

## SCAG April 2015 Environmental Justice Workshops Overview and Input Received

### Overview

SCAG held two public workshops on environmental justice on Wednesday, April 15, 2015 and Thursday, April 23, 2015. The purpose of the workshops was to provide information and receive input on environmental justice as part of the 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (2016 RTP/SCS) process and development. The April 15 workshop was held at Fairmount Park in the City of Riverside and the April 23 workshop was held at the downtown Los Angeles SCAG office with video-conferencing made available from SCAG's satellite offices and remote locations in Imperial County, Orange County, Riverside County, San Bernardino County, Ventura County, Palmdale and Torrance. Both workshops were held in the evening from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. to accommodate the schedules of a wider number of participants. A combined total of almost 80 participants attended the two workshops.

### Input/Comments Received

In order to maximize input opportunities, the agenda included two breakout sessions focused on four topics: (1) Air quality; (2) Parks and Open Space; (3) Transit, access and land use; and (4) Gentrification. Attendees were asked to choose a topic and provide input to a SCAG staff facilitator who transcribed input received on their respective topic onto a flipchart. To increase participation, the facilitator asked participants general questions related to the selected topic and then segued into the topic itself. After the first breakout session, participants were encouraged to select another topic and provide further input.

A wide range of comments were received. Below are some highlights from breakout session input, divided by topic. The full set of input received during the breakout session, transcribed verbatim, is attached to this summary report.

#### Air Quality

- 1) Serious health problems associated with air pollution include trouble breathing, asthma, and increased possibility of having a stroke.
- 2) Special attention should be placed on schools and low income families that are exposed to high levels of air pollution and emissions.
- 3) Public health is key in developing adequate mitigation measures for air quality issues.

#### Gentrification

- 1) Major concerns from gentrification include increased cost of housing and rent.
- 2) Gentrification not only causes displacement of existing residents, but also local businesses.
- 3) A strategy to tackle/address gentrification is by providing more subsidized and affordable housing, and educating the public about the benefits of affordable housing.
- 4) Others feel that SCAG should not do anything to address the effects of gentrification and let the market dictate what happens to these communities.

#### Parks and Open Space

- 1) Safety issues should be considered as a factor that influences access to parks.
- 2) There are many great open spaces in different areas, but access can prove challenging for lower income persons. However, there are smaller parks they can access.
- 3) Open space is not necessarily readily accessible to the community.

#### Transit, Access, and Land Use

- 1) Job density should be increased near transit stations.
- 2) Low-income communities have a large share of traffic-related fatalities involving pedestrians and bicycles.
- 3) School bus access should be a factor considered in the environmental justice analysis.
- 4) There should be increased connectivity for transfers across all transit operators.
- 5) There should be a better relationship between the locations of jobs and where people live, particularly for those with long distances to travel.
- 6) Farmworkers should be a category to consider for environmental justice analysis.

Concerns also varied by geography. For example, participants at the Imperial County videoconference location indicated that Ports of Entry were a concern, while those participating from the Inland Empire areas shared concerns regarding access to transit, parks, and food. Many participants at the Los Angeles location provided input on gentrification relating to infill development and rent control.

SCAG staff also distributed surveys to solicit input on additional environmental justice factors that SCAG staff will consider in its RTP/SCS analysis. SCAG staff encouraged participants to submit the survey during or after the workshop, with comments due by May 22, 2015.

#### Next Steps

SCAG staff has reviewed input received from the breakout sessions along with the five environmental justice factor surveys received, and will continue to develop the 2016-2040 RTP/SCS in consideration of these comments. SCAG plans to hold two additional workshops in summer 2015 and winter 2016 to provide stakeholders updates on the environmental justice process and analysis and solicit further input. SCAG staff also intends to inform SCAG's Regional Council and Policy Committees regarding the key aspects of the environmental justice analysis for the 2016 RTP/SCS in the fall of 2015.

2015 Environmental Justice Workshops  
 Summary of Breakout Group Public Input  
 April 15 and April 23, 2015

As part of the April 15 and April 23, 2015 Environmental Justice workshops conducted as part of the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)' development of its 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (2016 RTP/SCS), participants were asked to select one of four topics concerning environmental justice and provide their input in a small group breakout format. There were a total of two breakout sessions of 20 minutes each for each workshop. The four topics were: Air Quality; Gentrification; Transit, Access and Land Use; and Parks and Open Space. The table below is input received during the breakout input sessions, transcribed verbatim.

Disclaimer: The comments and viewpoints expressed below are solely those of the workshop participants and do not necessarily represent the views of Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) or any specific government agency.

