Armando Sepeda
Coachella Valley Housing Coalition	Britini Edwards
Coachella Valley Rescue Mission	Olga S. Betancourt
JFK Hospital, Director of Business Development	Jeff Van Hoy
Lideres Campesinas	Ramona Felix
	Lilia N Chavez
	Nancy Gonzalez
Office of Assembly Member V. Manuel Perez	Carlos Gonzalez
Resident representatives (ICUC)	Karen Borja (OLOS)
Resident representative	Abraham Ramirez
	Monica Hernandez
Riverside County Department of Public Social Services	Israel Vasquez
	Alisa Emery
Sunline Transit Agency	Joseph Forgiarini
Walgreens	Christine Ramos
	Mark Lardenoit

<b>The California Endowment Building Healthy Communities Eastern Coachella Valley Partners in Attendance</b>	
<b>Organization</b>	<b>Name</b>
Building Healthy Communities	Elizabeth Toledo
	Trinidad Arredondo
California Rural Legal Assistance	Cristina Mendez
Inland Congregations United for Change	Yvonna Cazares
	Alex Luna
Riverside County Department of Public Health	Victoria Jauregui Burns
	Miguel A. Vasquez

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<sup>1</sup> Attendees who failed to sign in at the meeting are not included in this list.

Community Health and Wellness Element Project Staff	
Organization, Role	Name
City of Coachella, Development Services Director	Linda Guillis
City of Coachella, Planning Manager	Luis Lopez
City of Coachella, Senior Planner	Gabriel Perez
City of Coachella, Planning Intern	Marcos Coronel
Raimi + Associates, General Plan and Community Health and Wellness Element Consultant	Beth Altshuler
	Matt Burris
Fehr & Peers, General Plan Transportation Consultant	Chris Gray

Other City of Coachella Staff	
Organization, Role	Name
City of Coachella, Senior Civil Engineer	Mark Chappell
City of Coachella, Engineering Technician	George Iñiguez

### ***Fiesta de la Salud Reflections***

Beth Altshuler of Raimi + Associates thanked everyone for all their hard work in putting together the Fiesta de la Salud – the first of three workshops for the Community Health and Wellness Element. Because there are more workshops to come, Beth asked the group for feedback on the workshop. She posed the following four questions to the group for discussion:

1. *What worked well in terms of outreach?*
2. *How can we improve outreach for the next workshop?*
3. *What worked well at the workshop?*
4. *How can we improve the workshop next time?*

### **Outreach and Follow-Up**

- Communicate the purpose (and importance of) the public workshop in the outreach materials at the beginning of the event.
- Create an evaluation mechanism for next meeting.
- Reach out to local businesses to help with outreach.
  - Walgreens offered to post posters and hand out flyers.
- Reach out to schools / teachers to help with outreach.
- Contact all the people who signed-in at the Fiesta de la Salud to let them know about the next meeting and the process in general.
- Send the summary out to community groups and they will help circulate it around the community.

### **Workshop/Event**

- The event was a positive, productive, and fun overall, but there is room for improvement.
- The health fair and workshop was a bit of a conflict during the presentation and small group discussions because of the noise and distraction.

- Next time they should either breakdown when it's time for the presentation or have them be in a separate room completely.
- Provide facilitators with easels and flip chart paper to make it easier to record comments.
- Provide training and meeting materials to small group facilitators in advance of the meeting (not just right before) so they can better prepare.
  - Provide a print out of the PowerPoint slides to the facilitators so they can refer to the information and topics during the small group discussion.
- Good attendance, good participation, good mariachi.
- Provide more structure to participants in breakout groups– clearly communicate how input would have gone into Health Element.
- Prevent people from leaving early – Maybe wait to serve food until the end.
- Next time, have a separate break-out group for youth participants.
- Mariachi, food booths, location were great.
- Consider doing the presentation only in Spanish next time.
- Attendees should have been notified ahead of time about input needs and expectations.

### ***Community Health Discussions Update***

California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA) and Inland Congregations United for Change (ICUC) have taken a lead in organizing and facilitating “Community Health Discussions”. Community Health Discussions are intended to be semi-structured conversations around health with different communities or interest groups in Coachella. They are still hosting more discussions but so far they have hosted or are scheduled to host the following groups:

- Moms from Cesar Chavez Elementary School
- CRLA Agricultural Workers
- Mobile Park Tenants
- A Religious Community Group affiliated with the Catholic Church
- Seniors at the Senior Center
- Older male Coachella residents

Once all of the discussions are done, we will compile the results and send out a master summary. Until then, if anyone wants to host/facilitate a discussion with five to ten participants, please contact Beth Altshuler at 510.200.0522 or [beth@raimiassociates.com](mailto:beth@raimiassociates.com) and she can provide the materials and instructions.

