



OurCounty Stakeholder Engagement Summary

June 2018 to May 2019

Introduction

OurCounty, the Los Angeles Countywide Sustainability Plan, is an effort to outline a bold, inclusive and truly regional vision for the present and future generations of Los Angeles. In a region as large and urbanized as Los Angeles County, many of the most pressing sustainability issues are best solved using a regional approach through collaboration across city and county boundaries. Recognizing this, the OurCounty Plan is countywide in scope, setting regional goals, targets, and strategies. County departments are responsible for implementing actions that fall under the County's direct control and will work with partners to address areas that the County can influence and/or support, such as policies and programs at the local, regional, state, and federal levels. OurCounty addresses a wide range of subjects including climate change, water, energy, waste and resource management, land use, transportation, open space, biodiversity, public health, air quality, economy and workforce development, housing, resilience, and governance. Central to the OurCounty Plan is a commitment to equity across all sustainability areas, especially considering the region's historic and ongoing economic, racial, social, and environmental disparities. Countywide goals and strategies have been informed by rigorous data analysis, expert input, and stakeholder and community input.

The LA County Chief Sustainability Office (CSO) spearheaded the development of the OurCounty Plan, working with an interdisciplinary team of consultants led by BuroHappold Engineering and researchers at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), with stakeholder engagement co-leadership from UCLA and Liberty Hill Foundation (Liberty Hill). Additional support was provided by Estolano LeSar Advisors; Fehr & Peers; Gladstein, Neandross & Associates; Studio-MLA; Raimi + Associates; and Toole Design.

Liberty Hill also developed a process wherein a designated Community-Based Organization (CBO) Anchor in each of the 5 Supervisorial Districts would serve as a partner. These organizations played a central role in uplifting equity discussions, both by participating in the design and facilitation of workshops as well as by ensuring that discussions were inclusive of the perspectives of low-income communities of color. The CBO Anchors who served in this capacity were East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice (EYCEJ) (SD1); Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education (SCOPE) (SD2); Pacoima Beautiful (SD3); Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) (SD4); and Day One (SD5). See the section on Community Organization Grants and Stipends below for more details on this part of the process.



Stakeholder Engagement Overview

Under the co-leadership of UCLA and Liberty Hill, the stakeholder engagement team planned and executed a series of workshops at various stages of the planning process that gathered input from the public, private, nonprofit and academic sectors. UCLA led outreach to local and regional governments and the academic and business communities. Liberty Hill focused its outreach efforts on grassroots nonprofit organizations, environmental policy advocates, and natural resource protection and conservation organizations.

After a kickoff event in November 2017, stakeholder engagement occurred in two principal phases that spanned from June of 2018 through May 2019. The first phase consisted of two parallel workshop series - one convening nonprofit sector leaders, another bringing together public and private sector stakeholders. Eleven total workshops focused on different sustainability topics and featured presentations of draft goals and strategies for discussion and debate. Nearly 600 attendees from nearly 300 unique organizations shared their vision for the goals of OurCounty and how to make the plan actionable. This phase also included a series of presentations to key business and advocacy groups across the region, co-delivered by the LA County Chief Sustainability Office and UCLA. After this phase, the stakeholder engagement team collected and presented feedback to the planning team.

The second phase of engagement consisted of two types of events. First were two Draft Review Sessions organized by UCLA reconvened stakeholders from all sectors who participated in earlier workshops to give their feedback on a "Discussion Draft." These were attended by 155 individuals representing 115 public, private and nonprofit organizations. The second type of event was a series of publicly accessible environmental fairs, titled "Our Voice Our County" Expos, organized by Liberty Hill and aCBO Anchor in each of the five Supervisorial Districts in LA County. These community events involved 361 individuals who signed in and another 81 staff and volunteers who facilitated the discussions.



