

“Our Voice, Our County” Expo + Environmental Fair Summary Report

Supervisory District 3

Saturday, April 27th, 2019

Zev Yaroslavsky Family Support Center in Van Nuys

Partner Organizations: Pacoima Beautiful with Liberty Hill Foundation



Gary Gero, Chief Sustainability Officer, Veronica Padilla, Executive Director of Pacoima Beautiful, Supervisor Sheila Kuehl and Michele Prichard from Liberty Hill Foundation.



Introduction

OurCounty, the Los Angeles Countywide Sustainability Plan, is an effort to outline a bold, inclusive and regional vision for the present and future generations of Los Angeles. To ensure that residents, local groups and youth from across the County had an opportunity to interact with the Draft Plan and provide input, Liberty Hill Foundation and community-based organization anchors organized five “Our Voice, Our County Expos” with support from the LA County Chief Sustainability Office.

Supervisory District 3 Event Description

The second of five Expos was held in LA County’s 3rd Supervisory District at the Zev Yaroslavsky Family Support Center in Van Nuys, California. Pacoima Beautiful - a nonprofit organization that provides education, impacts public policy, and supports local arts and culture in order to promote health and sustainability across the San Fernando Valley – acted as the Expo’s primary partner. Leaders at Pacoima Beautiful trained 7 of their staff and community volunteers to serve as discussion leaders at each of the tables. Their volunteers also helped with event logistics. This event was held on the last weekend in April at the end of what many informally consider to be “Earth Week.”

Supervisor Sheila Kuehl addressed attendees with remarks about the region’s vital sustainability needs, the County’s commitment to addressing the disproportionate impacts faced by marginalized communities, and appreciation of everyone’s commitment to providing their input on the Plan. The Supervisor visited some of the discussion tables and displays and interacted with the participants. Veronica Padilla, Executive Director of Pacoima Beautiful provided a warm welcome and brief summary on the importance of the OurCounty Plan to San Fernando Valley residents. Andres Ramirez, Director of Policy for Pacoima Beautiful, served as emcee for the day, encouraging participants to rotate from one table to the next to provide their input. Gary Gero, Chief Sustainability Officer for LA County, also offered remarks to help set the tone for the morning, including an overview of the Plan and context for the activities.

Expos Overview

Occurring on Saturdays throughout April and May 2019 in each County Supervisory district, Expos welcomed participation from all ages and backgrounds. Participants were engaged through educational activities, guided discussions, and auxiliary activities managed by partner organizations. While each Expo was led by different facilitators from respective community-based organizations and incorporated different educational activities, all the Expos centered around a consistent set of feedback activities. All feedback activities focused on aspects of the Discussion Draft of the Plan, which was released on April 5, 2019.

Spanish language interpretation and child care were offered at all the Expos to enable full participation by families, and complimentary refreshments were also offered to create a welcoming atmosphere.

Throughout the course of the event, attendees circulated around 8 discussion tables. Each table focused on 6 actions from the Plan, grouped around a central theme that reflected one or two goals from the Plan. The actions were highlighted based on their relevance to a grassroots, non-expert audience. Participants were asked to express which actions had the greatest relevance and priority for them and their community through “dot voting” and “fill in the blank”-style activities. They were also asked to provide their own ideas of issues and recommendations the Plan should consider through comment cards and post-it notes. 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, as well as a donated Patagonia Backpack Gift Set and Clippers NBA tickets.



Community members and a Pacoima Beautiful facilitator engage in group discussion and dot voting.

In addition to the Plan engagement activities, the Expo offered resource tables provided by a number of County Departments, including the Department of Beaches and Harbors, Department of Public Social Services, and Department of Regional Planning, as well as County Fire Department who distributed free native plants and trees to participants. Nonprofit environmental education organizations also provided resource tables to educate participants on sustainability practices. The event also featured an Electric Vehicle “Ride and Drive” sponsored by Plug In America to educate participants on the health, cost and environmental benefits of EVs, and explain state and local incentive and rebate programs, while signing up interested applicants. Liberty Hill’s emPOWER program also tabled at each event and provided participants with information on the variety of incentive and rebate programs available from utilities, the State and other public entities to reduce home energy and water consumption, and decrease carbon footprint.

A photo exhibition at the event showcased work by high school students and local youth who collaborated with a UCLA Urban Planning graduate student to document sustainability in their neighborhoods through photos and short essays.



