

**CONTRA COSTA SUSTAINABILITY EXCHANGE**  
**OCTOBER 3, 2017**  
**NOTES**

The Contra Costa Sustainability Exchange is a venue where local government staff in Contra Costa County who work on sustainability issues come together to network and learn from one another. Anyone in Contra Costa County who works for a city, county, special district, or other organization with a governing board of elected officials is welcome. The Sustainability Exchange meets quarterly.

These notes summarize the October 3, 2017 meeting of the Sustainability Exchange, which was hosted by the City of Walnut Creek. At the back you will find a summary of the Exit Ticket comments.

**INTRODUCTIONS**

As people introduced themselves, they responded to the prompt: how are recent natural disasters – hurricanes, fires, earthquakes – impacting how you approach your work?

**OPEN FORUM**

*Share News, Updates, Projects*

- 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Household Hazardous Waste collection at Central Sanitary 10/16-21. See attached flyer.
- Resilient By Design- 10 design teams will be matched with 10 locations across the Bay Area. Several areas in Contra Costa County have been nominated.
- BCDC Sea Level Rise Study - Grant from Caltrans
- Antioch citywide yard sale this weekend.
- MCE Board Retreat 9/22. Service rollout to 9 new jurisdictions will begin in Q1 & Q2 2018
- International Walk & Roll to school day this week.
- Share Your Ride week is this week
- Sunshares -- group purchase for solar panels, electric cars Aug-Nov. Several Contra Costa jurisdictions are participating.
- Countywide Transportation Plan was adopted last month
- SB1: Caltrans grant opportunities due by 10/20/17
- Farm Cleanup and Abatement Grant - 10/7 deadline
- Renewable Resource Potential Study - 5 bids received. Looks like cost to include interested cities will be about \$3,000/jurisdiction.
- Electrical Vehicle Readiness Planning – Contra Costa Transportation Authority and County are working on this.
- Concord Naval Weapons Station is trying to lure Amazon

## **REPORTS BACK FROM JULY MEETING SMALL GROUP COLLABORATIONS**

*How has the discussion in July helped you with the problem of practice you brought to the group?*

1. Facilitating walking and biking to school. People who participated in this group said the conversation at the July meeting emphasized that there is broad interest in seeing more children walking and biking to school, and that regional solutions are possible.

2. Launching Adapting to Rising Tides study in Eastern Contra Costa County. Jody London reported that the information from the July discussion is useful as the County works with the Bay Conservation and Development Commission on an engagement strategy for the project.

3. Expediting the permitting process for buildings that meet certain sustainability thresholds. Cara Bautista-Rao reported that the discussion helped her develop a list of potential barriers and next steps. One of the main group recommendations was to look in the General Plan and Climate Action Plan for policy level support for this initiative, which she did. She also met with the Walnut Creek Development Services Team and discussed how they could expedite permitting for 100% affordable housing, and how that model might be used for green/sustainable buildings in the future.

## **NEXT STEPS RE JULY PRESENTATION ON COMMUNITY CLIMATE SOLUTIONS**

The group discussed the presentation at the July meeting from Community Climate Solutions. (see [Fremont Green Challenge](#)) Some participants who are familiar with apps and software development observed that the platform is comprehensive, and could hold potential as a Countywide standard. There is a challenge in introducing the community-level metrics with so many jurisdictions. The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is interested in the potential for Community Climate Solutions, as is 511 Contra Costa and Antioch.

The group agreed to form a working group to look at whether the platform would be scalable. The group will include Corinne Dutra-Roberts, Julie Haas-Wadjowicz, Sarah Kolarik, and Jody London.

## SOLVING OUR PROBLEMS: SMALL GROUP COLLABORATION

Participants self-selected into two “problems of practice.” The reports out are summarized below and in the attached.

❖ *How to discuss climate related risks in a way that answers the “why now” question – Amelia Timbers, Pinole*

- **Immediate climate risks include:**
  - Health
    - Impacts vulnerable communities more – equity and social justice issue, not just environmental
    - Argue for community health as a priority, not easy to oppose
    - Smoke > fires
  - Impacts not remote, they are “here”
    - Flooding, drought, fires
      - Will be magnified in the future
- **Align sustainability projects/ programs with other regulatory obligations/ normal operations**
  - For example, waste issues can be framed as implementing laws
  - Frame in terms of stakeholder interests
    - Cost savings
    - New customer appeal
  - Find forums in which to broach issues & build momentum
    - Problem: people are not great about planning for the future; example, retirement planning
- **Messaging around climate change problematic**
  - Language can be political, vague, hyperbolic
  - Don’t overstate risks; stick to data
  - Learn to talk about sustainability and climate without using those particular politicized terms
  - Solution: focus on financial stick and carrot/ incentives and penalties
    - Avoid shaming/ berating
    - Incorporate sustainability principles into everyday operations and processes
    - Non financial benefits that have value
      - Make community more desirable, safer, personal property safety
      - Focus on cobenefits
      - Family values- density helps keep families in the community
    - Find pain points, address them through sustainability
    - Focus on the end goal, provide a vision
  - Identify community leaders who can model behavior/afford to fail
  - Next Door for communication

❖ *Complete Streets Funding* – Sarah Kolarik, San Pablo. See attached notes.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The Contra Costa Transportation Authority will host the January meeting.

Date: To be determined

Time: most likely 10-12

Snacks: of course!

