

Coachella General Plan Community Health and Wellness Element Wellness Advisory Committee Meeting #5 Minutes–June 14, 2012

City of Coachella Development Services staff opened the meeting, and participants went around the room and introduced themselves stating their name and organization or affiliation.

Attendees

Eleven WAC members 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
Assemblymember V. Manuel Perez (80th Assembly District)	Silvia Paz
California Rural Legal Assistance	Cristina Mendez
Cente Apostolic Assembly	Ramona Zarate
	Noelani Bonlle
Coachella Valley Housing Coalition	Mike Walsh
Inland Congregations United for Change	Alex Luna
	Sandra Cardenas
	Hector Marin
Planned Parenthood	Jacqueline Vargas
Walgreens	Christine Ramos
	Mark Lardenoit

Community Health and Wellness Element Project Staff	
Organization, Role	Name
City of Coachella, Mayor	Eduardo Garcia
City of Coachella, Councilmember	Steven Hernandez
City of Coachella, Acting Development Services Director	Luis Lopez
City of Coachella, Senior Planner	Gabriel Perez
City of Coachella, Planning Intern	Rosa Montoya
City of Coachella, Contract Planner	Ron Goldman
Raimi + Associates, General Plan and Community Health and Wellness Element Consultants	Beth Altshuler
	Matt Burris

Meeting Objectives

The objectives of this meeting included

- Debrief Fiesta de la Salud #2
- Provide feedback on draft Health Element goals, policies, and actions

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

- Brainstorm how the Existing Conditions analysis can help the community

We did not get to the final objective on the Existing Conditions report because the group needed more time to go through the Draft Health Element.

Fiesta de la Salud #2 Debrief

Some of the WAC members provided an overview of the Fiesta de la Salud #2 (public community workshop for the Health Element) for meeting participants who weren't at the event. The Fiesta format included an open house with community groups tabling and dinner, followed by a short presentation on Coachella's Existing Health Conditions and the General Plan update process. Part of the presentation included a "Visual Preference Survey" (VPS) where residents ranked 30 images of different building types and development characteristics on a scale of "most preferred" to "least preferred." After the presentation, participants went to stations to vote with sticker dots on their priority goals and strategies for the Health Element. To close the meeting, Raimi + Associates shared the initial results from the VPS and discussed the rest of the Health Element and General Plan timeline.

Beth Altshuler of Raimi + Associates (R+A) asked the WAC group to provide feedback on the Fiesta #2 outreach and event so we can improve planning the third Fiesta this coming Fall 2012. WAC #5 meeting participants thought both the visual preference survey and dot/voting exercises were great ways to interactively engage residents in the planning process and get good feedback. It was especially helpful that Fiesta #2 participants could add and vote on any ideas they felt were missing from the goals and strategies. While the turnout was great, the business sector was missing. Mayor Eduardo Garcia also stated that he feels like the City needs to improve their outreach and public education so residents and business owners have a better understanding of why participating in these planning processes is so important. It is important to ensure the City works closely with the school district in improving youth and community health.

Draft Community Health and Wellness Element Review

Beth, from R+A shared a bit about the Health Element, General Plan, and Climate Action Plan activities to come.

WAC participants were randomly assigned to Groups #1 through #5 and each group had a facilitator. The task of the small groups was to review, discuss, and edit the goals, policies, and actions assigned to their small group (see below for group topic assignments). The project team provided WAC participants with two handouts – one that had the small group discussion topics and discussion questions, and a second handout with their group's section of the Draft health element vision, goals, policies, and actions.

Group Assignments

Group #1:

Overall Health and Well-Being (Page 3)

1. GOAL: A physical, social, and policy environment that supports residents' health, well-being, and equity.

Environmental Health (Page 10)

4. GOAL: A community protected from the harmful effects of pollution and hazardous materials, hazardous waste and environmental contamination.
5. GOAL: A resilient community that is prepared for the health impacts of extreme weather events and climate change.
6. GOAL: Reduced negative public health impacts of tobacco smoke.

Group #2:

Urban Form and Land Use (Page 5)

2. GOAL: Development patterns and urban design comprised of complete, walkable, attractive, and family-friendly neighborhoods, districts, and corridors that support healthy and active lifestyles.

Housing Quality and Affordability (Page 7)

3. GOAL: Safe, affordable and healthy housing for every stage of life.

Jobs, Prosperity and Economic Development (Page 20)

10. GOAL: Improved economic prosperity and vibrancy of households and businesses.

Group #3:

Public Safety and Social Support (Page 15)

7. GOAL: Close-knit and safe communities.

Health Care and Social Service Facilities (Page 26)

13. GOAL: Affordable, accessible and high-quality health care and social services for all residents.

Group #4:

Food and Nutrition (Page 17)

8. GOAL: Strong local food production and ample opportunities to eat locally grown food.
9. GOAL: Safe and convenient access to healthy, affordable, and culturally diverse foods with low concentrations of unhealthy food providers.

