"Public Health & Air Quality" Public & Private Sector Workshop Notes

October 3, 2018

Summary

The following are comments from the "Public Health & Air Quality" workshop held on October 3, 2018 at LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes in downtown Los Angeles. 45 attendees representing 33 public agencies, private sector entities, and healthcare providers (see Appendix A) participated throughout the three and a half-hour workshop via a plenary session, three breakout activities, and a dot-voting prioritization activity. This compilation represents all of the comments that we were able to capture through butcher paper notetaking, computer laptop transcription, and written notes. Because facilitators asked participants to share individual opinions, in some cases comments may conflict or be duplicative.

Discussion on Goals

Workshop participants met in breakout groups to provide feedback on general transportation goals that were included in the briefing and framed the discussion. Facilitators led the conversation and took notes on butcher paper and in a typed document.

Goal A: Eliminate racial disparities in health outcomes by supporting policies that advance equity

- Is very aspirational. "Eliminate" is a great word, but the goal goes soft with the "support" language
- incorporate safety
- Work on metrics: set aspirational goals whose language is balanced in its attainability
- Equity vs. justice – maybe add "and environmental justice"
- Equity in emergent technology

Goal B: Improve collection, accessibility, and evaluation of public health data by adopting a racial equity lens

- This should be reworked as a strategy instead of a goal.
- This is a technical approach and doesn't say very much.
- Seems more a way to support goal A or all of them.
  - However, they already do collect data by default, so this should also be a goal in and of itself.
  - Goal should be worded to show what the point of collecting the data is for. Ties closer to goal A.
  - This fits better under a goal about greater collaboration between multiple entities.

- "Lead the nation in health outcomes regardless of" etc.

- Data needs to be descriptive because if it's too scientific it won't be very helpful to community

- What does it mean to adopt a racial equity lens?

  - improving data collection and digging deeper

- Include something specific about health effects of climate change

- Emphasis on culturally competent accessibility

  - Ex. not everyone has access to internet

- Broaden to include inequality realities besides race

- Gap analysis as a first step

- Identify who will hold on to data

- EPA (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency) released a social equity map that combines pollution and equity lens

- Working with public schools to gather data.

Goal C: Improve community communication by developing a place-based climate change education partnership

- Goal has a lot going on

- Opportunity to include community driven change

  - Could be your neighbors, your block, etc. Needs that are vastly different from those on the other part of town

- Use wording "community driven" to ensure it's not just the County talking to them / talking down to them. The community should talk to the County. Bottom up approach, not top down.

- "foster ownership and accountability"

- "Place-based" is an ambiguous term. Community can be vague and changes based on work, school, church, etc. neighborhood has an ownership connotation.

  - Though "Place based" is important because that's where the problems are. Context matters based on geography. Advocate to keep place-based language. Combination of people and place.

  - However, people don't know what "place based" means. This doesn't tell me what to expect of the County if it's for the community.

- Deeply engage community to understand climate change is place based.

- Goal C & D work well together, loop them into one goal.

- "Improve community resilience" and see communication as a vehicle to that

- "Improve community connectedness"

- How do we work with scientific researchers to inform communications?

- Focus on local jobs. We have jobs in the communities of people so we need to train those folks to take those jobs on.

- C & D are complementary because there is trust building. How where you live determine the language. Do not combine them; they just complement one another.
  - Ex. City of Paramount has had bad air. Community was hesitant to do tree planting because they do not understand or have other priorities. Educational partnership.
  - Important to build public literacy
- Goal C is a strategy to more informed communities so they can take action on climate change issues.
  - Should be more of a results-based accountability framework
  - Should reflect what County needs, not the strategies to get there.
    - What are we actually trying to change and what are we actually trying to do?
    - For example: goal A: solve racism.
- Strengthening relationship between County and local orgs to uplift needs of communities. Strengthen relationship and collaboration between all of the agencies in the county re: sustainability issues.
- Work with community to determine how they use different spaces. Fairly affluent area, had a resilience booth and youth wanted to save the park. High school does not go to the park because it is too dangerous.
- Low-income communities may not have access to parks because it is not safe, too much traffic, low tree canopy, etc.
- Interactive programming, parks after dark program is a great way to bring people back. Homelessness is a big issue.