## **Complete Streets: Funding Notes**

Regional Roundtable: “developed to identify and remedy obstacles for funding for Sustainable Streets projects,” e.g. grants only funding certain components, ineligible components or activities, matching funds limitations, un-coordinated grant cycles, administrative burdens of managing grants (tracking, applying, implementing, reporting), problematic scoring systems

Immediate actions (e.g. addressing Sustainable Streets in grant solicitations)  
Short-term actions (e.g. reviewing policies for better ways to fund Sustainable Streets)  
Long-term solutions (e.g. including legislative advocacy such as Prop 218 reform)

\*Provides a list of potential funding sources

\*Need better coordination and collaboration by all levels

California Transportation Commission (CTC): SB 1 (Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017) programs (e.g. Local Streets & Roads; Solutions for Congested Corridors; Trade Corridor Enhancement)

Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account (RMRA): Active Transportation Program (ATP) funding coming from RMRA

SB 1 funding: Lots of programs (many still accepting funding applications/proposals); Requirements specific to each program; Annual funding opportunity (but up for a vote next year => people not happy with new taxes/fees, take advantage while still around)

⇒ Need to advertise positive uses of this funding (to encourage people not to vote against it in the next voting cycle)

Transportation Planning Grant Program: Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program (\$12.5 million statewide) and Adaptation Planning Grant Program (\$7 million statewide); applications due **Oct. 20**

Local Streets and Roads funding:

“Objective (...) is to address deferred maintenance on the local streets and roads system through the prioritization and delivery of basic road maintenance and rehabilitation projects as well as critical safety projects.” Complete Streets components and traffic control devices are also part of funding scope.

By **Oct. 16**, City/County must submit a list of projects proposed to be funded to CTC. “All projects proposed to receive funding must be included in a city or county budget that is adopted by the applicable city council or county board of supervisors at a regular public meeting.” Initial submittal needs to have a project description, timeline, location.

Caltrans: Potential future funding for alternative compliance projects for stormwater. Specific details are still being worked out. Have your stormwater program managers follow-up on this.

## **Sustainability Exchange: Complete Streets Small Group Discussion Notes**

Key Players: MTC, Caltrans, Air District, CCTA, RTPCs (Regional Transportation Planning Committees)

### Roles of Key Agencies:

- CCTA and RTPCs as coordinating agencies
  - \*CCTA resources available for grant applications
- Cities need to reach out more (to other cities, the County, CCTA, etc.)
- Contra Costa County already collaborating with cities on a project-by-project basis

### Challenges/Obstacles and Potential Strategies:

- Unclear future of SB 1 funding
  - \*Need to show communities positive uses of \$\$
- Competitive process for grant funding
  - \*Work with local RTPC to optimize phasing of grant applications
  - \*Increase collaboration on grant apps (increase likelihood of getting grant and increase regional impact of grant)
  - \*Recognize that some communities need money more than others (and that strengthening transportation gaps in a region strengthens the region as a whole)
- Administrative burden of grant reporting (e.g. Charge! Grant)
  - \*Need assistance with reporting in addition to the grant application process
- Funding for ongoing maintenance of projects
- Shared grant writing resources for Contra Costa County
  - \*Needs to be specialized (e.g. sustainable transportation projects only) in order to produce high quality grants
  - \*Funding?
  - \*Grant writing assistance from transportation consultants => can get dicey
- Co-benefit estimates (e.g. GHG emissions reductions from bike/ped/public transit development; gallons of water treated by green stormwater infrastructure)
  - \*Develop resources/formulas to help cities estimate the co-benefits of projects in order to provide quantitative benefits in grant applications
  - \*Compile existing resources regarding how to estimate co-benefits of projects
  - \*Adapt resources to be appropriate for Contra Costa County => need to have regionally specific estimates, since wide variation throughout the County
  - \*Who would take this on? Future project for a CivicSpark fellow at the County?

# Exit Ticket: Sustainability Exchange

October 3, 2017

Name (optional):

What was most significant about our work today....	What I personally enjoyed about today...	I have some concerns about or feel we did not fully address ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning about upcoming grants</li> <li>• Learning about projects the group is working on</li> <li>• I really appreciated everyone's insights, I realize I may be approaching some of these issues less than optimally and could talk more towards personal interests</li> <li>• Hearing different perspectives from a group with experience in a diverse range of agencies</li> <li>• I enjoyed discussions and hearing about other projects</li> <li>• Small groups!</li> <li>• Having so many players in the room</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group discussion</li> <li>• Discussions on the word "climate"</li> <li>• Hearing updates from the open forum</li> <li>• I enjoyed discussions and hearing about other projects</li> <li>• Seeing and sharing with colleagues</li> <li>• Small groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How we can further collaborate and adopt consistent messaging</li> </ul>
At the next meeting, I'd like to see...	The way that I most want to contribute to the Sustainability Exchange moving forward...	Anything else...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More final steps/closing information on how to move forward on issues</li> <li>• Discussion on consistent messaging</li> <li>• More networking time</li> <li>• More discussion of available programs</li> <li>• Not sure yet</li> <li>• More of the same!</li> <li>• More small group discussions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend and contribute feedback</li> <li>• I will propose a discussion topic for next time</li> <li>• Happy to help, let me know</li> <li>• Continue to attend</li> <li>• Not sure yet</li> <li>• Anyway I can</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need more people to attend</li> </ul>
Feedback on facilitation and organization of the session: appreciations, suggestions going forward		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It seems like this group could be more of an online clearinghouse. For example, people should regularly share their upcoming event blurbs for cities to promote in newsletters/online, etc.</li> <li>• Would be great to receive the agenda prior to the meeting.</li> </ul>		