



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

### Supervisory District 1

Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Net Zero Plus-Electrical Training Institute in Commerce

Partner Organizations: East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice with Liberty Hill Foundation



*Supervisor Hilda Solis talks with an “Our Voice, Our County” participant.*



## Introduction

OurCounty, the Los Angeles Countywide Sustainability Plan, is an effort to outline a bold, inclusive and truly 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 1 Event Description

The third of five Expos was held in LA County’s 1<sup>st</sup> Supervisory District at the Net Zero Plus-Electrical Training Institute (NZE-ETI) in Commerce, California. East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice (EYCEJ) - a nonprofit organization focused on environmental health and justice for communities disproportionately affected by the negative impacts of industrial pollution - acted as the Expo’s primary partner. Leaders at EYCEJ trained 12 of their staff and community volunteers to serve as discussion leaders at each of the tables. Their volunteers also helped with event logistics.

Supervisor Hilda Solis 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 her own history of addressing environmental justice from when she was in the State Legislature. The Supervisor appreciated everyone’s commitment to providing their input on the Plan and interacted with the participants while she visited some of the discussion tables and displays. Alessandro Negrete, Director of Communications for EYCEJ, offered a welcome and brief summary on the importance of the OurCounty Plan to the communities of Southeast Los Angeles. Gary Gero, Chief Sustainability Officer for LA County, offered additional remarks to help set the tone for the morning, including an overview of the Plan and context for the activities. Diana Limon, Director of Training for the NZE-ETI, also provided a welcome and overview of the workforce development and apprenticeship training program. About 50 trainees from the apprenticeship program were released from their “boot camp”

### 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.

workshop to join the Expo for Supervisor Solis' remarks, helping to place their hands-on training experience in the broader context of energy and environmental policy.

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 participate in an interactive game to express their sustainability priorities.*

In addition to the Plan engagement activities, the Expo offered resource tables provided by Metro and the County Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services. The County Fire Department distributed free native plants and trees to participants and the County Library stationed the "MakMo" interactive van in the parking lot to encourage youth literacy through the distribution of free books and puzzles. 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 staffed tables to provide 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.



## Key Takeaways

Facilitators at this Expo prioritized group discussion, note-taking and recording feedback. While dot-voting took place at most tables, others engaged in different interactive exercises (e.g., puzzles) to encourage discussion.

Top vote-getting actions were:

- Preserve and increase affordable housing
- Enact permanent rent stabilization in unincorporated areas
- Offer free transit for students, seniors, disabled & low-income people
- Create Green Zones
- Support urban agriculture & community gardens
- Promote local, healthy and sustainable food
- Train neighborhood leaders to become emergency responders
- Phase out oil and gas operations, emphasizing environmental justice neighborhoods

## Attendee Demographics

Fifty-five attendees signed in throughout the day, not including the roughly 50 NZP-ETI Trainees who joined for the Supervisor's remarks. According to entrance polling, 22% of attendees were born outside of the U.S. while the rest were U.S.-born. Sixty percent of attendees who were polled were between ages 18-35, a much larger showing of young adults compared to other Expo events. In contrast, less than 4% of attendees polled were 65+, a much smaller showing of seniors than other events. The vast majority of attendees identified as Latino/a, making up 70% of polled attendees. 13% identified as White, and only 8% identified as Black, Asian or Native. Seven percent of those polled identified as Other.

## Sample Comments/Feedback Received

- Several spoke up about needing protections for students and teachers when they speak out about impacts and issues at and around their schools
- Clarify that natural gas vehicles do not achieve zero emissions, and have significant climate impacts
- Education about sheltering in place should be a focus, not just cooling center
- More public housing and rent control, and more resources for low-income people so they don't become at risk of or fall into homelessness
- Emergency training should also include medical emergencies, as sometimes medical services do not show up quickly enough

- Existing parks and public space infrastructure need to be better maintained, and encourage more parcels to be owned by land trusts so they aren't subject to gentrification
- A few fill-in-the-blank responses expressed the need for County boards and commissions to better represent frontline communities living next to oil and gas infrastructure rather than industry representatives who exploit neighborhoods for their own interests
- Be more specific about what is meant by "green jobs," (including salaries and training), to build more trust with people around job security
- There is skepticism over Vision Zero in areas with large roadways and high vehicle traffic demand. Some shared concerns over the cost of bicycle infrastructure and if it is worth the investment
- Conduct better community engagement around brownfields
- Support local gardens and lot-to-spot approaches as restorative justice
- Create County youth commissions on different issues to include more young people at the table