Goal D: Build a County that supports inclusion, health and wellbeing for all residents

- County should "drive" or "lead" inclusion, health and wellbeing for all residents
- There is a need to build new systems that will allow the County to be aspirational
- In bridging C and D, there needs to be emphasis on Adaptation and protecting people from climate change consequences
- This is not defined enough; reframe it for the general public
- **Many participants felt that Goals C and D would be the most important if they were combined**

Goal E: Enhance health equity by addressing racial equity and environmental pollution

- Feels too similar to other goals
- Perhaps add more about enforcement? Add words like "exposure" or "regulation"
- More strategized coordination between different agencies
- Strategies could distinguish if based on Cal Enviro Screen

Goal F: Accelerate the transition to sustainable alternatives to fossil fuel for transportation, manufacturing, and energy production

- **Many participants felt that Goal F is one of the most important goals**

- Solid goal, touches different sectors, equal application throughout County, and could be applied to multiple concentric circles levels

- Gives good direction for regional departments and municipalities

- Though the language is not aspirational enough

- "Accelerate" does not describe an end state. A more affirmative word needed. Effectively becomes a target.

- Get rid of accelerate – start with "Transition to…."

- Public works - transitioning to alternative fuels. Third largest fleet in county. Lots of equipment that does not have renewable energy yet.

- Challenging to find someone to partner with in the energy sector.

- Adding "Just" to Goal F to say "Just Transition". Making sure that equity is embedded in language and our transition is done in an equitable sense.

- Use carbon neutrality as a main focus of goal as was done in Energy goals; include a target date

- Important for workers as well. Thinking of what the pathway for workers as they transition away from extractive jobs

- Incorporate indoor air quality into discussion. Humans spend the majority of their time indoors. That is also a bridge into social equity.

Goal G: Improve access to educational and employment opportunities

- **Many participants also felt that Goal G is one of the most important goals**

- Alter Goal G to include local jobs/local hire. People can't afford to live in communities and more money now goes into cars

- Identify and promote programs that already exist to improve community buy-in and ownership
  - Need to understand how County works in unincorporated areas

- Improving education and employment will eliminate issues; these are baseline problems that people need to fix before thinking about climate. Need to support these types of initiatives first.

- "improve" isn't aspirational enough language – driving is a better word

- Goal G stood out as a means to connect homeless folks to training and opportunities
  - Some type of workforce development to support

- Students are looking for green jobs; need to strengthen the pathway from degree to job employment. Students want to but it is difficult to maneuver.
  - Important to line up the institutions to educate
  - Have specific trainings that give students those skills

- Can the County sponsor a regular job forum?
  - There is a nationwide high percentage of unstable workers. Idea is employers put their needs and employees put their availability and the program matches.

- How can County use their position to make jobs more available?

General Comments

- Desire to see more climate change and trauma-informed emphasis in these goals and subsequent strategies

- Make goals tighter – some consolidation is possible

- Make the County's collaboration with nonprofits a specific goal for this topic area

- Make sure we don't fix our problems by moving them somewhere else (specifically mentioned regarding air quality)

- Food might deserve its own goal

- Not a lot of air quality in the goals, should be more prominent

- Language is not that aspirational

    - Are current county processes in place going to be able to meet these aspirational goals? Probably not.

    - Difficult for county residents to interact with county governance to achieve these aspirational goals

- Synergize instead of equalize on a general level for all goals.

- Goals G, F, A, and B are more topic specific. Cross cutting topics in other goals.

- Organize these goals more thematically

- Goals will have to work together. They will have to be really ambitious. Our goals in public health relate to goals in other chapters. These goals are tools for agencies

- No clear call out to work with agencies that are already doing work. Trying to regulate things that there is no direct control with. So important to stack incentives so that you can work with private folks to engage folks to, for example, buy cleaner trucks.

- Making sure that there is intersectionality in Goals and recognizing social economic factors, race, age, surveillance, pollution to understand all of the issues.

- Improve air quality throughout the county – but make it aspirational

    - Clean air for all, but add equity framing

Discussion on Strategies

This breakout session featured a series of current programs and initiatives that reflect L.A. County departments and partners' work on Public Health and Air Quality-related topics. Using these "case studies" as examples of potential strategies, participants discussed the topics and developed a list of Public Health and Air Quality-related sustainability strategies. Participants then dot-voted on what they think should be L.A. County's top priority strategy.

Top vote-getting strategies

- Create a business license process

- Establish funding for a "right tree, right place, right time" program

- Creating an environmental stewards' program / partnership

- Invest in capacity building training and leadership

- Ensure strategies address benefitting not just homeowners but also renters

- Increase charging infrastructure for alternative fuel sources to eliminate air pollution

- Incorporate strategies for indoor air quality into building requirements

- Partner across agencies to develop metrics and foster collaboration

Economy / Workforce Development

- Create a business licensing process period. L.A. County currently does not have such a process. Need to have this so we can have more oversight of activities.