Pre-Draft Workshops - Summer/Fall 2018

Dedicated to an inclusive and bottom-up engagement process, the Stakeholder Engagement team launched a series of eleven workshops in the Summer of 2018. With support from CBO Anchors and members of the consultant team, UCLA hosted five public and private sector workshops; Liberty Hill hosted five nonprofit workshops; and together, UCLA and Liberty Hill co-hosted one joint workshop across sectors. These workshops' primary purpose was to inform the draft Plan from a variety of perspectives, including those belonging to communities commonly left out of decision-making.

With approximately one year allotted for stakeholder engagement, the team determined that it was important to include the participation of grassroots representatives during these early workshops. This strategy helped to ensure that the Discussion Draft Plan would reflect the priorities of historically impacted communities and vulnerable populations.

The workshop topics included:

Public & Private Sector Workshops

- Water (July 23, 2018) – Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator
- Energy & Climate (July 31, 2018) – Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator
- Transportation (September 26, 2018) – Los Angeles County Metro Headquarters
- Public Health & Air Quality (October 3, 2018) – LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes
- Landscapes and Ecosystems (October 11, 2018) – Studio-MLA

Nonprofit Sector Workshops

- Water (June 28, 2018) – The California Endowment
- Energy (July 13, 2018) – Los Angeles Trade Tech College
- Transportation (July 27, 2018) – Los Angeles Trade Tech College
- Open Space, Recreation, Biodiversity & Habitat (September 17, 2018) – Los Angeles Trade Tech College
- Equity and Resilience (October 26, 2018) – Japanese American Cultural and Community Center

Combined Sectors Workshop

- Waste and Resource Recovery (September 28, 2018) – Los Angeles Trade Tech College



Workshop Format

The workshops followed the same agenda format, opening with an introductory overview by the Chief Sustainability Office to highlight the rationale and approach for developing the OurCounty Plan. UCLA and BuroHappold content experts followed by a short PowerPoint summary of the Briefing Documents that had been prepared and distributed prior to the workshop, helping to set the stage for the discussions that followed. Morning breakout groups typically focused participant feedback on the draft goals contained in the briefings, while afternoon sessions delved into strategies and proposed actions. The breakout sessions featured activities such as introductions, one-on-one conversations, group discussions, prioritization (including dot-voting exercises), and cross-sectoral collaboration. Nonprofit sector workshops ran from 10:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. with lunch provided to participants, and public/private sector workshops ran from 9:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. (Please note that workshop summaries are available at ourcountyla.org/resources).

The structuring of the workshops played a significant role in ensuring equity would be brought to the forefront of the final recommendations elicited from the stakeholder engagement process. Each of the primary environmental topics chosen as workshop themes (water; energy; transportation; public health; landscapes and ecosystems; waste) featured breakout groups to identify equity implications (i.e., economic and workforce development, public health and air quality, and housing and land use). This ensured that the local impacts to historically impacted communities and vulnerable populations were given considerable attention with each topic.

The sixth and final Equity and Resilience workshop for nonprofits summarized the comments received at each of the previous five workshops related to housing, economic justice, public health, land use, and air quality. Each of these topic areas was considered independently of the environmental theme (e.g., water, energy, transportation, open space, and waste) to ensure that the cross-cutting analysis did not omit any further concerns stakeholders felt needed to be addressed.

Altogether, workshop facilitators and notetakers recorded nearly 6,000 individual comments which were subsequently synthesized to identify key takeaways.

Outreach and Attendance

For each workshop, the Stakeholder Engagement Team developed extensive outreach lists tailored to each workshop topic to effectively gather input from issue-specific organizations throughout the County. Liberty Hill created initial invite lists based on its grantee portfolio and community lists, while UCLA created invite lists based on its network of local partners, research and meetings with trusted regional conveners, and the expertise of the Los Angeles Regional Collaborative (LARC), which is housed within the California Center for Sustainable Communities at UCLA. Invite lists were then reviewed by the Chief Sustainability Office for any gaps. The County sent invitations via e-mail, where recipients were asked to RSVP via an Eventbrite link. Liberty Hill and UCLA reviewed RSVP lists, sent follow-up emails, and conducted calls to encourage attendance.