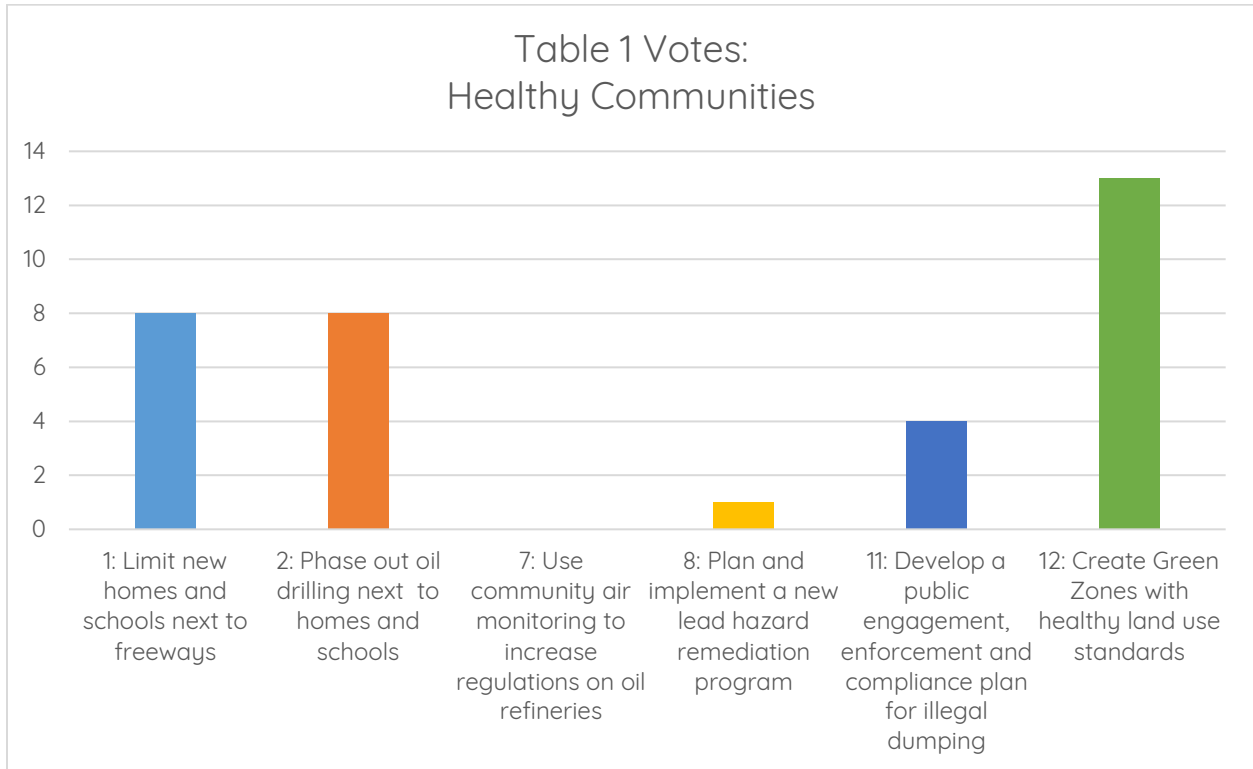
*Community members offer "Have Your Say" feedback while an East Yard facilitator takes notes.*