- Create a fund to support relocating a business to a different area when it is being noxious.

- Ensure equitability to small businesses to make sure this permitting idea can work.

  - AB 617 money can be given to small businesses for stationary source gives money to help small businesses cope with the new standards.

- Small businesses need standards to meet – County should give money once you have started trying to meet that standard.

- Use County's spheres of influence to maintain clear lines of communication between AQMD (South Coast Air Quality Management District), local county licensing, and other agencies to make sure there is more coordination over all licensed businesses.

  - Carrot and stick. Make sure stick is aspirational and forces technology.

  - Also, need to demonstrate technology and show new tech that works to help achieve pollution standards.

Housing / Land Use

- Coordinate among other jurisdictions that have their own land use authority. Can clean up unincorporated areas, but would need to coordinate with neighboring regulators to make sure we really make sure to maintain air quality.

- Failing to do this would also prevent redlining. Make sure it is comprehensive and integrates across the region.
- Create stronger policies in unincorporated areas for housing next to freeways. Recognize design standards for those housing.
  - In addition, what do we do about existing housing?
- Air Filters: not just installing them but also taking care of them
- Looking at the whole aspect of storm water management as it relates to safety access
- Not being punitive to industry because we still need the jobs, needs to be balanced with research to show need between industry and community. Ensuring zoning will continue to uplift jobs. Communicate with employers in those areas to let them know what's going on
- Collecting data where it is pertinent and how it is used to actual design. AB 617 might help in monitoring data in 10 DACs (disadvantaged communities)
- When we collect data, also collect public knowledge. Ground truthing is a necessary strategy.
- Equitably distribute LULU's (locally unwanted land uses), not overburdening communities especially if they are already qualified as a DAC.
  - Address cumulative impacts
- Partner with community orgs in data gathering solutions (aka ground truthing)
- Work with informal community leaders to act as ambassadors and working via grassroots for buy-in
- Invest in training in DACs, community capacity, and leadership development
- Expand opportunities for renters and multi-family.
  - Gets difficult to talk about rent control, if landlord needs to make changes it will not be fiscal.
  - Difficult to have renters transition to EV's because they can't charge
  - Policy design like the just approved community-solar that directly benefits community

Community Engagement

- Incentivize communities as well as businesses.
- Don't focus on standard modes of community engagement, but focusing on community empowerment, and giving community decision authority in determining strategies
- Promote community-driven collaboration with other communities, integrating between each other rather than relying on County. Peer to peer collaboration.
- Increasing capacity in the community, training and education, data collection, etc. building the community's voice. Compensating communities for being engaged.
- Raising awareness of these issues is a first step. Needs to be on the thousands. Get people to come to our meetings but it does not extend beyond our rooms.
- Expand awareness/outreach efforts
- Provide funding opportunities around childcare and school credit
- Ensure when communities request that projects have greater enforcement that there is a better process for listening and follow-through

- What is industry doing and businesses doing, who are the root causes of pollution within our communities. Agencies need to push on holding more businesses accountable.

- Legislation and legal action in certain communities could bring accountability to industries. Leverage the power of the health officer that way through legislation and legal teeth.

- Give DPH (Department of Health) a greater role in citing places; they are usually reactionary rather than permitting. Not just unincorporated areas, but all over the county.

- Work in conjunction with state agencies to make tools more accessible to communities. Not available in churches and community centers, etc. not just online or in paper in government offices. Make it more personal.

Transportation

- Focusing on emissions reductions and pollution reductions, rather than mitigating

- Increase bicycle and pedestrian only zones

- Support first/last mile solutions as bike infrastructure

- Install cool roads

- Develop and support shared transportation technologies

- Increase opportunities for L.A. County staff to adopt healthier mobility practices – lead by example

- Improve rail safety at Metro and use County's influence to do this at Metrolink, especially for workers

Landscapes & Ecosystems

- Reduce paved surfaces to incorporate more flora and reduce the urban heat island effect

- Create an urban forestry plan.
  - Need a detailed plan for how they are going to manage all trees.
  - Ex. Castaic Lake lost 2,000 trees

- Create a comprehensive shade assessment
  - Do we currently have a canopy analysis?
    - There's aerial information/photography and infrared.
    - Most of it is at 2-kilometer scale.
  - These trees have a life cycle; many oaks are dying. What is the life cycle of the trees we are planting now? What type of landscape are we creating? How are we thinking of tree planting in the long-term. Strategy needs to be local in different areas, can be trees or other strategies.