Key Takeaways

All of the Plan's actions received at least some votes, but some received far more votes than others. Actions relating to the County's own processes received the most votes, as well as actions around ending unhealthy and polluting practices that harm communities. Top vote-getting actions were:

- Ensuring the County's purchases support environmental & social responsibility
- Offering free transit for students, seniors, disabled & low-income people
- Phasing out oil drilling next to homes and schools
- Ending illegal dumping through better enforcement
- Creating Green Zones with healthy land use standards
- Planting of trees and native plants through community efforts
- Increasing opportunities for community groups and Native tribes to work with County

Attendee Demographics

Seventy-four attendees signed in and provided demographic information throughout the day. According to entrance polling, out of those polled, about half of all attendees were born outside of the U.S.; the other half were U.S.-born. Nearly 20% of all attendees were 18 years old or younger, providing a strong showing of young people participating in the process. Twenty-two percent of attendees were 65 years or older, while 44% were ages 35-64 and only 15% were ages 18-35. The vast majority of attendees identified as Latino/a, making up over 70% of polled attendees. Thirteen percent identified as White, with a small handful of people identifying as Black, Asian, Native, or other.

Sample Comments/Feedback Received

- Attendees expressed many concerns about pollution and the way it affects their communities. They want more regulations on emissions from vehicles and factories and want more trash clean-up
- Increasing housing affordability through rent control and a diversity of housing affordability options is very important to attendees. Some comments touched on the need for accessible and affordable vehicle parking coupled with housing
- Participants want to see homelessness addressed in the Plan
- Several people called for the County to include jails as a sensitive use that should not be placed near polluted sites
- There was support for more community gardening and urban agriculture education
- There were several comments regarding better access to healthy food through more farmers markets, more incentives for low-income customers to buy healthy food, and more healthy food at County facilities like hospitals

- Through the “Fill in the Blank” activity, participants shared visions around more accessible and sustainable mobility - through free transit, more electric buses, and more bike share programs- and highlighted the need for greater accessibility of parks and public spaces for people in wheelchairs.



Small group discussion led by a Pacoima Beautiful facilitator solicited resident recommendations.

Exit Survey

Through exit surveys, participants were asked a few questions to learn more about their interests and concerns relating to the LA County Sustainability Plan. When asked about their neighborhood’s biggest sustainability challenges, transportation/traffic congestion received the highest number of responses. Water quality/supply and access to parks/green space tied for the second most-pressing sustainability challenge for people’s local communities. Out of all the aspects of the Plan, people expressed the most willingness to reduce their plastic use and recycling waste/trash, followed by reducing their energy use. Only a few participants felt they would be willing to use more public transit or register for Community Emergency Response Training.

Overall, additional comments were mostly positive about the Plan’s breadth. Constructive feedback included wanting to see more concrete plans with budgets, more details about when County residents can expect actions to be implemented, and concerns about the urgent need to build more affordable housing and not wait until plans like this are passed before taking action.

