

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

Supervisory District 5

Saturday, April 20th, 2019

The Armory Center for the Arts, Pasadena

Partner Organizations: Day One with Liberty Hill Foundation



Community members and a Day One facilitator engage in dot voting and “Have Your Say” feedback.



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 to the final plan, Liberty Hill Foundation and community-based organization anchors organized five “Our Voice, Our County Expos” with support from the LA County Chief Sustainability Office.

Supervisorial District 5 Event Description

The first of five Expos was held in LA County’s 5th Supervisorial District at the Armory Center for the Arts in Pasadena, California. Day One - a nonprofit organization that has promoted environmental justice, public health, and youth empowerment across the San Gabriel Valley – acted as the Expo’s primary partner. Leaders at Day One trained 15 of their staff and community volunteers to serve as discussion leaders at each of the tables. Their volunteers also helped with event logistics. The event date was selected because it was the Saturday before Earth Day, reinforcing ecological themes and possibly attracting more participants (despite it being a busy holiday weekend with both Passover and Easter celebrations). That afternoon, Day One hosted their annual Earth Day festival across the street in Memorial Park, featuring a wide range of environmental education and sustainability resources.

Christy Zamani, Executive Director of Day One, and Gary Gero, Chief Sustainability Officer for LA County, offered opening remarks to help set the tone for the morning, along with Leslie Ito, Executive Director of the Armory Center, who provided a welcome.

Expos Overview

Occurring on Saturdays throughout April and May 2019 in each County Supervisorial 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.

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” activities, and 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 complete comment cards and post-it notes to convey their own ideas and recommendations.

In addition to the Plan engagement activities, the Expo offered resource tables provided by County Departments, including the Department of Regional Planning, Department of Beaches and Harbors, Department of Public Social Services, as well as the County Fire Department who distributed free native plants and trees to participants. The County Library also provided the “MakMo” interactive van to encourage youth literacy through free books and puzzles. Kiss The Ground and TreePeople, two local nonprofits, also provided resource tables to educate participants on composting and other sustainability practices. Liberty Hill’s emPOWER program also tabled at each event and provided 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.

A photo exhibition at the event showcased work by high school students and local youth who collaborated with a UCLA Urban Planning graduate student to document sustainability in their neighborhoods through photos and short essays.



Key Takeaways

All of the Plan's actions received at least some votes, but some received far more votes than others, especially actions that addressed major issues with high visibility. Top vote-getting actions were:

- Preserving and increasing affordable housing, which was by far the most voted-for action
- Phasing out single-use plastic
- Increasing energy and water conservation efforts
- Creating Green Zones
- Actions pertaining to parks, open space, and the urban-wildlife interface, such as planting more trees, increasing native plants and biodiversity, and increasing access to recreation spaces

Attendee Demographics

Fifty-four attendees signed in throughout the day. According to entrance polling, out of those polled, 16% of attendees were born outside of the U.S. while the rest were U.S.-born. Nearly half of attendees were between ages 36-64, with 15% over 65 years old and 10% under 18 years old. A nearly even split of attendees identified as Asian or White, making up nearly 75% of total attendees. Just under 20% of attendees identified as Latino/a, with the balance identified as African-American or Other.

Sample Comments/Feedback Received

- Many expressed interest in more maintenance, facilities, and transportation access to mountain areas
- Attendees want cities to stop planting street trees that don't provide shade and have high water needs
- There were calls for building bioswales on public and private land
- Increasing density and transit-adjacent affordable housing emerged as extremely important to attendees
- Participants highlighted organizing reuse and "freecycle" programs
- There were several comments in regards to banning all gasoline-powered small engines like lawn mowers and leaf blowers



Community members and a Day One facilitator discuss key actions in the Plan with visual aids.

Exit Survey

Through exit surveys, participants were asked a few questions to learn more about their interests and concerns relating to the LA County Sustainability Plan. When asked about their neighborhood's biggest sustainability challenges, climate change, affordability, biodiversity/conservation, and transportation/traffic congestion all received the highest number of votes. Out of all the aspects of the Plan, people expressed the most willingness to reduce their plastic use and recycling waste/trash, followed by reducing water and energy use. Overall, additional comments were mostly very positive about the Plan's contents. Some, however, felt unclear about the target audience intended for the Plan. Many who took the survey noted wanting a ban on leaf blowers.

