

## City of Oceanside Public Outreach Summary

Over the last several months, the City of Oceanside has offered numerous opportunities for residents, business owners, visitors, and community leaders to provide input regarding the Climate Action Plan and Energy/Climate Action Element (E-CAP) and the Economic Development Element (EDE). Various methods for gathering input included stakeholder interviews, pop-up outreach events, public workshops, roundtable discussions, and internet questionnaires.

Throughout the public outreach efforts, stakeholders identified that the City's continued growth, community character and diversity, coastal location (pier, beach, harbor), availability of land, local businesses, and quality of life were the City's key assets that should be leveraged to promote both economic and environmental sustainability. Stakeholders opined that the local economy would benefit from more housing options, "destination" and experience-oriented retail uses, visual enhancement of urbanized areas, and further leveraging of the City's coastal location and ideal weather to grow the hospitality sector. These crossover themes reveal opportunities for policies that have the dual goal/function of promoting the growth and diversification of the local economy while reducing communitywide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The following themes have been most frequently voiced by stakeholders.

### Major E-CAP Themes



### Climate Change Impacts

Many of those who responded to the E-CAP internet questionnaire and who attended the E-CAP workshop indicated that they are very familiar with the concept of climate change, its causes, and effects (approximately 76% of questionnaire respondents). They expressed a deep sense of urgency regarding the need to act now to address climate change. Most respondents said that it is extremely important for the City to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in an effort to curb climate change (approximately 77% of questionnaire respondents) and that the City should attempt to reduce emissions as much as possible (approximately 70% of questionnaire respondents). Community members are very concerned about the effects of climate change, particularly in regards to drought conditions, sea level rise and associated coastal hazards, impacts to habitats and wildlife, and increased frequency of wildfires. A few respondents to the

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internet questionnaire also indicated that they believe climate change will result in a devastating collapse of the human population, potentially leading to extinction.

Lack of water resources due to drought conditions is a recurring concern. To address this issue, community members have recommended encouraging the use of drought tolerant landscaping, using reclaimed/recycled water, desalinating seawater, limiting future development, and continuing to inform individuals and businesses of the economic benefits of water conservation efforts.

A significant topic of discussion was Oceanside's vulnerability to sea level rise. Workshop attendees questioned if a sea level rise analysis was being conducted and what would be done to protect high-end beachfront homes. There was a concern regarding whether taxpayers would be required to pay for protection efforts. Some attendees also expressed concern about the impact that seawalls have on the natural ability of beaches to be replenished with sand. A desire to utilize nature-based adaptation measures for protecting coastal resources was brought up through stakeholder interviews as well as at the public workshop.

Protecting wildlife and their habitats (both land and water) from the effects of climate change is an important consideration for community members. Not only are such efforts crucial for preserving biodiversity, but Oceanside's natural resources also contribute to the quality of life within the community.

Through the questionnaire, it was apparent that wildfire is perceived as one of the bigger impacts of climate change in Oceanside. At the E-CAP workshop, a concern was raised regarding how dry the San Luis Rey River gets and how it had previously caught on fire. It was questioned whether the river could be restored and revegetated.

Despite the overwhelming support for a Climate Action Plan, it is noted that a few respondents to the internet questionnaire indicated that they believe climate change is not caused by human activity and that the earth goes through natural changes that are out of our control. There are also those who expressed the belief that it does not matter what Oceanside does because its actions will not have a big enough impact on the rest of California or the world. Others recognize that local climate action builds upon broader regional, state, national, and international efforts to reduce GHG emissions.

### Environmental Sustainability

The input received through the various outreach efforts indicates that community members would like Oceanside to be recognized as an environmentally sustainable community. Approximately 78% of respondents to the E-CAP internet questionnaire are optimistic that the City can both reduce greenhouse gas emissions and grow the local economy. Many respondents have already implemented changes to improve the sustainability/efficiency of their home and/or place of business, such as making energy efficient upgrades, implementing water conservation measures, and becoming less

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reliant on single-occupancy vehicles. Some have indicated that climate change was not the driving factor in making such changes – living this way is simply healthier and, in many cases, more affordable.

One of the most frequent comments that arose was the desire for the City to set a goal of reaching 100% clean energy and to establish a Community Choice Energy (CCE) program. CCE allows cities and counties to purchase renewable energy for residents and businesses in their area. SDG&E would partner with the CCE to deliver that energy through the existing transmission and distribution system. Those within a CCE service area may choose to opt out of the program and continue to utilize SDG&E as their energy provider.