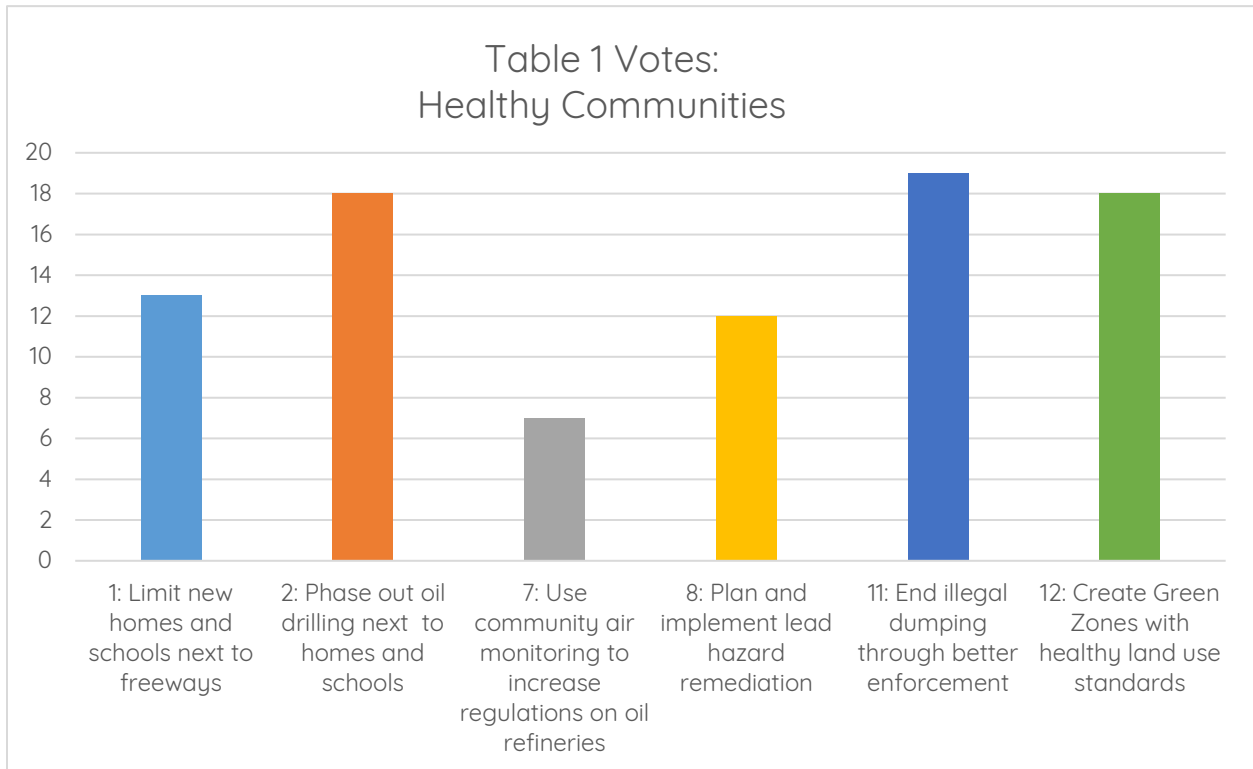


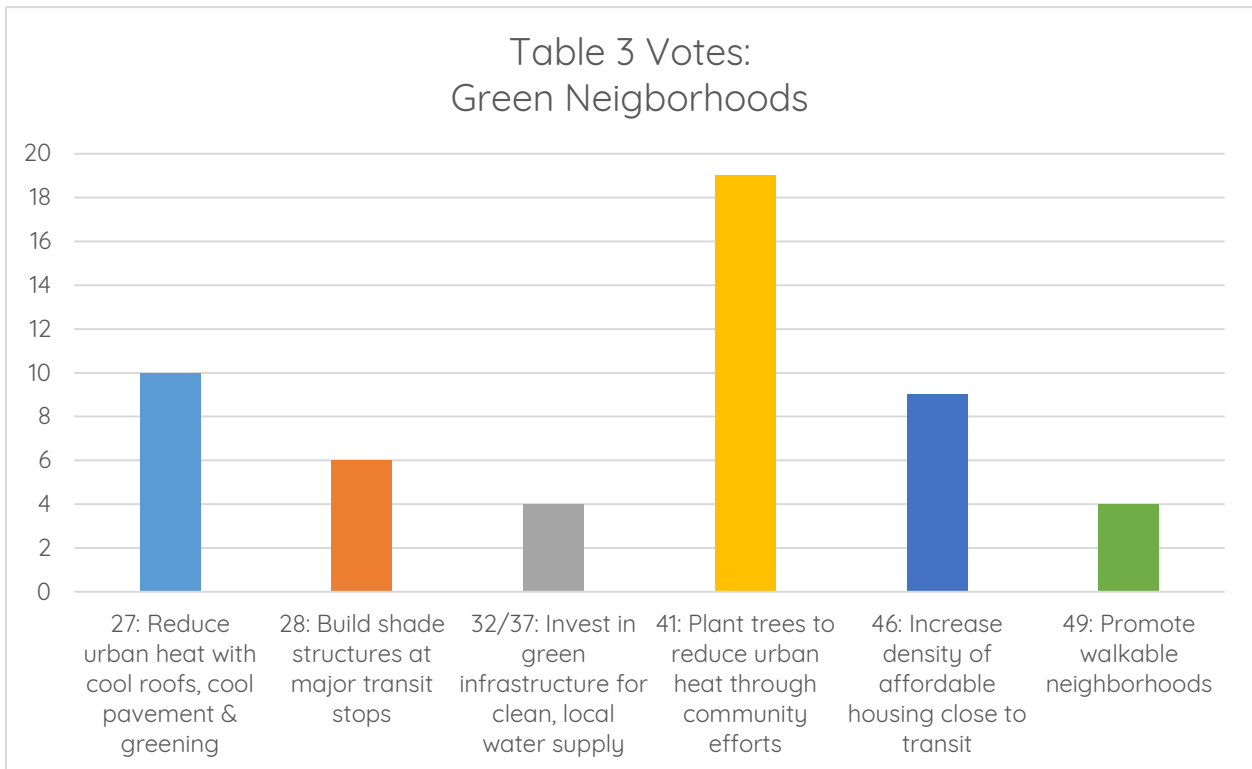
