

Coachella General Plan Community Health and Wellness Element Wellness Advisory Committee Meeting #4 Minutes–January 10, 2012

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

Twelve WAC members, seven California Endowment Partners, and six project staff attended the meeting. The following is a list of meeting attendees’ names and organizations.

WAC Committee Members in Attendance¹	
Organization	Name
Apostolic Church	Frank Mendez
Augustine Band of Cahuilla Indians	David Saldivar
Coachella Certified Farmers’ Market	Ivan Garcia
Coachella Valley Housing Coalition	Britni Edwards
Emergency /Physician	Raul Ruiz
Esperanza YFC	Ashley Mendoza
Galilee	Lupe Torres
HealNet	Diana Nancy A DeLeon
Imperial Irrigation District	Patrick Swarthout
Office of Assembly Member V. Manuel Perez	Silvia Paz
Walgreens	Mark Lardenoit
	Christine Ramos

The California Endowment Building Healthy Communities Eastern Coachella Valley Partners in Attendance	
Organization	Name
Building Healthy Communities	Elizabeth Toledo
California Rural Legal Assistance	Laura Massie
	Cristina Mendez
Inland Congregations United for Change	John Rodriguez
	Yvonna Cazares
Riverside County Department of Public Health	Victoria Jauregui Burns
	Miguel A. Vasquez

¹ 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, Economic Development Manager	Lorie Williams
Raimi + Associates, General Plan and Community Health and Wellness Element Consultants	Beth Altshuler
	Matt Raimi

Meeting Objectives:

- Understand and provide feedback on the existing health conditions in Coachella
- Understand the General Plan process
- Provide feedback on the future of Coachella’s development and growth
- Prepare for the Fiesta de la Salud #2

Existing Health Conditions

Beth Altshuler of Raimi + Associates presented some of the initial findings from the Existing Health Conditions Analysis (see the pdf of the PowerPoint presentation). The group provided feedback and agreed to review the draft report when it is released. One participant requested a section discussing healthy (habitable) and unhealthy housing in the City and “planning area”, possibly looking at the age of housing stock, rehabilitation programs, and the location of legal and illegal mobile home parks in the area. Building off of this comment, one participant wanted to see if the City would be able to help displaced mobile home park residents if the City does not annex the unincorporated areas in which they currently reside. There was an extensive discussion around parks and recreation facilities in the City and the connection to development projects and the location of new parks. Here is some general info about park development fee rules in California http://www.cprs.org/membersonly/Sum02_Quimby.htm. And here is info about Coachella’s Park Development Fee Rules <http://www.coachella.org/documentView.aspx?DID=748>.

Land Use Planning, the General Plan Update, and Health

Matt Raimi, principal of Raimi + Associates, provided of overview of the general plan update process. He summarized what we’ve heard from community members thus far in their goals for the future of Coachella. The group suggested adding the following concepts to the list:

- Family-friendly
- Honor the history of the region
- Food security
- Interrelationships between City and unincorporated areas (access to retail, facilities, services)

Next, Matt presented how some of the potential land use goals and strategies are related to, and can improve health. The group then shared some of their ideas / desires for goals and policies related to land use.

- Participants want a balance between locally owned and national / big box businesses. If more national chains open up in Coachella, think about ways to protect small, locally-owned businesses.
- In regards to job creation and economic development, City staff shared that currently the City has about 0.65 jobs per household and they would ideally want 1 job per household.
- Participants expressed concerns with developing the hilly eastern part of town. Especially related to sprawl (developing the far eastern part of the City before everything in between is developed) and disturbing species habitat.
 - The plan should include policies to connect existing development with new development.
- One participant asked how the General Plan Update process can include the unincorporated communities into the planning process since they are in the sphere of influence / planning area.
 - The City responded that they extended an invitation to the communities to select a representative for the Wellness Advisory Committee and the communities never did. The City also invited them to the first Fiesta de la Salud and some unincorporated community residents did attend. They will also be invited to attend the second Fiesta de la Salud and Wellness Advisory Committee members are encouraged to spread the word to people in neighboring communities.
- Consider how the General Plan, or other city initiative/programs can help expand people's openness to different types of housing stock (e.g., single family home with a lawn and yard vs. row houses vs. multi-family housing, etc.).
- The plan should include policies for running trails, especially ones that create connectivity between parks (e.g., linear parks such as the Emerald Necklace in Boston, MA).
- Coachella should be a leader in sustainable development including generating and using green energy and creating green buildings / homes.
- Create more gathering spaces for socializing and entertainment such as plazas/public spaces, recreation areas, and social retail *places*.
 - Create safe places to dance.
 - Gain inspiration from plazas (zocolos) in Mexico.
 - Establish sense of ownership of public spaces.
- Consider, welcome, and integrate the bicultural character in policies and development design.
- Honor cultural/historic aspects of Coachella
- Create safe walkways/connectivity between shopping areas, especially on Harrison
- Prioritize the revitalization of blighted areas over creation of new areas.
- Create one or more "Gateways" that announce "arrival"
 - City tried to talk to the property owners at the swapmeet (City talked to property owners, but so far no progress has been made).
 - The City is considering roundabouts at gateways which could include public art, landscaping, and/or signage.

- General Plan will not have design guidelines, but the land use section will address urban form.

Next Steps

Fiesta de la Salud #2

The second Fiesta de la Salud will take place on Thursday, February 9, 2012 from 6:00pm-8:00pm in the Bobby Duke Middle School Multipurpose Room, 85-358 Bagdad Avenue in Coachella. Healthy dinner, childcare, and Spanish translation will be provided. We will be presenting existing conditions and obtaining feedback on policy directions for the health element and the rest of the general plan. Gabriel Perez (Senior Planner) has flyers in English and Spanish. Please contact him at gperez@coachella.org and he can email you the flyers or call [760-398-3102](tel:760-398-3102) / stop by the Development Services Department at City Hall to obtain copies. Additionally, we may allow community groups to set up tables at the end of the meeting during the dinner / social portion of the evening. Contact Gabriel for more information.

- Volunteer to hang up flyers
- Send out an email announcement
- Tell your friends & neighbors
- Post on Facebook / Twitter

City Council Study Session on General Plan Update

Matt Burris and Matt Raimi of Raimi + Associates will present and facilitate a discussion on Wednesday, February 15th at 6:00pm with the Council members at City Hall, in the City Council Chambers. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend and participate. If your group is planning on bringing a large number of residents, please contact Linda Guillis (Development Director) lguillis@coachella.org or [760-398-3102](tel:760-398-3102) so she can ensure the space will accommodate everyone who wants to attend.