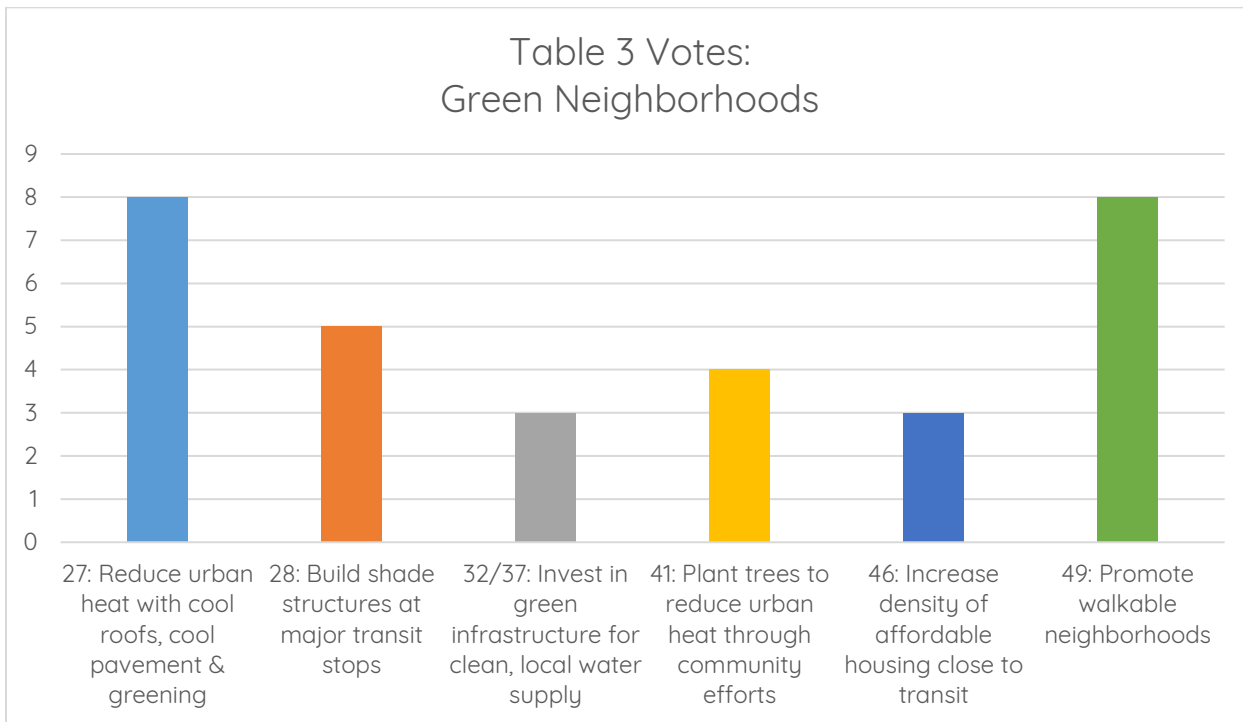
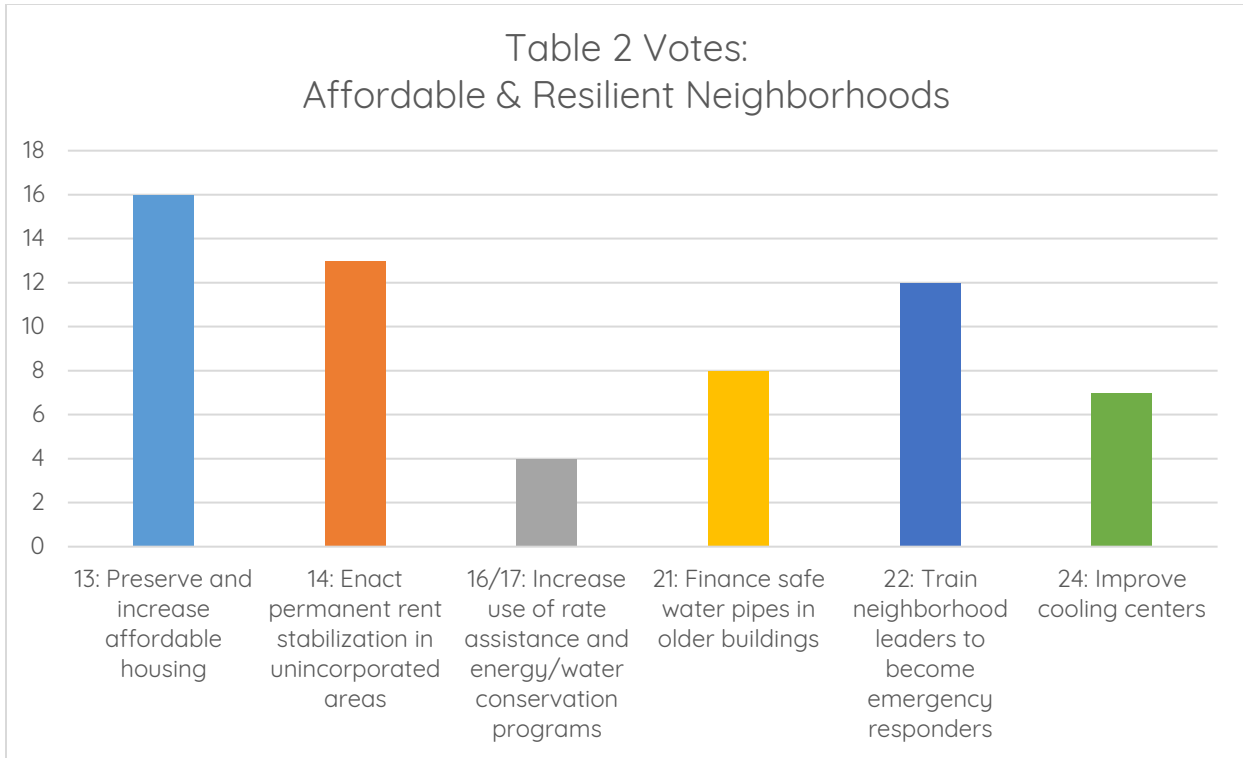
## Insights/Lessons Learned