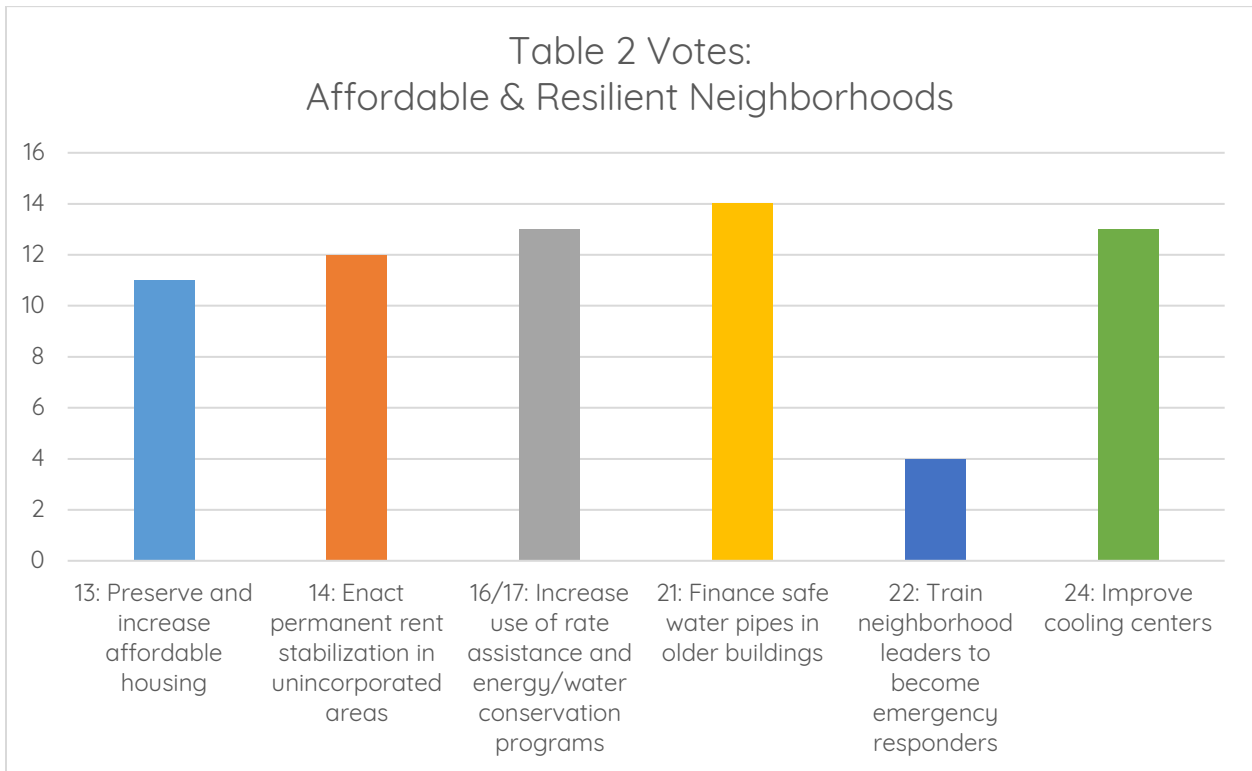
Insights/Lessons Learned