Healthy, Safe, and Sustainable Transportation (Page 28)

14. GOAL: Infrastructure and programs that support walking and bicycling as safe, efficient, and viable forms of transportation.
15. GOAL: Improved public transportation usability that supports transit-oriented development patterns.
16. GOAL: Improved safety for all roadway users.

Group #5:

Parks and Open Space (Page 21)

11. GOAL: Increased access to parks, recreation, and natural open spaces to support increased physical activity.

Schools and Community Facilities (Page 22)

12. GOAL: Community facilities and schools that support physical activity, civic life, and social connections for residents of all ages and interests.

Small Group Discussion Questions

1. **Topics.**
 - a. Do the topic headings make sense/ have the correct wording?
 - b. Do they accurately describe the goals, policies, and actions in each section?
2. **Goals** should describe a desired future end state.
 - a. Do the goals align with the Vision?
 - b. Is your topic's section missing any goals?

- c. Should any goals be changed or removed?
3. **Policies.** *A principle or rule to guide decisions and achieve each goal.*
 - a. Are these the right set of policies?
 - b. Is the language too strong? Not strong enough?
 - c. Are there important ideas you want the City to consider?
 4. **Actions.** *Actions are discrete ways to implement the policies that can be completed.*
 - a. Can you think of additional actions that would help the city implement the specific goals and policies?
 - b. Should any actions be removed?
 - c. Are the correct partners identified?

At the end of the meeting, each group gave a summary of their discussion. The notes presented provide some of the highlights. The City collected written comments from all participants and is compiling them into the next iteration of the Draft Health Element. Gabriel Perez, Senior Planner with the City of Coachella, emailed the entire WAC membership immediately after the meeting with the Draft Health Element word document, and the Discussion Questions handout from the meeting. Any WAC member can email comments to gperez@coachella.org (or hand deliver comments to City Hall) by Friday, June 22, 2012.

Small Group Discussion Report Back Comments

Below is the summary of comments from the report back in the order they were received:

GROUP #1 - PUBLIC SAFETY AND SOCIAL SUPPORT | HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL SERVICE FACILITIES

- Funding is an issue there for it is key the City strengthen and fully utilize community partnerships and programs.
- Community groups need to help more with outreach
- Although the city is lacking in health care facilities, Walgreens offers many health services - City should use them
- Educate people about social services available through outreach at public city events.
- Educate the youth about gangs, drugs, domestic violence
- Incentivize businesses
- Get churches involved

GROUP #2 - URBAN FORM AND LAND USE | HOUSING QUALITY AND AFFORDABILITY | JOBS, PROSPERITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Add policy for timing of subdivision improvements to ensure complete neighborhoods before people move in and to ensure that existing neighborhood infrastructure is maintained before new infrastructure is put in.
- Cul-de-sacs are family friendly and provide recreation space for kids
 - If they are allowed, require pedestrian/bicycle paths for connectivity
- Need discount stores such as Walmart and Target (some people in the group are strongly in favor and others are strongly opposed)

- Big box vs. locally owned
- If big box comes in City sets the terms
- Concerns about the effect new big box stores will have on existing mom and pop businesses
- Consider a local first and local purchasing policy

GROUP #5 - PARKS AND OPEN SPACE | SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- Combine Boys & Girls Clubs with Park and Recreation Centers
- Need more low-cost recreation programs
- Park maintenance should be more sustainable (no pesticides)
- Need to expand and promote nature access
 - Encourage appreciation of the desert landscape to shift residents' desire for non-native plants (such as grass) in all the parks.
- Create concession stands in or near parks so people can get refreshments and stay longer
- Investigate joint-use opportunities to address lack of facilities.
- Work with school districts to create/improve wellness policies
- Siting = integrate schools into neighborhoods so kids can walk and bike
- Consider creating nutrition standards for the City
- Create health clinics at or near schools

GROUP #4 – FOOD AND NUTRITION | HEALTHY, SAFE, AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

- Encourage locally grown food
- Create flexible agricultural spaces in the city for urban farming opportunities
- Encourage local and healthy food in schools
- Change the Farmer's Market to night time in summer to avoid extreme heat
 - Consider organizing a bike event in tandem with the farmers market
- Need to work with Sun Line to expand public transit service after 8:30 PM
 - Many people work non-standard hours and depend on transit for employment
- Convert the swap meet building into a co-op general store

GROUP #1 - OVERALL HEALTH AND WELLNESS | ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

- Health in development planning
- Ban smoking in casinos (*The City has no authority of tribal owned casinos on tribal land)

Next Steps

- Please send your comments on the Draft Health Element to Gabriel Perez by Friday, June 22 (gperez@coachella.org).
- WAC #6 Meeting will take place on Thursday, August 2, 2012 from 5-7pm, location TBD.
- The date for Fiesta de la Salud #3 will be announced at the next WAC meeting, but it is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, September 20, 2012 in the evening.