<b>April 15, 2015 – Riverside Workshop</b>	
<p>- <b><u>Air Quality</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How can we minimize the effects of air pollution on communities that live close to freeways and railways?           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify areas such as schools and focus on truck and emission concentrations on time of day (school drop off/pick up)</li> <li>▪ Trouble breathing               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asthma, Stroke</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Issue?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too many train/trucks concentration</li> <li>• Wind blowing/transfer</li> <li>• Long distance driving contributes to air pollution</li> <li>• Too many warehouses and trucks moving in and out</li> <li>• Too many freeways and refineries</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Solutions? Mitigation?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land use adjustment</li> <li>• Plant trees/ more landscaping</li> <li>• Exercise</li> <li>• More compact development</li> <li>• Public health is key</li> <li>• Zero emission technology</li> <li>• Involve Health Effect Institute, Air Districts, ARB</li> <li>• More research</li> <li>• More investment in technology and new clean diesel engines, clean cars</li> <li>• Roadway improvements</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Immediate solution: provide for poor people who cannot afford               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidelines for addressing poor air in long term land use planning</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Comments?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't like toll lanes or VMT fees</li> <li>• Close border</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>- <b><u>Gentrification</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Major concerns about effects of gentrification:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase cost of housing</li> <li>▪ Increase rents</li> <li>▪ Impact to the elderly – moving in may be difficult</li> <li>▪ May not be that evident in certain areas at this time – like Riverside County</li> <li>▪ Increased cost of taxes</li> <li>▪ Impact to children</li> <li>▪ Displacement of existing residents</li> <li>▪ Impact to local businesses -&gt; displacement/track data</li> <li>▪ Need carpool and toll lanes to be free</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Strategies:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Subsidized housing               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue: stigma of affordable housing</li> <li>• Need affordable housing close to jobs, need more senior housing</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Do nothing – let market address situation</li> <li>▪ Rent control</li> <li>▪ Gather more data/better data               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also disaggregate data to better understand</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Parking strategies</li> <li>▪ Zoning</li> <li>▪ Minimum standards for amenities/infrastructure when building housing – don't build new communities with no amenities; make people not want to live there which defeats the purpose</li> <li>▪ Positive message – competitiveness</li> <li>▪ Conduct health impact assessment (HIA) before development</li> <li>▪ Understand difference between displacement and gentrification               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “no net loss”</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p>- <b><u>Transit, Access, and Land Use</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Increase public awareness – seniors (Sun Lakes)</li> <li>○ Impact of toll lanes/carpool lane comparison</li> <li>○ VMT fee</li> <li>○ Cost/benefit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Total transportation cost burden (subregion)</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Traffic fatalities of pedestrians and cyclists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Low income communities</li> <li>▪ Vision zero</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ School bus access</li> <li>○ Transit access by operator, particularly in rural areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Safe routes to destinations</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Transit connectivity across operators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Destinations</li> <li>▪ Headways/frequency</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Job density <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Connecting to jobs and housing</li> <li>▪ Long distances</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Transit information</li> <li>○ Farmworkers (Sunline)</li> </ul>	<p>- <b><u>Parks and Open Space</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Who will pay for parks and open space?</li> <li>○ Difficulty in travelling to parks</li> <li>○ Should a separate analysis be conducted for disadvantaged groups?</li> <li>○ Good stewardship of parks is needed</li> <li>○ Park safety is important</li> <li>○ Smaller parks</li> <li>○ High desert areas are deficient</li> <li>○ Multiple access points are needed</li> <li>○ Usable vs. non-usable open space</li> <li>○ Grow Riverside initiative: access to open space, food, and farmers markets</li> <li>○ Replicability of best practices</li> <li>○ Subregional deficiencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community of Wildomar</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Land use policy</li> <li>▪ Classification of agricultural land as open space</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Funding supplement of property tax</li> <li>○ Rural vs suburban in the Inland Empire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Eastern Coachella valley is deficient</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Link to community gardens</li> <li>○ Land use policies in agricultural communities results in food deserts</li> <li>○ Encourage city programs to involve local populations</li> <li>○ Parks should serve as the center of the community</li> </ul>
---	--

**April 23, 2015 – Los Angeles Workshop**

- **Air Quality**

- Safety concerns: access to parks/open space and need for access to parks and complete streets where it is safe and AQ isn't an issue.
- Identify more adversely impacted populations within EJ
- Difficult to find affordable housing in healthy areas
- AQ issues – focused studies on areas like South LA where there are many challenges (limited access to parks/active transportation = health issues)
- OTTP – Occupational Therapy Training Program (USC study – S. LA Latino Lifestyle Redesign)
- Elderly – issues with maintaining physical health, lack of walking paths
  - Aging in place – need access to parks, bike lanes and other amenities accessible via ATP/transit
- Educate state and federal officials about economic benefits of efficient freight and transportation (use clear visuals and easy to understand materials)
- Educate officials about benefits of electrified rail/reduction of diesel
- Lack of jurisdiction over mobile freight sources (e.g., ships, interstate commerce modes like trains)
- Channel development away from freeways
- Focus on border air quality
  - Border wait times very long
  - Childhood health – increased asthma cases, students in schools near border are at higher risk of getting sick
- Agricultural burning – causing more problems
- Issues from Imperial County
  - Port of Entry – expansion project
  - New River – emissions
  - Feed lot – dust problems
  - Fireworks (allowed)
  - Grade of gasoline
  - Pave dirt roads
  - Smog Vehicle Odd & Even Years
- Retrofitting programs for land lords
- Focus on residential properties near freeways
- Urban forestry programs

- **Transit, Access, and Land Use**

- Lack of convenience
  - Schedules
  - (In)frequency of transit
- Poor quality particularly in outer counties and offpeak/holidays