Other popular suggestions among community members for improving the environmental sustainability of Oceanside and reducing greenhouse gases include:

- Increasing the urban forest by planting as many trees as possible, especially those that are native, drought tolerant, and provide shade.
- Encouraging green building through density bonuses, rebates, and expedited permit processing.
- Providing financing options to help homeowners and/or businesses to install solar panels and/or solar hot water heaters.
- Offering tax breaks/incentives for implementing “green” projects.
- Newer, energy efficient alternatives for street lights (e.g. better technology than LED).
- Converting the City’s municipal fleet to zero or low emission vehicles.
- Installing solar panels on City buildings and facilities.
- Constructing new residential development to allow for easy implementation of gray water systems that allow wastewater from sinks, showers, and washing machines to be reused for irrigation purposes.
- Requiring water conservation and drought tolerant landscaping.
- Implementing rainwater collection systems.
- Expanding recycled water infrastructure.
- Banning single-use plastic bags.
- Permitting food scraps to be placed in compost bins and providing composting services for residences, businesses, and schools.
- Furthering zero waste efforts.
- Implementing a City purchasing policy that favors the use of recycled content and reusable products as well as other environmentally preferable products and services.
- Promoting electric vehicle use and setting up solar charging stations through the City by:
  - Requiring charging stations as part of building permit/review for new residences or commercial development.
  - Requiring installation of charging stations as a condition of business license renewals.
  - Requiring pre-wiring garages for future installation.

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- Pursuing storage options for renewable energy.
- Studying opportunities to generate renewable energy on Camp Pendleton.
- Improving public transportation and enhancing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to encourage active transportation modes.

### Smart Growth

Smart growth was one of the recurrent themes that emerged through the public outreach efforts. Community members recognize the link between land use patterns and greenhouse gas emissions. Some are concerned about the recent rezonings of land to permit residential development. Community members want to prevent land use changes that contribute to sprawl. The preference is to promote infill development and redevelopment with a focus on transit-oriented and mixed-use development. Business owners have also expressed the need for high quality townhomes and single family housing near employment centers. There is a strong desire to preserve peripheral open space and agricultural land and focus on the revitalization of Coast Highway and Oceanside Boulevard consistent with the vision plans prepared for those corridors. One of the messages that appeared often was the need for “complete” neighborhoods that provide a complementary mix of land uses that allow more people the option of walking, bicycling, or riding public transit. An essential component of a “complete” neighborhood is the provision of parks, open space, and other recreational features within urban areas. There is a sense that Oceanside is currently lacking such amenities and that developers should be required to provide open space. Parks and open space are perceived as important quality of life components. Many community members brought up the need to address public health issues and drew connections between smart growth principles and healthy lifestyles.

One of the biggest challenges to promoting public transit use is how inconvenient it currently is to use. Several people commented that there is a need to provide more frequent service, expand routes/improve connectivity, upgrade transit facilities, and address the difficulties associated with walking long distances to transit stops as well as final destinations after using transit services. Many community members acknowledged that such issues are the responsibility of North County Transit District (NCTD) and not the City, but believe that the City can play a role in encouraging a regional approach to improving public transportation as well as take some local actions that could help encourage the use of transit. For example, it was suggested that the City could look into providing local shuttle service, encourage the use of private transportation services (e.g. go go grandparent), and implement parking strategies that limit free parking, thereby encouraging people to utilize other modes of transportation.

In addition to the overall desire to stop authorizing new housing that is located far from services and public transit, it was noted that there are some community members who have expressed a desire to limit housing altogether. There is a perception that preventing additional housing construction will encourage the rehabilitation of homes in older neighborhoods and will reduce resource consumption and vehicle miles traveled. A few respondents to the internet questionnaire expressed opposition to high

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density housing projects and believe that less housing will result in more opportunities to provide parks and open space resources.

### Agriculture

Community members are very concerned about preserving Oceanside's agricultural land and promoting local food supplies. South Morro Hills often came up as one of Oceanside's greatest assets and there is a strong desire to conserve that land for agricultural purposes. There are increasing concerns regarding the cost of water and its effect on the financial viability of local farms. However, the preservation of farmland and expansion of opportunities for growing food in Oceanside were perceived as essential components of a successful climate action plan. Many stakeholders see the South Morro Hills as being in a transitional period during which farmers are exploring new crops, irrigation methods, and business models that will support the long-term viability of agriculture in the area. They ask that farmers be given the opportunity to develop new strategies for sustaining agriculture before allowing production housing and other potentially incompatible uses into South Morro Hills.

