



MEETING NOTES

LITHIUM VALLEY SPECIFIC PLAN

Date: May 24, 2023

Time: 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

Topic: Lithium Valley Environmental Justice Working Group Meeting #2

ATTENDEES

1. Jose Luis Olmedo, Comite Civico Del Valle
2. Daniela Flores, Equity and Justice Coalition
3. Luis Gomez, Columnist, Newsletter Lithium Valle
4. John Hernandez, Our Roots Multicultural Center
5. Isabel Solis, Los Amigos de la Comunidad
6. Eric Reyes, Los Amigos de la Comunidad
7. Hector Meza, IBEW Local 569
8. Sean-Keoni Ellis, UA Local 230
9. Diana Robinson, ICPDS
10. Jim Minnick, ICPDS
11. John Gay, ICPWD
12. Aida Castaneda, Falcon Strategies
13. Clarissa Falcon, Falcon Strategies
14. Brian Mooney, RICK Planning + Design
15. Shannon Baer, RICK Planning + Design
16. Sabrina Sessarego, RICK Planning + Design

MEETING NOTES

1. Lithium Valley Environmental Justice Working Group Meeting #2 – Baseline Report Presentation
 - Project Process and Scope
 - Baseline Report Review Process and Instructions
 - Breakout Groups – Document Review / Discussion Prompts
2. Environmental Justice (EJ) Principles
 - Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing – Southwest Network of Environmental and Economic Justice
 - Request for further research into the principles and statutes for EJ other than what has been regulated by State law, including policy justification and nexus.
 - Jemez Principles- <https://www.ejnet.org/ej/jemez.pdf>
 - No tokenism
 - Emphasis on grass-roots mobilization
 - Let people speak for themselves
 - Work together in solidarity
 - Building just relationships amongst ourselves
 - Commitment to self-transformation
 - AB617- <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/capp>
 - Participant interested in having EJ principles reflected in the County of Imperial General Plan Environmental Justice Element
 - Participant interested in having EJ principles reflected in the Lithium Valley Specific Plan
3. Accessibility of Outreach Plan



- Community-based organization (CBO) leaders warned they may be unable to complete their review until their separate contract is approved and underway to conduct outreach on the report.
- Consistent reporting to CBOs in support of ongoing advocacy and outreach efforts
- Document translation- Spanish translation should be considered for all documents moving forward.
- Should be considerate to how much time the community may need to review documents under our their current constraints.

4. Disadvantaged Community Barriers

During the break-out sessions of the meeting, participants expressed the following existing barriers for disadvantaged communities, which should be considerations when making land use and circulation decisions in the Plan Area:

- Major infrastructure and public service/utility deficiencies
 - How can federal/state grant funding be leveraged to fund infrastructure improvements?
 - Access to electric vehicle (EV) charging stations in the County
- Access and financial accessibility to quality healthcare (i.e. hospitals)
 - Incomplete array of healthcare services provided within the County
 - Current financial strain placed on hospitals due to necessary facility improvements
 - County should consider hosting overall health education workshops
- Lack of green spaces, parks and recreation areas
- There is a significant need to address the drug dependency
- Lack of access to technology, broadband, and education on technology, including communication and skills training to leverage it.
- Generational poverty
- Significant language barriers for a high portion of the population
- Lack of existing STEM careers in the valley
 - Difficult to retain STEM professionals due to non-competitive pay compared to other regions of the state
- Difficult to retain educational and administrative staff due to non-competitive pay
 - On average, Isabel Solis has about 400 8th graders, and about a third cannot promote because their GPA is lower than 2.0. (anecdotal)
- Consideration of federal government control and involvement in water transfers
 - Address how state legislation may impact our community in a negative way (i.e. taking water away from the County – farmers out of farming)

5. Baseline Report Disadvantaged Communities Map

- Participant expressed that there are data gaps in CalEnviroScreen and census data which drove the methods of analysis
- Update the map to show Palo Verde by moving map legend
- Participants requested additional consideration of Salton City, Niland and Calipatria in identification of disadvantaged communities due to high rates of poverty and pollution

6. Overall Transformative Vision for Imperial County

- Engage world class developers willing to invest into the betterment of the population, not just the renewable energy and lithium industry
- Workforce training and development



- Train and prepare the workforce for the introduction of industry employment opportunities
- Inform the community on how to apply for grant applications to take advantage of affordable career training/education opportunities
- Vocational programs and training to include a broader age range (younger population)
- Increasing financial literacy and entrepreneurial opportunities
- Consider County-wide affordable housing programs
 - Ex.) Niland Housing Initiative: Introducing a proposed affordable housing project in Niland that is going to be the first “Green” community in the Imperial Valley. This project will feature Clean Green Technology to reduce your electric bill through energy efficient building materials, self producing micro-grid electricity to power your home independent of the grid, streetlights and community park
 - Interest in increasing affordable, quality housing options in Niland and Calipatria
 - Education opportunities about housing procurement and investment strategies
 - Increase affordable housing opportunities and train people on how to apply for specific programs
- Community clean-ups

ACTION ITEMS

1. Download the pdf and provide comments in the PDF
2. Respond to discussion prompts
3. Send comments via email to Aida and cc County

NEXT MEETING

Land Use Alternatives EJ Working Group Meeting #3 - July 2023