In total, nearly 600 unique individuals representing close to 300 organizations participated across the eleven workshops.

Workshops	Attendees	Organizations
Public & Private Sector		
Water	41	31
Energy & Climate	49	36
Transportation	71	54
Waste & Resource Management*	35	22
Public Health & Air Quality	45	35
Landscapes & Ecosystems	71	47
TOTAL (Unduplicated)	325	157
Nonprofit Sector		
Water	66	55
Energy	48	37
Transportation	55	42
Open Space, Recreation, Biodiversity & Habitat	65	50
Waste & Resource Management*	15	14
Equity & Resilience	70	51
TOTAL (Unduplicated)	264	135
All Sectors	589	292

*Joint workshop



Key Takeaways from Workshops

What Worked:

- Hundreds of organizations and regional leaders were engaged in a meaningful manner
- Equity implications were uplifted and made a primary focus, especially with the involvement of the CBO Anchors
- Extensive feedback was collected across an enormous range of sustainability topic areas
- Grants and stipends (see below) enabled active participation by many nonprofit and equity focused groups who may not have been able to participate as fully otherwise
- Creative workshop design contributed to intersectional policy discussions and recommendations
- Cross-sectoral workshops yielded examples of collaboration outside the planning process by organizations who interacted at workshops

What Was Less Strong:

- Participants lacked action items to take after completing workshops until months later
- Private sector engagement was limited, lacking participation from key industries such as healthcare and entertainment
- Limited time and resources did not allow for geographically diverse venues; events were exclusively held downtown
- The compressed timeframe posed some challenges. For example, while the workshop briefing documents were very informative and posed goals and strategies to stimulate and focus discussion, often there was insufficient lead time for nonprofits to thoroughly review in advance of the workshops.



Draft Review Sessions - April 2019

The Draft Review Sessions, led by UCLA and supported by Liberty Hill, BuroHappold, and the broader consultant team, brought together nonprofit, public, and private sector leaders from across the county to review and provide input on the Discussion Draft of the OurCounty Plan. The sessions were designed to reconvene stakeholders across all sectors who participated in earlier workshops or attended previous meetings, allowing organizations and communities who offered initial input to assess the Discussion Draft Plan and provide feedback.

Sessions Format

To maximize opportunities for attendance, two identical Draft Review Sessions were held on different days of the week and at different geographic locations. The first session was held April 24, 2019 at Metro Headquarters in Downtown Los Angeles; the second session occurred on April 30, 2019 at the Carson Community Center in the City of Carson. Each Draft Review Session ran from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and included a continental breakfast. Feedback was solicited throughout the session using facilitator notes, typed transcription, participant comments, and interactive digital polling.

Both Draft Review Sessions followed the same agenda format, with an introductory overview by Gary Gero, Chief Sustainability Officer, to present the Discussion Draft structure and content, including its equity definitions. UCLA shared a synopsis of the stakeholder engagement process and conducted polling for participants to visualize the regional diversity and topic area interests of attendees. The first breakout session featured several small groups and focused on strategies and actions throughout the Discussion Draft's first ten goals. The second breakout session shifted the conversation towards implementation, using strategies and actions within Goals 11 and 12 to spur feedback on best practices, potential partners, and ways participants themselves could put elements of the OurCounty Plan into action. During the break and throughout the session, attendees could review the Discussion Draft's targets and provide feedback on post-its or through digital polling.

In total, workshop facilitators and notetakers recorded nearly 1,200 individual comments, which were synthesized to identify key takeaways and recommendations.

Sessions Outreach and Attendance

UCLA developed an invite list primarily based on stakeholders from across all sectors who participated in the public/private or nonprofit workshop series. Outreach was conducted to public sector leaders who attended the Chief Sustainability Office's City Summit, organized internally by the CSO in April 2018, as well as stakeholders who had been in communication with the Stakeholder Engagement team throughout the planning process but were unable to attend a workshop.

Each invitee received one invitation which encouraged them to choose which of the two sessions best fit their schedule and needs. UCLA conducted follow-up outreach to invited stakeholders across all sectors with support from Liberty Hill Foundation.