Many people brought up their concerns regarding the negative impacts of genetically modified crops, the use of chemical pesticides and artificial fertilizers, and the method of raising and slaughtering livestock. The system of producing, storing, processing, packaging, transporting, and consuming food requires an extensive amount of energy that results in high quantities of greenhouse gases being released into the atmosphere. Therefore, there is a prevalent desire for local agricultural operations to grow organic produce and to utilize sustainable farming practices in an effort to reduce the emissions associated with food production. A recurrent suggestion was that the City educate consumers about the benefits of reducing the consumption of emission-intensive food products (such as meat).

Using compost to support carbon sequestration is a topic that was frequently brought up. Several community members expressed a desire for curbside pickup of food waste which could be made into compost for use by local farmers and residents. It should be noted that not all local farmers are in favor of using compost in lieu of artificial fertilizers. Some believe that compost delivers lesser quantities of nitrogen, that it takes longer for the nitrogen to be released into the soil, and that a greater amount of compost would need to be applied to supply the same amount of nitrogen as artificial fertilizers.

In addition to concerns regarding the impacts that agricultural operations have on climate change, community members are worried about the effects climate change will have on food supplies. Crop production is affected by changes in temperature, rainfall, pests and diseases, and the cost and availability of water supplies. There is a desire for Oceanside to become more self-reliant and food secure by preserving its existing agricultural land and looking for additional opportunities to grow food within the urban core. Some of the recurrent suggestions included subsidizing mini-farms and vineyards, encouraging agritourism, promoting farm-to-table restaurants, partnering with the school districts to supply local produce to Oceanside's schools, establishing community gardens on currently vacant lots, planting fruit trees in public parks

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(particularly in lower income areas), and preventing land use changes that would allow additional housing in South Morro Hills.

### Education

Many community members see education as a crucial component of the Climate Action Plan. They believe that change begins with the individual and that it is very important to inform residents and businesses of immediate actions that can be taken to reduce greenhouse gases (such as driving less, choosing to eat less meat, and reducing energy and water consumption). They also believe that the City should do outreach to inform the community of the incentives, assistance, and financing options available to make certain upgrades to their homes and/or businesses as well as provide training on green building techniques, organic gardening, and other related topics. Not only will such actions assist in making Oceanside a more sustainable community, but they can also result in economic benefits and lead to healthier lifestyles/habits. Youth outreach and engagement was identified as an important element of the overall education program. Young people will be the most impacted by current planning efforts and they will be the ones to ultimately lead future climate action efforts. Stakeholders would like to see the City work more closely with the Oceanside Unified School District to develop and implement curriculum that promotes sustainable practices.

### Political Leadership and Partnerships

Another frequent theme that arose is the need for Oceanside's elected officials to take a strong leadership role in the development of the Climate Action Plan and form partnerships with other organizations that can help to implement the greenhouse gas reduction measures. In order to make significant changes, community members suggested that the City partner with neighboring cities, NCTD, SANDAG, Camp Pendleton, local businesses and non-profit organizations, school districts, and climate action advocates.

Community members feel that Oceanside should set an example for other municipalities to follow. It is essential for the City to implement and continue to monitor progress towards achieving its goals in order for positive changes to occur. Most community members expressed a desire for the Climate Action Plan to be a living document that does not sit on a shelf collecting dust. Many recognize that the long-term success of the Climate Action Plan depends upon diligent monitoring of GHG reduction measures and quantification of emissions reduction over time. It is also understood by many that the City's GHG reduction strategies may need to evolve in response to changing conditions.

There is concern that the City's leaders will have difficulty breaking away from conventional methods as well as continuing to implement climate action policies and measures as time goes on. Some respondents expressed fear that the power and influence of large corporations and developers as well as leadership changes could undermine the City's climate action efforts. There are also concerns that the City will favor economic development over environmental considerations and approve land

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use changes that conflict with climate action policies. Much of the input received focused on the need for transparency, certainty, and consistency when it comes to applying policies and regulations. Some stakeholders indicated that prospective investors may be deterred from Oceanside due to the instability and uncertainty of its political leadership. They believe that the City needs to create a culture of sustainability through the creation and implementation of long-term goals.