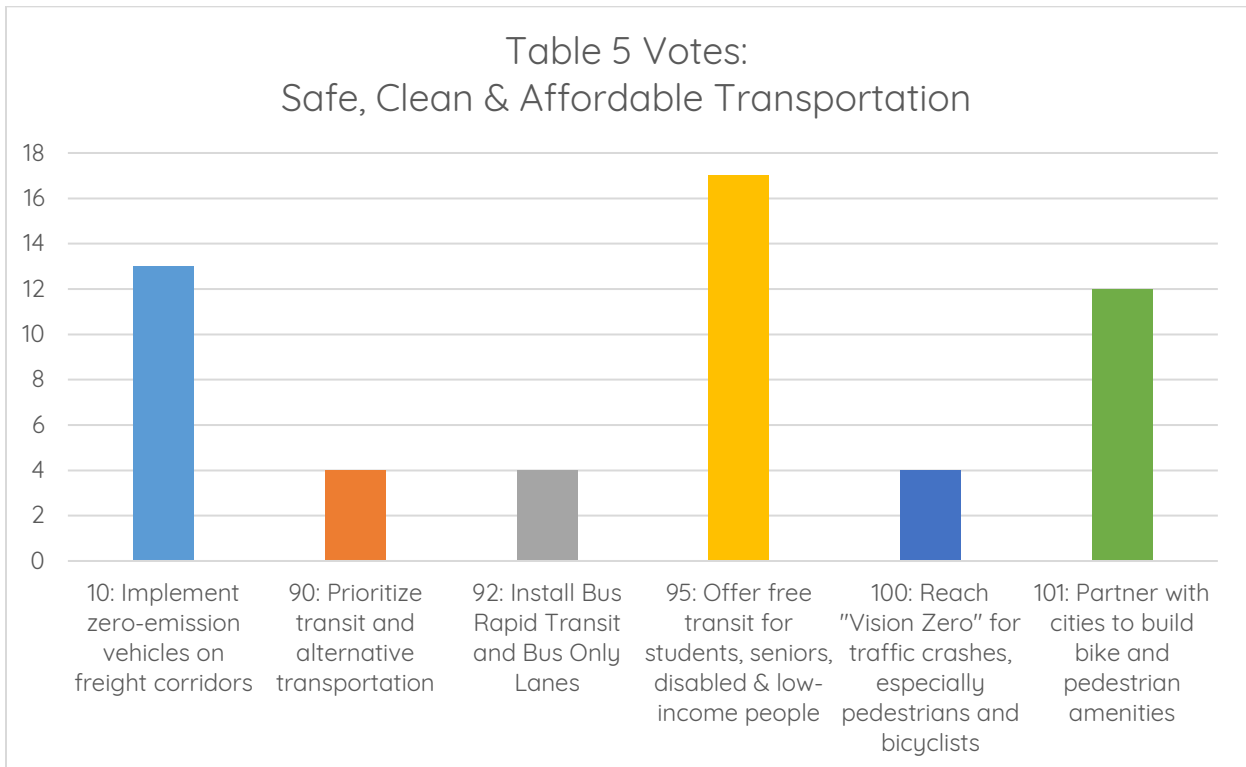
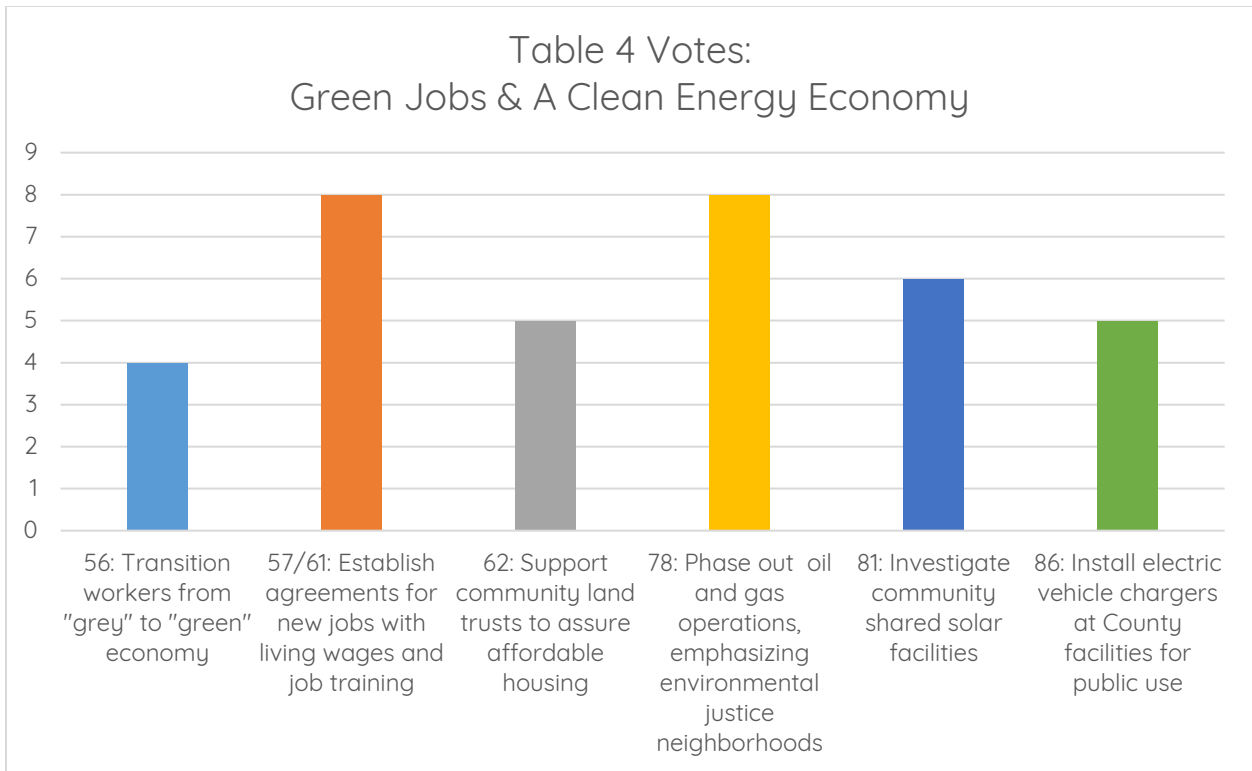
EYCEJ, the co-sponsoring local organization, noted that one of the important benefits of the Expo had been the opportunity to build the capacity of their staff team and community leaders about the Plan in order to lead the discussion tables and help facilitate the event. They also noted that this plan has the ability to impact many cities that are low-income communities of color in LA County if there is intentional outreach to incorporate this in the cities. Participants noted the clear correlation to the County's many municipalities, and the need to become sustainable in all the topics from housing, to food justice, to sustainable solutions like zero emissions, to create a positive legacy for their families.