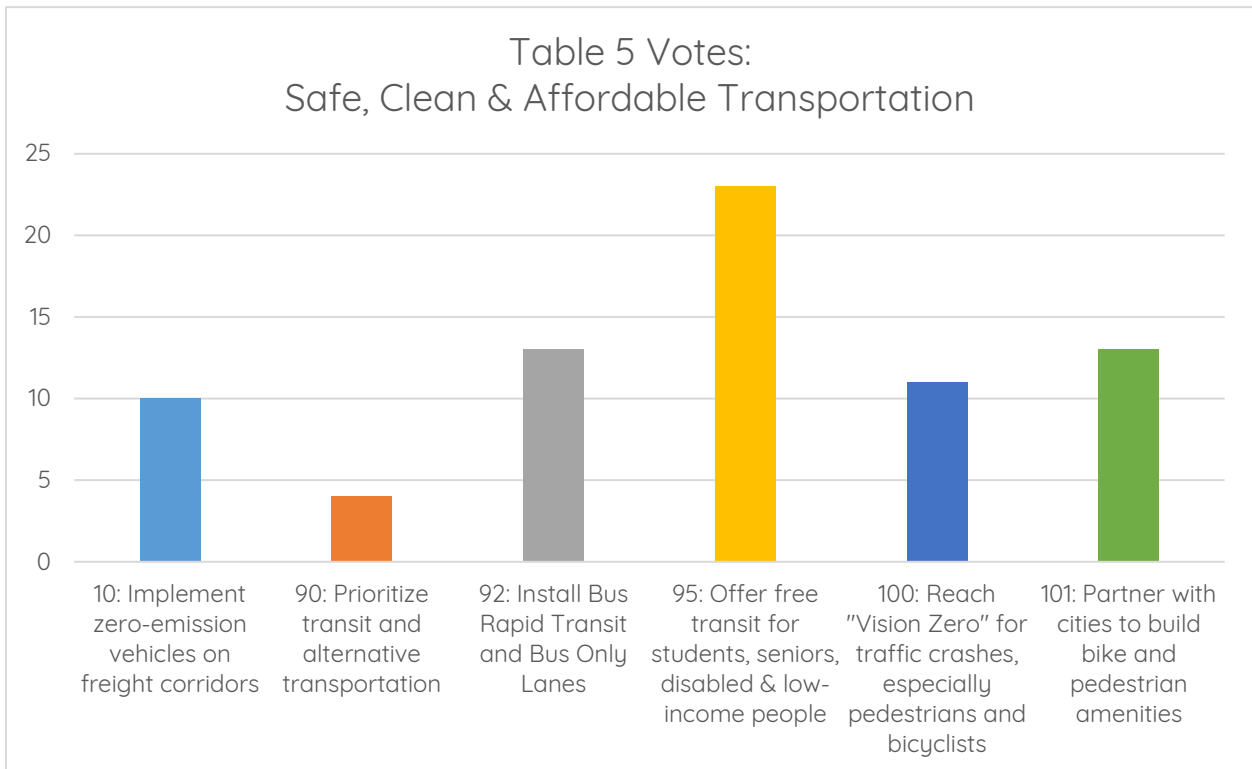
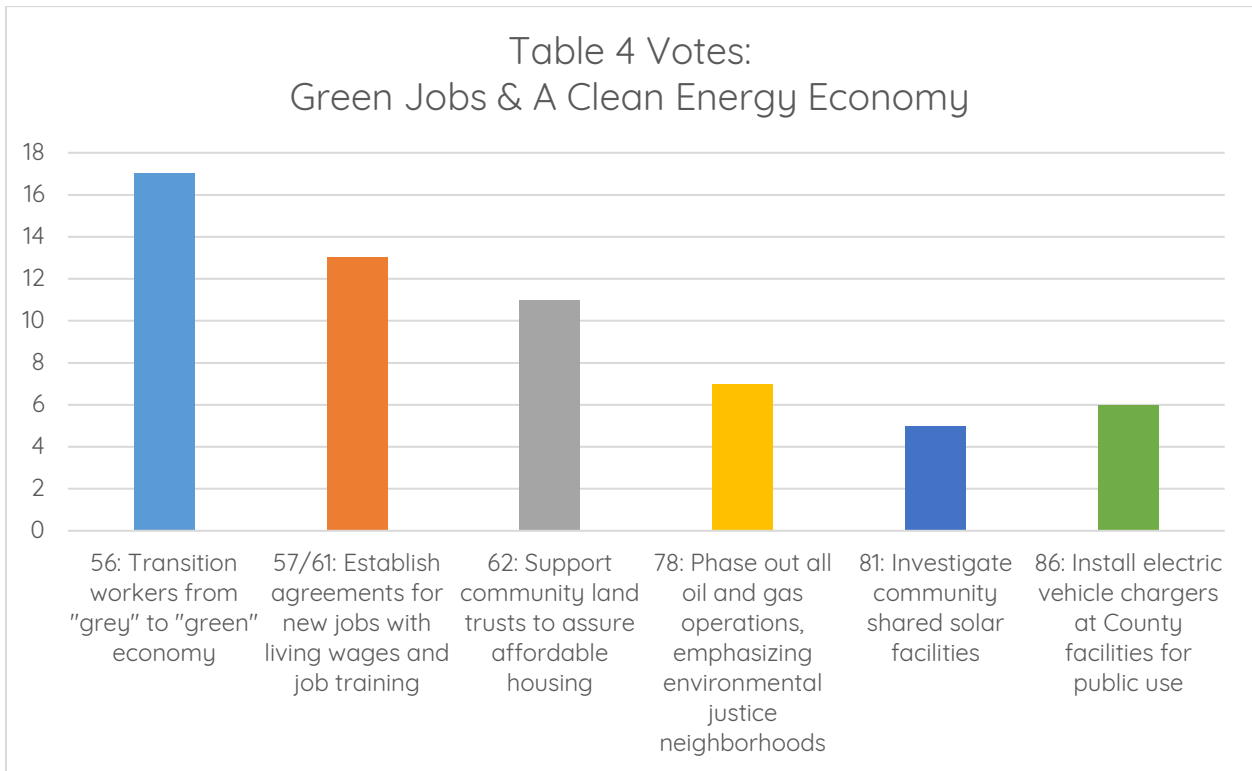
Pacoima Beautiful, the co-sponsoring local organization, noted that one of the important benefits of the Expo had been the opportunity to provide in-depth training to their staff team and community volunteers about the Plan in order to lead the Discussion tables and help run the event. They also noted that the diverse activities offered to provide feedback were helpful to keep participants engaged and energized through the process. The overview provided by the County Supervisor provided good context to why community voices matter.