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### Jobs/Housing Balance

Community members expressed the need to improve the jobs/housing balance. SANDAG commuting data reveals that approximately 10,267 people live and work in the City of Oceanside. This is significantly lower than the 27,185 people who are employed in Oceanside but live outside of the City's boundaries and the 54,937 people who live in Oceanside but are employed outside of the City's boundaries. Most cities within San Diego County experience similar conditions. The City of San Diego is one of the few jurisdictions where a majority of residents live and work within the City's boundaries. Approximately 75% of respondents to the EDE internet questionnaire believe the City should take steps to achieve the optimal 1:1 jobs to housing ratio. Many agreed that a diverse range of housing options should be located adjacent to major employment centers. Some respondents preferred more affordable housing options that catered to low and medium income families while others raised concerns about the saturation of low grade housing and its visual impact on Oceanside. Potential areas for housing were identified within the Coastal Zone and along Mission Avenue. A few members opposed the addition of new housing. A few raised concerns about the development of high-rise apartments and condominiums obstructing oceanfront views in Downtown and in residential neighborhoods along the coast. Some were concerned about potential rezones to residential uses. There is a perception that slowing the approval of new housing will help foster more demand/interest for people to buy older homes and revitalize Downtown and older neighborhoods. A significant number of stakeholders stated that the integrity of neighborhoods needs to be preserved.

Some stakeholders identified north county as a distinct economic region and suggested that the City take a more collaborative and less competitive approach to employment growth by working with other north county cities to leverage common assets to build industry clusters, promote workforce readiness, and market the region as a tourist destination.

### Quality of Life

Community members recognize that quality of life is an important metric for economic development. Many of those who responded to the EDE internet questionnaire and who attended the EDE workshop recognized that employment growth, improved jobs/housing balance, better transportation and communication networks, higher income levels, and improved environmental quality were the most important factors for improving the economic well-being and quality of life for those living and working within Oceanside.

Community members want to increase opportunities for high paying jobs and long term steady employment. Many would prefer similar biotech and high tech companies (like Genentech and Gilead) to locate in Oceanside. Other recommendations included promoting local businesses, recruiting and assisting prospective businesses (big box chains), and incentivizing new retail, commercial, industrial, and office development. While recognizing that the job market is regional and that many residents choose to live

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in Oceanside and commute elsewhere for employment, many stakeholders would like to see more local employment options for Oceanside residents. There was a collective desire to create destination centers that balance housing and employment opportunities, support multi-modal transportation, and maintain the daytime population of Oceanside year round.

Educational attainment and employment readiness were also emphasized as important quality of life determinants. Community members would like the City to match overall County statistics regarding educational attainment of a four-year degree or higher. Many indicated that Oceanside's schools are overcrowded and do not provide equal resources for students to attain a successful education. A significant number of residents expressed the high desire to attract and recruit trade colleges and training programs that can prepare the local workforce for occupations in new and emerging "green" industries (such as environmental sciences, agriculture, electric car manufacturing, solar panel manufacturing, renewable energy generation, etc.). Stakeholders encourage the City to work with educational institutions to establish scholarship programs, vocational education programs (e.g., internships and apprenticeships), and other workforce readiness efforts. Stakeholders would also like to see the City better leverage its summer and after-school youth programs and library resources to promote academic success.

Beautification and placemaking principles were also perceived as important quality of life concerns. Community members support the development of livable and connected environments that leverage community assets, create engaging public spaces, and empower the local community. Many community members agree that Downtown, the pier, and major regional gateways (such as Coast Highway, SR-76, Oceanside Boulevard, Mission Avenue, and South Morro Hills) are suitable locations to instill a "sense of belonging" and spur economic activity. Popular recommendations focused on cleaning sidewalks and streets and enhancing areas with gateway markers, entry signage, public art, and landscaping improvements. The implementation of architectural design guidelines was also discussed as a tool to maintain the historical architecture and ambiance of buildings. A significant amount of community members agreed that visually attractive places will encourage new businesses to invest in the City.

Parks and recreation opportunities were identified as fundamental components of placemaking. Community members desire more parks, green space, and recreational/leisure activities that promote and facilitate civic engagement. Some popular recommendations include incorporating pocket parks in urban areas, visually enhancing corridors with street enhancements (xeriscaping designs, native landscaping, lighting, and street furniture), protecting coastal resources, watersheds, and associated habitat, promoting schools as neighborhood centers, and providing day care centers for seniors and their caregivers. Many community members are excited for the completion of the El Corazon Sports Complex, which will provide numerous opportunities for active and passive parks, recreation, public safety and cultural/community centers, and trails and green spaces. Many members believe El

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Corazon will strengthen neighborhood ties, continually attract visitors, and contribute greatly to the City's economic viability and quality of life.