- **Gentrification**

- Look at specific areas that are affected by gentrification and displacement
- Homeless issue
  - MacArthur Park Area – good example of addressing homelessness and affordable housing
- Rent control – way to stop gentrification
- Don't condemn gentrification
  - Displacement is the issue, not gentrification
- Address tenant rights issues
- Strategy: Land use policy - no rezoning if not attached to transit and contribute to affordable housing
- Combine cost of housing and gentrification
- Address Vacancy Decontrol (once someone with rent control moves out, don't allow rent to go up)
- Address pedestrian safety in low income communities
- Issue: don't push low income and people of color out because area will lose transit riders
- City vs. Regional issue:
  - Changing commute patterns by providing/limiting jobs and housing due to gentrification
    - Example: Expo line can change commute pattern in Santa Monica – need to improve housing problem
- Consider first mile/last mile strategies
- Need more data on impacts on rent around transit stations
  - Focus on zero vehicle households
- Set higher goals for housing production
- Transit needs to be more affordable too, not just housing
- Think of gentrification as a business plan: buy out not profitable businesses?
- Imperial County concerns:
  - Port of Entry
    - Crossing access
    - Jobs/economy
- Where do “pushed communities” go?
- What happens to “pushed communities” new neighborhoods?
- Increasing affordable incentives
- Provide workforce educational opportunities
- Active transportation benefits from gentrification of existing neighborhoods
  - More walkable
- Create either funds or other vehicles to fight displacement, especially around transit (either existing, or in-construction or proposed) **[comment received via email]**

- **Parks and Open Space**

- Investment in safer routes (bike lanes, etc.) and public health funding
  - Multiple agencies
- Improve linkages
  - Rail to trails

- Bus rapid transit (BRT) lines
- Los Angeles has a good bus system
- Not competitive with other modes
- Politicians should attend these meetings
- Safety for walking and biking
  - Lighting
  - Safety
  - Bike parking
- Needs system-wide planning versus ad hoc
- Bus stops are in poor condition
- Use technology to assist transit riders
  - Cell phone data is helpful
  - Smart phone apps
  - Bus marquee/reader boards
- Outreach to transit riders and potential riders
  - Include non-English speakers
- Can't bike at night
- Need better standards and amenities
  - More bike racks on buses
  - Increase bike access and secure bike parking
  - Add/improve pedestrian crossings
- Prioritize low income and minority areas for improvements
  - Zero vehicle or one vehicle areas
- Fix sidewalks
- Increase job densities near transit
- Developers should help disadvantaged communities
  - Base floor to area ratios (FAR) with affordable housing
- Oppose toll lanes
  - Do toll lanes/vehicle miles traveled (VMT) fees discriminate against low income and minority groups?
- More funding needed for projects is reason for toll lanes and VMT fees
- No representation of the people by board members
- Lack of accountability
- No transparency
- Too much money is spent on the 405 freeway
- Politically induced decrepitude
- How does SCAG use EJ analysis to identify transit needs, especially for disadvantaged communities?
- Has SCAG looked at its transportation plan?
- Investigate 5875 Mission Boulevard as a toxic site
  - Look into affordable housing at this site
- Why do only 5% of workers use public transportation?
- Citizens should conduct the largest part of the analysis
- Use promoters to engage the public
- Disband SCAG and SANBAG
- Outreach to community groups
  - Attend community group meetings (such as Rotary, Lions Club, Kiwanis etc.)
- Compressed Natural Gas
  - Transit zero emission
- Transportation
  - Private Business
  - Incentives to promote other Public/Private Transit Options

- Huntington Park rail corridor project funding
- Livable corridor strategy
- Parks are inaccessible for biking and walking
  - Sidewalks
  - Transit routes
- Evaluate current park usage and re-evaluate land uses
- Evaluate opportunities at government owned spaces (e.g. flood control) for passive use
  - Trails in infiltration basins
- Assess the differentiation between local parks and natural areas
  - Deficit for each
- Homeless encampments in Sun Valley and Arroyo Seco
  - Safety issues
  - Needs of different user groups
  - Gather information and communicate to partners (such as county transportation commissions (CTCs) who have active roles
- SCAG should provide data about safety factors
- Evaluate accessibility of
  - Los Angeles River
  - Mountain trails
  - Beaches
- There needs to be public awareness of parks and transit to parks
- Understand the problem to provide a solution
- Park fees should be used appropriately
  - Equitable share of fees across cities
- Maintenance of park safety
- Culturally conscious park space
- New River
  - Environmental
- Colorado River
  - Chemical Dumping
  - Water not filtered
  - Raw Sewage
  - Selenium
- Tree Planting

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Public Transit<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Operating and imposing private business operation</li></ul></li><li>○ What is needed<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Improved convenience</li><li>▪ Better long term planning</li><li>▪ Focus on communities in need</li><li>▪ Priorities</li><li>▪ Look at other regions/cities for best practices in transit planning</li><li>▪ Land use zoning that is compatible with transit growth</li><li>▪ Connectivity</li></ul></li></ul> |  |
|--|--|