Key Takeaways from Draft Review Sessions

What Worked:

- Generated extensive feedback on the Discussion Draft Plan to inform the final draft
- Pushed participants to see their role in the OurCounty Plan's implementation and uplifted actions that organizations plan to take to further this work
- Forged new opportunities for partnership by bringing leaders from all sectors together

What Was Less Strong:

- Participation numbers were lower than expected, possibly because organizations were encouraged to submit feedback through a variety of sources and/or directly to the CSO
- Those who participated were likely those already willing to support the Plan

In total, the Draft Review Sessions convened 155 stakeholders and leaders representing 115 organizations. According to online polling, participants' homes ranged widely in geography, from Santa Clarita to Long Beach to Santa Monica to Pomona. Attendees' workplaces are also geographically diverse, with large concentrations in Downtown LA, Mid-Wilshire, El Segundo and the South Bay sub-region. Other attendees work in places ranging from the San Fernando Valley to the Antelope Valley and throughout the San Gabriel Valley.



Our Voice Our County Expos - April-May 2019

To ensure that residents, local groups and youth from across the County had an opportunity to understand the Draft Plan and provide input to the final Plan, Liberty Hill Foundation and the LA County Chief Sustainability Office organized five “Our Voice, Our County” Expos with support from the Anchor CBOs.

Expos Format

Occurring on Saturdays throughout April and May 2019 in each Supervisorial District, Expos welcomed participation from residents of all ages and backgrounds. Participants were engaged through various educational activities, guided discussions, creative exercises, and other activities managed by partner organizations. The CBO Anchors each facilitated the discussion tables for the Expo within their respective district to directly engage their members and local residents. Some provided additional interactive exercises like a bean bag toss, puzzles, and building blocks to help constituents understand the policies and actions proposed in the Plan. This required each organization to invest several hours in training their staff on the sustainability topics and the discussion rubrics.

While each Expo was led by different facilitators and incorporated distinct educational activities, all of them were centered around consistent information about and feedback activities for the Discussion Draft Plan. Each Expo featured eight small group discussion tables, with each table focused on six thematically-linked actions from the Plan. Actions were selected for discussion based on their relevance to a grassroots, non-expert audience. Participants were asked to express which actions had the greatest importance and priority for them and their community through “dot voting” activities. Participants were also able to share their own feedback related to the Discussion Draft Plan through written comments and fill-in-the-blank prompts. Participants received raffle tickets for each discussion table they completed and were able to enter prize drawings for gift cards and products from local vendors, including donated Patagonia backpack gift sets and Clippers NBA tickets. Spanish language interpretation and child care services were offered at all the Expos to enable full participation by families, and complimentary refreshments were also offered to create a welcoming atmosphere.

In addition to the Plan engagement, the Expos featured tables with educational resources and giveaways by regional organizations and County Departments, such as native plant giveaways by County Fire Department and “MakMo” - an interactive van provided by LA County Library that encourages youth literacy. Several Expos also featured an Electric Vehicle “Ride and Drive” sponsored by Plug In America, giving participants the opportunity to test-drive a range of electric vehicles as well as sign up for incentive and rebate programs. Liberty Hill’s emPOWER program, offered in conjunction with several of the CBOs, provided participants with information on programs for utility rebates, home energy and water consumption incentives, and how to decrease their carbon footprint.



Expos Outreach and Attendance

The Our Voice, Our County Expos were promoted primarily by the CBOs through email outreach to their member and supporter lists and social media, and through English/Spanish flyer distribution at community meetings, high schools, neighborhood councils, and other events held in advance of the Expos. Two of the CBOs, SCOPE and Communities for a Better Environment, also conducted neighborhood canvassing—knocking on the doors of nearby residents to invite them to the upcoming Expos. Communities for a Better Environment also focused on marketing to youth and had the highest proportion of youth participants and the highest attendance overall.