Lastly, community members recognize that public safety and neighborhood services are significant quality of life metrics. For some respondents, there is a lingering perception that the City is old, dangerous, and visually blighted. Many members desire creation of a more focused approach that reduces gang activity, dumping, and homeless people lingering in public areas. Specific recommendations focused on developing community-based services (rehabilitation centers) that provide the homeless with a safe place to sleep and live in dignity. Additionally, community members emphasized the importance of providing neighborhood services – health care, fire, and law enforcement – that are accessible and convenient to the public. A few EDE workshop attendees suggested providing more health care facilities (i.e. incorporating facilities into grocery stores) that accommodate all needs and disabilities, specifically seniors and disabled persons. In addition, community members want to improve the response times of fire and police first-responders and provide adequate law enforcement to monitor criminal activity, maximize safety in certain areas, and protect the health and wellbeing of the community.

### Tourism and the Hospitality Sector

Community members expressed the desire to promote Oceanside as a tourist destination. Many respondents to the EDE internet questionnaire indicated that the City's coastal amenities (beaches, harbor, and pier) and weather are some of the greatest assets in terms of promoting and sustaining economic development. Several members were impressed with the City's ability to capture vacationers and provide local jobs related to tourism. Many agreed the City should expand beach-related tourism activities and access to beachfront destinations by providing hotels and lodging, shopping, oceanfront restaurants, and entertainment and nightlife opportunities. A few respondents prefer fewer hotels and short term vacation rentals. Instead, they would like to see more open space preserves. Some members also suggested promoting events that highlight Oceanside's vibrant surf industry. A suggestion was for the City to partner with the California Surf Museum and work to create an Oceanside Surf Design District that holds surf and body board contests as well as promote local organizations.

Downtown revitalization was another consideration for tourism. Community members expressed a desire for Downtown to embody a village atmosphere that is supported by boutique shops, dining areas, and offices. Many want more events, festivals, fairs, conventions, and other social activities (such as Turkey Trot, Sunset Market, and Half-Iron Man) held in Downtown. Many suggested providing additional shuttle, trolley, or pedi-cab services to allow for better access to and within Downtown.

Many stakeholders expressed the need to develop more mixed-use development along major corridors, specifically I-5 and SR-78. They noted that there is potential to redevelop vacant retail and industrial sites with eclectic businesses that have the

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capability of revitalizing areas that are not accessible to the beach. They would like the City to focus attention on both coastal and inland areas.

Another recurrent theme was agritourism. Many EDE workshop participants were very concerned about the future of South Morro Hills. Many workshop attendees believe the conservation of South Morro would bolster agritourism. It is believed that agritourism has the potential to support the financial feasibility of farming. Many fear that if the agricultural land is lost, food will have to travel great distances. It is better to support local farms and businesses that tailor their offerings to the local community. Many community members believe agritourism will create a new draw for the City, generate additional farm profit, promote farm-to-table restaurants, address health and obesity concerns, and incorporate wellness as a vital part of the City's quality of life.

In addition, many respondents to the EDE questionnaire raised concerns about the blighted and underutilized appearance of the airport. Many felt like the airport does not sufficiently link to tourist and recreational attractions. There is potential to develop an attractive and user-friendly airport that can bolster employment growth and be a catalyst for workforce training. Many believe the airport has the opportunity to attract aviation tourism that could draw visitors from outside of Southern California.

### Development Review Process

Community members expressed concern about the City's current development process being too lengthy and expensive. There are some discrepancies in current regulations that make the overall development process very rigid and unclear. Community members recommended that the Zoning Code be updated, a more streamlined permitting process be adopted, and fees and restrictions be reduced for businesses. Some of the recurrent suggestions included implementing flexible zoning to allow for the development of constrained sites and to encourage mixed-use development. Another suggestion was to make the business license process more inclusive and easier to classify small businesses into approved zoning classifications that do not require additional permits or expenses. Providing more opportunities for funding and grants was also suggested.

### Political Leadership

Some community members believe that Oceanside's elected officials are divided and they need to take a more proactive/leadership effort to prioritize economic development. Elected officials should make the effort to identify, prioritize, and remove obstacles to business development and ongoing business operations. The City should focus on developing and implementing an all-encompassing Economic Development Element that is consistent with local, regional, national, and international efforts.

Through the public outreach efforts, it was revealed that many community members would like to become more involved in the decision-making process, but are not aware of when public meetings are held. They would like to see more publication identifying

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the schedule of upcoming outreach events. Many suggested distributing City Council notices to community centers, posting agendas at transit sites, and developing a web portal as methods to increase community awareness and engagement. Many believe that there are opportunities to highlight Oceanside in a positive way through sustained relationships with neighboring cities, local property and business owners, and community members.

Many stakeholders would like to see the City be more actively engaged in regional planning efforts – particularly those sponsored by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG). There is a common view that Oceanside has not had a strong enough voice in the regional planning conversation, and that this has resulted in less funding and technical support for infrastructure improvements and other essential projects.