- Create environmental stewards
  - We already have individuals that take it upon themselves. However, we do not have them in all areas - sharing the ability and connections with people. Empowering them with local information but not completely put it on them

- Make sure that whatever is planted is specific to that ecosystem. Diversity of trees that we plant. Do not want to plant a monoculture.

- Streamline the process of getting trees into neighborhoods. However, not easy to access those tree planting services from the County.

  - Important to consider how to streamline maintenance help from County and City services (although owners are responsible).

  - Consider that many renters, residents, and agencies do not want to plant trees because of maintenance problems and safety issues with dying trees falling on them.

  - Need to make sure goals are not conflicting with each other. Trees have water requirements that will help them be aware of how to take care of the trees.

  - Trees are discussed in a facile way that masks the benefits of certain types of trees

- Support and fund a "Right tree, right place, right time" program

  - Ex. In a community where trees planted 20 years ago, roots were breaking the sidewalks. Nobody fixed it so someone tried to cut up the roots. Planting a tree could cause bigger problems decades into the future, especially given the placement of where the tree is located.

- Protect existing trees.

  - Grass is a 6-month problem to regrow. However, to regrow a tree is a 50-year endeavor.

- Reevaluate the value of a tree.

- Create stronger development standards that make it more difficult to remove existing trees, shade, and flora

- Maximize underutilized vacant lots

  - Ex. Long Beach offers tax breaks for repurposing vacant lots into community gardens

    - However, soil fertility is long process

- Need more funding for tree maintenance programs.

- Must address beetle decimation of lumber and trees. Must be responsible for how to dispose of trees.

- Safety is a big issue – must address how maintenance must be safe.

- Also, promote local jobs in these tree maintenance focuses.

Additional topic areas

- Install cool roofs

- Expand the number of cooling centers in the region

- Improve local access to distribution of services and info – including prevention services

- Address mental health issues in terms of access to services and education

- Increase the County's focus on social and emotional well-being

- Address food deserts by coming up with a plan to improve the quality of food resources in underserved areas

  - Public-private partnerships for food deserts and tree planting Ex. Root Down in South Central

- Address gender disparity

  - Expand women initiative groups in low-income communities

- Put more resources into engaging existing healthcare providers around the region

Public & Private Partnerships Notes

A final breakout session had attendees pair off. Each pair were handed one of the cross-cutting prompts and developed a concept for a public-private partnership opportunity that integrates public health and air quality, wrote it down on a sticky note, and shared it with the full group.

- Bring together waste hauling companies, Public Works, and research institutions to work on air pollution mitigation and management projects
  - Target waste-related emissions
  - Landfills
  - Garbage collection
- Force private waste haulers to more fully engage the community on strategies they can implement to reduce air quality impacts attributed to the waste industry
- Have CARB (California Air Resources Board) create a "carbon filter giveaway" program to distribute filters and increase awareness, education, and buy-in. Identify geography and key leaders to tout the program as well.
- Target public policy and public resources to address immediate climate and air quality emitting pollution
- Private sector polluters pay for mitigation and fund non-profit education outreach
- Collaborate with private led initiatives and public organizations for local hiring opportunities
- Create a linear park on First Street adjacent to rail partnership with DPOA [sic]
- Low impact janitorial cleaning product program
- Public/Private partnerships for increasing alternative fuel infrastructure (ex. EV charging in low income communities)

Our County

Appendix A: Workshop Attendee List by Organization

- Beach Cities Health District
- Cal State Long Beach
- California Air Resources Board
- California Endowment
- California Health Collaborative
- California State Assembly - Assemblywoman Autumn Burke, 62nd AD
- City of Carson
- City of Los Angeles
- City of Palmdale
- City of Paramount City
- City of Pasadena
- City of Vernon
- Climate Resolve
- Coalition for Clean Air
- Community Health Councils
- Environmental Defense Fund
- Gateway Cities COG
- HGA
- LA Chamber of Commerce
- LA County Center for Health Equity
- LA County DPH
- LA County DPR
- LA County DPW
- LA County Parks
- LA County Sheriffs
- Long Beach Aquarium of the Pacific
- Long Beach Marine Institute
- Meridian Consultants LLC
- Siemens
- SoCalGas
- South Coast AQMD
- US Green Building Council