All of the Supervisorial offices were asked to publicize the Expos to their constituents through email and newsletter outreach. Participants were able to RSVP through an Eventbrite link provided in the publicity materials, including reserving child care and/or an EV Ride and Drive.

In total, 361 participants were officially counted as participating in the five Expos through a sign-in process. Participants joined for anywhere from 30 minutes to the entire three-hour event. Some only visited one discussion table, while others weighed in at all eight tables. In addition, the CBOs provided a total of 81 staff, volunteers, and community leaders to help run the events. Together, 442 individuals were actively engaged in learning about the Draft Plan and providing feedback. Attendance figures are below:

Location	Staff & Volunteers	Signed-in Participants
April 20 th in Pasadena SD 5 with Day One (Armory Center for the Arts)	15	54
April 27 th in Van Nuys SD 3 with Pacoima Beautiful (Zev Yaroslavsky Family Support Center)	15	74
May 4 th in Commerce SD1 with East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice (Net Zero Plus-Electrical Training Institute)	12	55
May 11 th in Exposition Park SD2 with SCOPE (CA African-American Museum)	25	65
May 18 th in Wilmington SD4 with Communities for a Better Environment (LA Harbor College)	14	113
Total (unduplicated)	81	361



Our Voice Our County Expos Takeaways

What Worked:

- County residents were given an opportunity to provide direct feedback on contents of the Draft Plan across all five Supervisorial Districts through engaging and fun activities
- County residents were introduced to County agencies and nonprofits offering sustainability and other programs
- Community-based organizations were trusted to design and deliver events that would speak to their own membership and/or communities
- Community-based organizational staff and volunteers became very knowledgeable about the content of the Plan, creating an informed constituency for implementation

What Was Less Strong:

- Event turnout was less than expected, but on par with similar County agency stakeholder experience; possible reasons include small marketing budget, competing events, busy schedules, and lack of one galvanizing event
- Limited time and resources allowed for five events across a very large geographic area; areas such as the East San Gabriel Valley and Antelope Valley did not have events



Additional Stakeholder Outreach

The County Chief Sustainability Office conducted extensive stakeholder engagement in addition to the process organized by the stakeholder engagement consultant team. The CSO held dozens of meetings in which the OurCounty Plan was discussed and feedback was solicited. In addition, the County more formally convened stakeholders through two City Summits and a session for tribal governments and Indigenous communities.

KICK-OFF EVENT - NOVEMBER 2017

The CSO hosted a kick-off event on November 16, 2017 at the LA County Natural History Museum to mark the beginning of the development of the countywide sustainability plan. Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas and Chief Sustainability Officer Gary Gero kicked off the morning by pointing to past improvements in the region, such as air quality, and emphasizing an equitable approach to sustainability in developing and implementing the plan. UCLA Associate Vice Chancellor for Environment and Sustainability and leader of the Sustainable LA Grand Challenge, Mark Gold, was part of the programmatic portion of the morning. He spoke about his experiences developing other regional sustainability plans, lessons learned, and his vision for the county alongside other regional sustainability leaders, including Long Beach City Councilmember Rex Richardson and Veronica Flores, CEO of Community Health Councils.

CITY SUMMITS - APRIL 2018 & MAY 2019

The CSO conducted a City Summit on April 23, 2018 to announce the intent of the OurCounty Plan with the County's 88 cities and respective councils of governments (COGs) and to obtain preliminary feedback from them. After the release of the Discussion Draft, the CSO reconvened cities and COGs for a second City Summit on May 14, 2019. At this second City Summit, the CSO reviewed the Plan's content with respective city leaders, solicited high-level feedback, and engaged cities in discussions about potential next steps oriented towards Plan implementation.

TRIBAL & INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES FEEDBACK SESSION - MAY 2019

The CSO organized a focused listening and feedback session for tribal governments and Indigenous community groups in partnership with the Sacred Places Institute. The event occurred on May 13, 2019 at Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration in Downtown Los Angeles and convened fifteen leaders from seven tribes and Indigenous community groups around L.A. County.