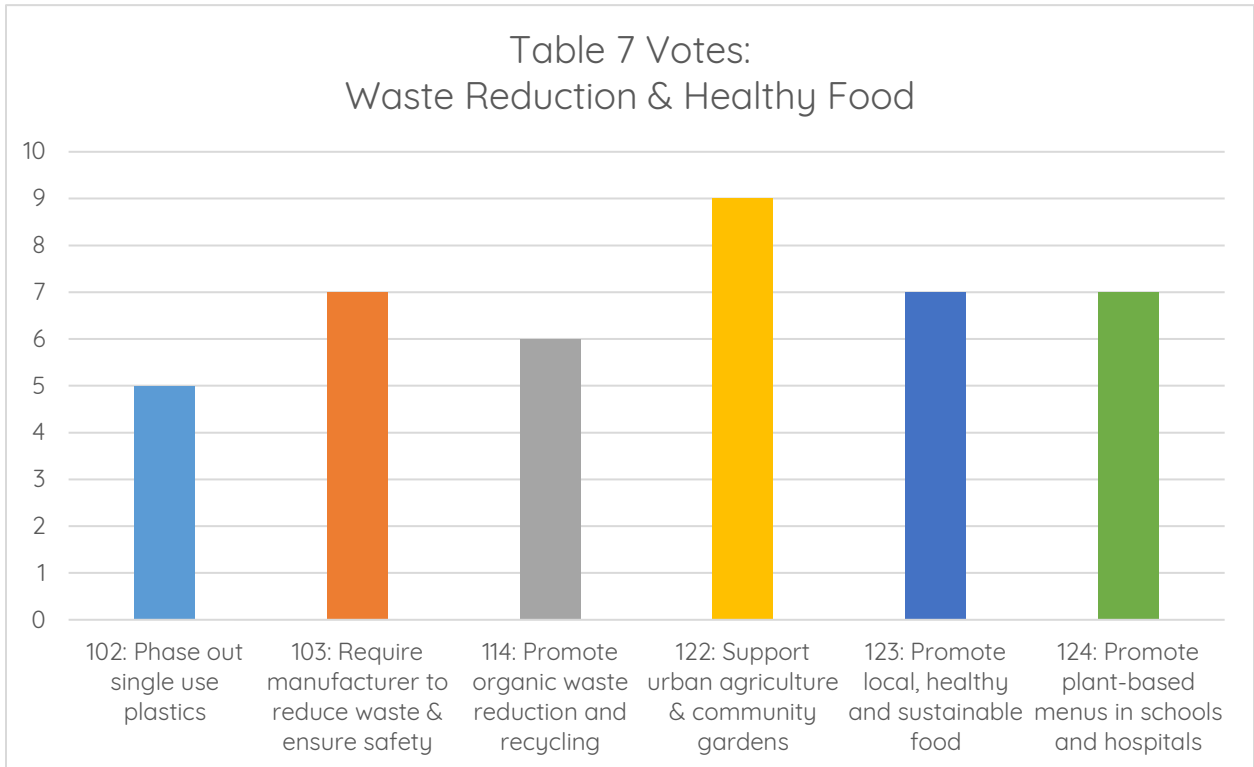
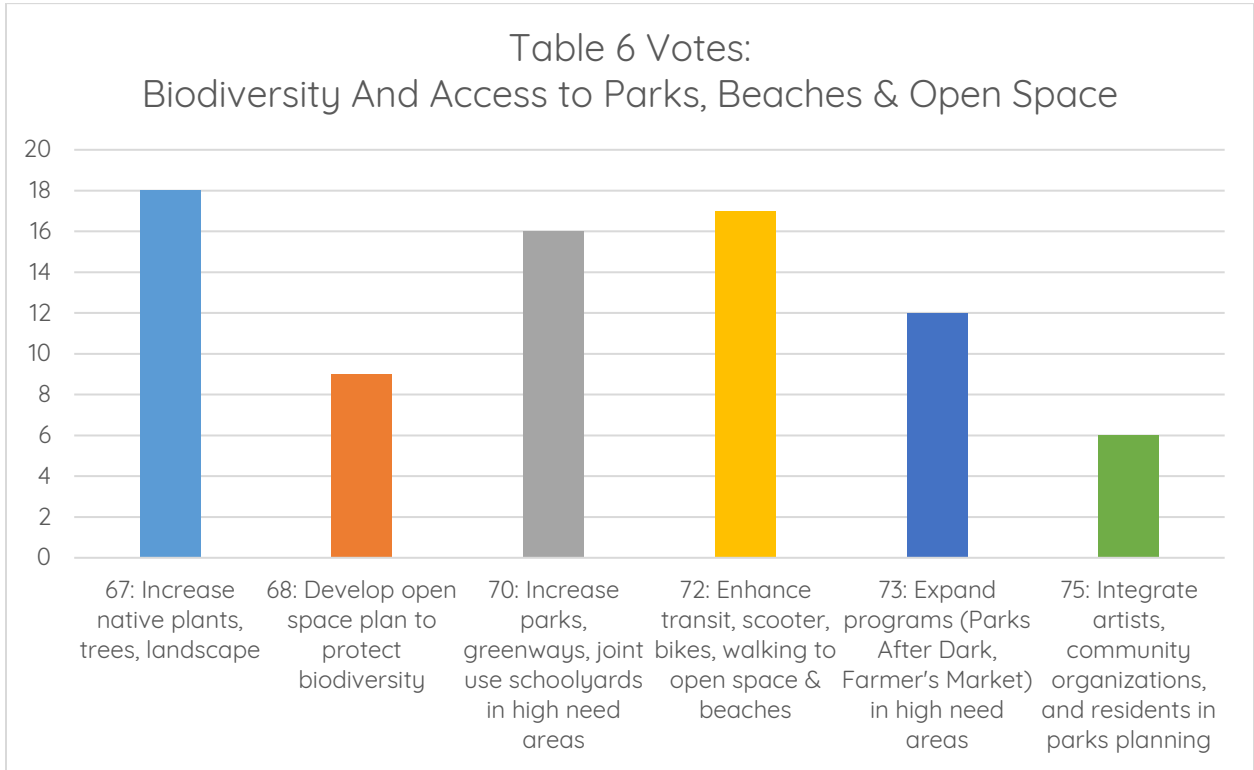
Appendix A: Our Voice Our County Supervisorial District 3