Appendix A: Our Voice Our County Supervisorial District 1

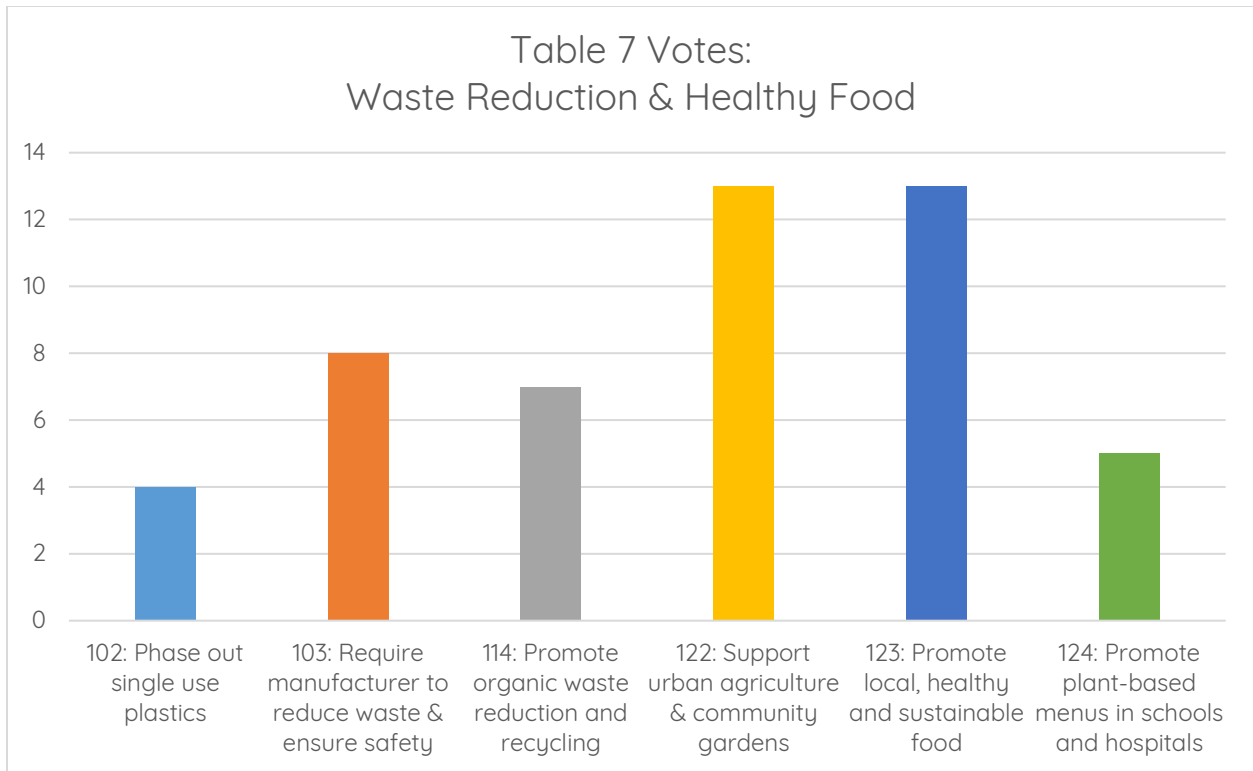
All Table Voting Results











\*Note: There was no data recorded for Discussion Tables 6 and 8.

## 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:

- Regarding action 1, what about housing/schools built before 2003?
- Donde estan ubicadas los centros de enfriamiento? Existe la posibilidad de contar con uno de estos centros de enfriamiento en Boyle Heights? (Where are the cooling centers located? Is there a possibility of one of these cooling centers being in Boyle Heights)
- Re: Acción 6: elimina las emisiones de los camiones (Re: action 6: eliminate truck emissions)
- More protections for students and teachers when they speak out about impacts
- There should be a bigger push for natural gas (not diesel) for freight vehicles.
- Very important that natural gas vehicles are not considered zero emissions; natural gas is much more heat trapping than carbon. Read the science. This is a step backwards!
- Include disadvantaged communities (including the homeless) when implementing new green zones plans.
- un programa de asistencia para la gente que no puede pagar su renta (An assistance program for people who cannot pay their rent)
- How can LA County find and contract with local/neighborhood champions for climate and emergency resilience preparedness?
- More enforcement on rainwater, stormwater capture
- Services and parks are within walking distance, but the infrastructure and locations are not maintained
- I’m concerned that Vision Zero has few opportunities for East LA
- Bike riding on Santa Fe/PCH is too dangerous – my friends have problems riding and I’m scared to ride
- Offer free transportation for students in South LA (all areas), especially low-income and people of color
- “Walkability” looks different in every community – lighting, maintained sidewalk, shade, traffic calming measures
- Narrow down “Green Jobs” so people can feel heard and recognized
- Phase out ALL plastic; promote reducing overconsumption
- Proper community engagement around brownfields; justice through local gardens and lots to local spots
- Creating youth commissions to represent young community members



## Appendix C: Organizations with Resource Tables at Our Voice, Our County Supervisory District 1 Expo

- County Library
- County Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services
- County Fire
- Metro
- emPOWER
- East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice

Photos by Giovanni Solis