### ***Healthy and Safe Transportation System Presentation and Discussion***

Chris Gray, Transportation Planner from Fehr & Peers is working both on the General Plan’s Circulation Element and the transportation sections of the Community Health and Wellness Element. Chris presented some of the existing transportation conditions and behaviors in Coachella and then posed the following discussion topics to the group for an open discussion:

- Promoting transit use
- Encouraging pedestrian travel
- Promoting bicycling
- Vehicular accidents
- Seatbelt/infant restraint violations
- Focus on long-term or short-term strategies
- How best to reach out to other agencies for transportation

A pdf of Chris's presentation is attached to these minutes. After the presentation some participants asked the following questions. The project team's answers are included below:

- **What is a bicycle facility?**
  - Separate Facility (a.k.a. Class I) - A non-motorized facility, paved or unpaved, physically separated from motorized vehicular traffic by an open space or barrier. Also called Bicycle Path, Bike Trail, Non-motorized Trail, Multi-purpose Trail or some combination thereof.
  - Bike Lane (a.k.a. Class II) - A portion of a roadway that is designated by striping, signing and pavement markings for the preferential or exclusive use of bicyclists. Most often these are done in couplets, each one being one way and adjacent to the outside through travel lane. Also called Bicycle Lanes.
  - Bike Route (a.k.a. Class III) - A segment of road designated by the jurisdiction having authority, with appropriate directional and informational markers, but without striping, signing and pavement markings for the preferential or exclusive use of bicyclists. Also called Bicycle Route.
  - Bike Friendly (a.k.a. Class IV) - A roadway not designated by directional and informational markers, striping, signing nor pavement markings for the preferential or exclusive use of bicyclists, but containing appropriate bicycle-friendly design standards such as wide-curb lanes and bicycle safe drain grates.
- **How much do sidewalks cost?**
  - Sidewalks cost approximately \$6.00 per square foot. In residential areas sidewalks are five feet wide and in commercial areas they are usually six feet wide.
    - There is also another "sidewalk" model called a parkway which includes five or six feet of sidewalk with a buffer of plants/trees between the cars and sidewalk.
- **Would the City consider using permeable paving materials to decrease the heat island effect and stormwater run-off?**
  - Permeable paving is more expensive to install (\$9.00 per square foot) and more expensive to maintain. Although it's the more environmentally responsible choice, with limited resources, the City prefers to build sidewalks on more streets rather than permeable ones on fewer streets.
  - Comment that the General Plan should address the heat island effect and flooding.

## Comments from the Discussion:

### The Regional Transportation Landscape:

Chris explained that many of the transportation decisions that affect Coachella's transportation system are made at the state or regional level.

- Many WAC participants want to see more equitable decision making and funding allocations that aren't as heavily weighted towards the western end of the Coachella Valley.
- Chris stressed the importance of the Regional Transportation Planning (RTP) process.
  - SCAG (Southern CA Association of Governments) is the regional planning agency that writes and funds the RTP that covers Coachella. SCAG represents all southern CA cities and counties except San Diego County.
  - RTP's include major funding for roads, highways, goods movement, transit, and some (but minimal) funding for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
  - Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) and Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) are other sub-regional planning bodies with whom the Coachella community should engage.
  - The City, community groups, and residents should strive to understand the RTP process in order to participate in the process to inform/influence decisions.
  - Coachella will have the greatest impact at advocating for more equitable distribution of long range regional transportation funding if the Coachella community presents a unified voice regional planning decision makers. A coalition like this should include individuals, community groups, the City, and other relevant public agencies) and present shared goals.
- Political pressure might make the Regional Whitewater Trail move faster.
  - Cathedral City has secured funding to start the construction of their piece of the trail. (Bill Simons is the contact at Cathedral City's engineering department if the City wants to get more information).

### Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning:

- Plan streets as public spaces for PEOPLE and not just cars.
  - Consider creating a Ciclovía event in Coachella to help promote bicycling like in Bocata, Columbia, Los Angeles, San Francisco, etc. <http://www.ciclavia.org/about/>
- People would bike more during non-summer months if they had more access to bikes and better/safer bike facilities.
- Consider bike sharing programs or other innovative strategies to increase access to bikes.
  - Look into a "Get rid of your old bike" day – a bike donation event
- City has some corridors near Bobby Duke Middle School that are very well shaded which would be good places for bike facilities and bike events.
- In general Coachella streets need better shading throughout City for walking and biking to become safer and more attractive options.

### Transit:

- Bus are difficult to use – headways (how frequently the buses come) are too long

- Poor pedestrian access to transit stops is a barrier.
  - A long walk to transit lengthens the already long total trip time.
  - Consider removing barrier walls to increase pedestrian access.
- Bus stop quality often needs to be improved.
  - Shade, signage, seating, trash cans, etc.
- Fare box revenues have to be supplemented from a variety of other sources. Bus fare generally only covers 1/10<sup>th</sup> of the actual trip cost.
  - Population growth helps increase transit lines.
  - Increasing density around transit nodes creates more potential riders.
  - Charging for parking in some other places helps encourage transit ridership, but this strategy may not work well in Coachella since there is not a huge demand for parking (because there is so much parking available and because transit does not fully cover the City)
- Consider improving “Safe Routes to Transit” until density justifies better headways, more lines, and more stops. Bicycles will get people to and from buses.
- Sunline should ensure that there is a bus stop at all the public schools.
- **Question: Who pays for bus stops?**
  - Answers: With money from the Federal government, Sunline pays for basic bus stop amenities. Cities can contribute additional funding to enhance bus stop amenities.
- **Question: Who selects bus stop location?**
  - Answer: Sunline selects stops. But stop location changes can be influenced by public support and demonstrating the potential for additional riders. If the community considers conducting a survey to show support, ask where people currently travel to and from and by what transportation mode.
- **Question: Could Sunline consider running smaller buses to increase frequency?**
  - Answer: Sunline has considered it, but the driver is the largest cost of the running additional busses so changing from one large to many small vehicles is much more expensive. Additionally, smaller buses don’t last as long and the busses need to carry additional school loads twice a day.

## ***Next Steps***

The fourth Wellness Advisory Committee Meeting will take place Tuesday, January 10, 2011 at City Hall in the Council Chambers (time still to be determined). The second Community Health and Wellness Community Workshop will likely occur in February 2012.