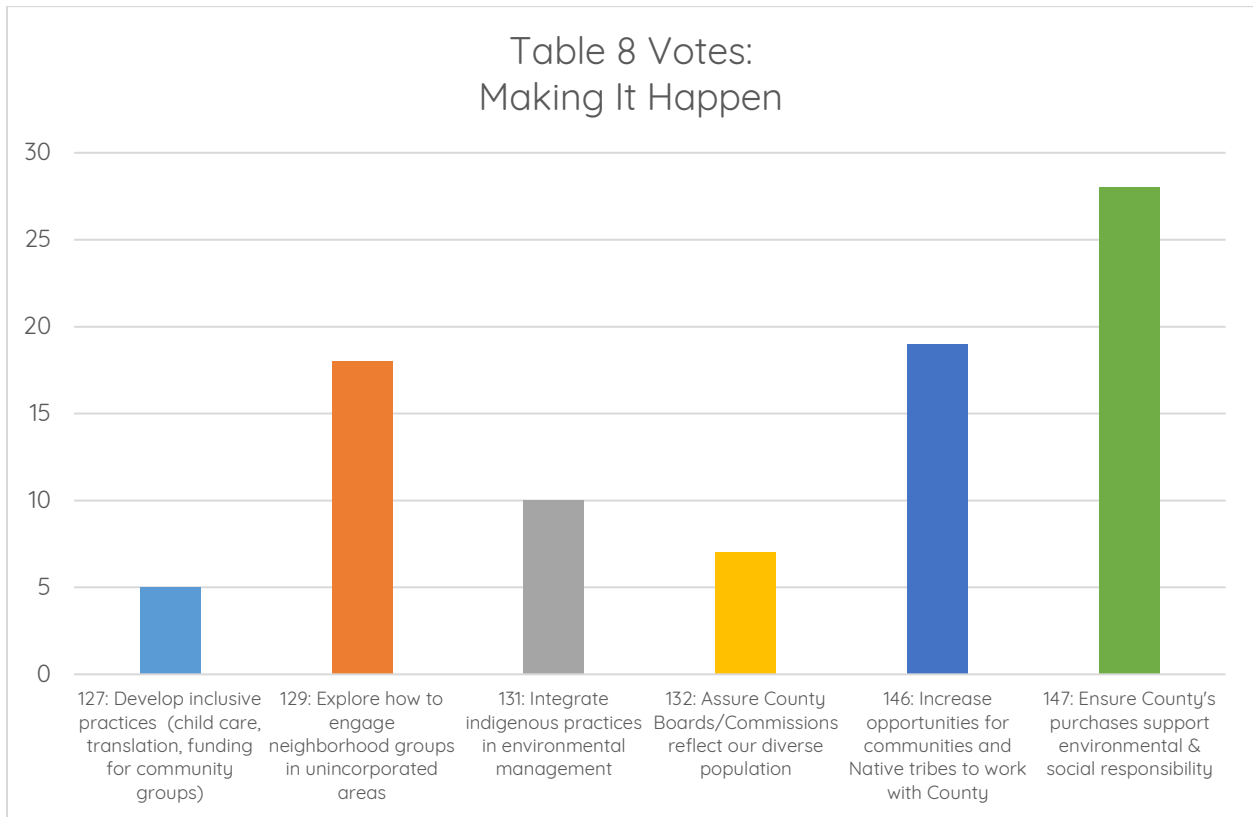
All Table Voting Results













Appendix B: “Have Your Say” Post-it Notes Feedback:

SELECTED COMMENTS

Below are just a few samples of “Have Your Say” comments that were offered most commonly by participants:

- Limpieza de basura y prevenir contaminación (Clean the trash and prevent pollution)
- Are there incentives for a multiple age-range of people (elders, youth) to be responders?
- Get rid of corrections facilities operating next to Superfund sites.
- Es muy importante un control de renta (Rent control is very important)
- Make resources highly accessible for those workers transitioning from “grey” to “green” economies and careers
- Focus on incentives for bicycling and community training for transportation use
- Free workshops on beehives, worm compost, community/urban gardening, etc.
- Apoyar a la agricultura urbana y jardines comunitarios (Support urban agriculture and community gardens)
- Implement policies to require manufacturers to reduce waste and ensure safety to hold them accountable
- La gente quieren comer sano en familia pero es demasiado caro comer saludable (People want to eat healthy with their family, but it is too expensive to eat healthy)



Appendix C: Organizations with Resource Tables at Our Voice, Our County Supervisory District 3 Expo

- County Regional Planning
- County Public Works
- County Library
- County Beaches & Harbors
- County Fire
- Metro
- Workforce Development, Aging, and Community Services
- Tree People
- emPOWER
- Pacoima Beautiful