Community Organization Grants and Stipends

The Stakeholder Engagement Team is aware of the fact that nonprofit and community-based groups are often asked to spend their precious staff time reviewing technical policy documents and providing feedback, often creating a strain for organizations that are typically under-staffed and under-resourced. Liberty Hill proposed a system of grants and participation stipends that, as a grantmaking foundation, it was well prepared to administer to enable grassroots and community-based groups to participate more fully and systematically.

CBO ANCHOR GRANTS

Grants were made to the five community-based organizations for this increased involvement in the workshops, as well as for their role in promoting, planning and facilitating the more grassroots-oriented “Our Voice, Our County Environmental Fairs & Expos” which took place in April and May 2019. The organizations who served as CBO Anchors were:

- District 1: East Yard Community for Environmental Justice
- District 2: Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education
- District 3: Pacoima Beautiful
- District 4: Communities for a Better Environment
- District 5: Day One

These organizations were each approved by their Supervisor’s Office, and all agreed to provide the following specific services related to the Stakeholder Engagement workshops:

- Review and provide comment for key documents, including Workshop Briefings, Workshop Summary Reports, Discussion Draft of OurCounty, and a Summary Report of the Expos
- Support at each of the workshops, including providing 2 staff members at each to assist with facilitation, notetaking, and logistics
- Promote, plan, and co-facilitate a Saturday “Our Voice, Our County Environmental Fair and Expo” in their assigned Supervisorial District, including providing 10-15 staff or volunteers on the day of the event

Each CBO Anchor received a total of \$20,000 for these services, granted in installments as each phase of work was completed.

PARTICIPATION STIPENDS

In addition to the CBO Anchor grants, the stakeholder engagement team agreed that participation stipends would enable more active and engaged involvement from additional nonprofit organizations that face staffing capacity challenges. Every nonprofit organization that attended a workshop was asked to complete an online survey to confirm their status as a 501(c)(3) organization (or a fiscal sponsorship) and provide answers to determine eligibility and stipend levels (Tier 1 or 2). Tier 1 stipends were set at \$700 per workshop attended, and Tier 2 at \$200 per workshop attended.



Tier 1 – Community-Based Organization Stipends:

These stipends were for organizations with a maximum budget of \$5 million, conducting a minimum of 75% of their work within LA County. Organizations must have additionally met all the following criteria:

- Policy work related to the workshop issue area
- Social justice as a primary lens, at the forefront of their policy advocacy
- History of collaborative work with other organizations
- Regular community organizing/capacity building activities

Tier 2 – Advocacy Incentive Stipends:

These stipends were for more mainline environmental policy and/or advocacy organizations with a maximum budget of \$15 million, with at least one staff person based in LA County. These organizations must have additionally met all the following criteria:

- Policy work related to the workshop issue area
- Consistent inclusion of equity issues in policy advocacy
- History of collaborative work with other organizations, including CBOs
- Not a foundation, academic/research institution, labor union, or government-controlled nonprofit

Some exceptions were made for qualifying Tier 2 organizations to receive the higher Tier 1 stipend rate, provided their budget was under \$5 million and they allowed underrepresented geographic or demographic populations to contribute to the discussion. In addition, Liberty Hill staff requested each eligible organization’s letter of tax-exempt status and checked GuideStar for the group’s most recent tax filing to verify budget size. Over the course of the six workshops conducted during summer and fall of 2018, 72 eligible nonprofit organizations received stipends totaling \$64,300.

PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT FOR EXPANDED PARTICIPATION

Our ability to provide participation stipends was greatly aided by the Partners for Places national philanthropic initiative. The Chief Sustainability Office applied for this competitive funding program, which also required a “local match” of funds. The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, California Community Foundation and the LA’n’Sync initiative of the California Community Foundation all contributed towards this local match, resulting in a total philanthropic commitment of \$175,000 to assist the stakeholder engagement process. The foundation partners were especially supportive of the effort to include underrepresented communities in the planning effort, and to highlight equity and inclusion throughout the OurCounty Plan.