Insights/Lessons Learned

Day One, the co-sponsoring local organization, noted that one of the important benefits of the Expo had been the opportunity to provide in-depth training to their staff team and community volunteers about the Plan in order to lead the discussion tables and help run the event. Christy Zamani, Executive Director of Day One, noted that their organization felt that the manner in which this work was developed was intentional, meaningful, and authentically engaging. The process not only served as an educational opportunity for the community, but also allowed Day One to advance the knowledge and capacity of staff. They commented that an indirect benefit to their community was providing the space for like-minded, green advocates and environmental groups to connect and collaborate on a variety of sustainability issues they find important.

Appendix A: Our Voice Our County Supervisorial District 5

All Table Voting Results:

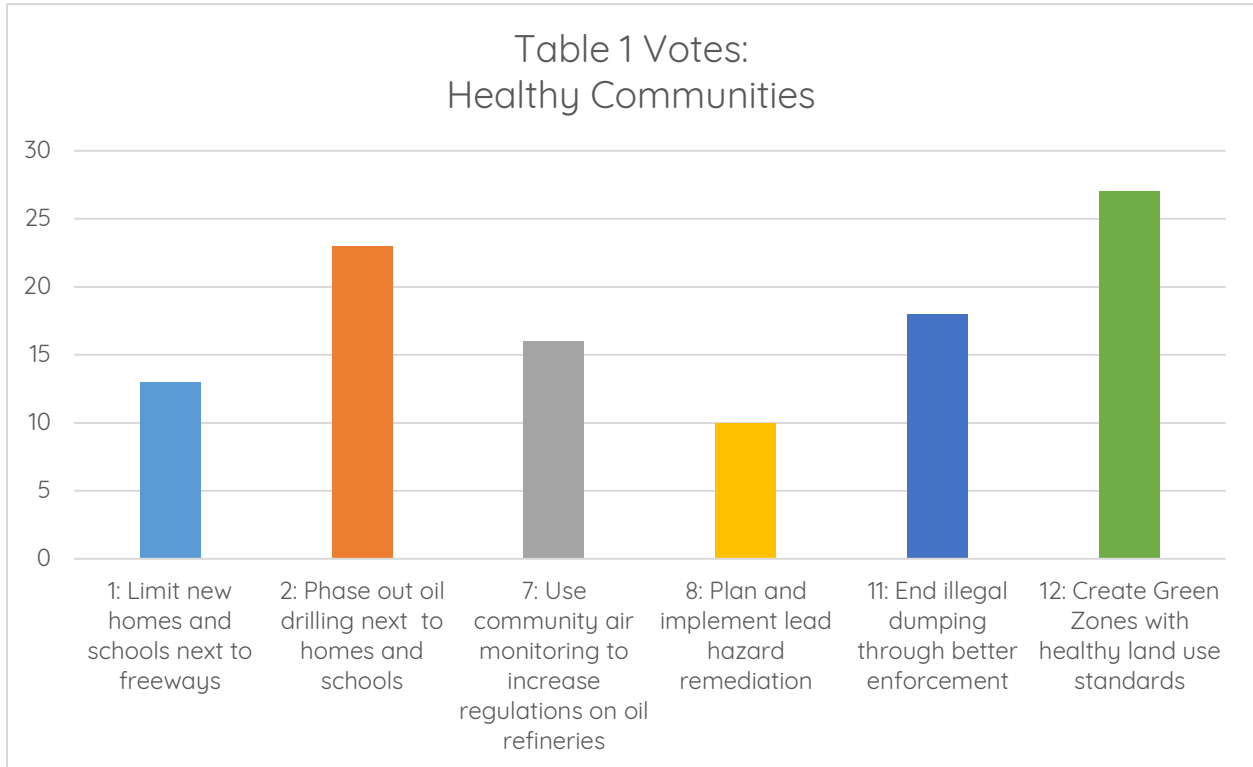


Table 2 Votes:
Affordable & Resilient Neighborhoods

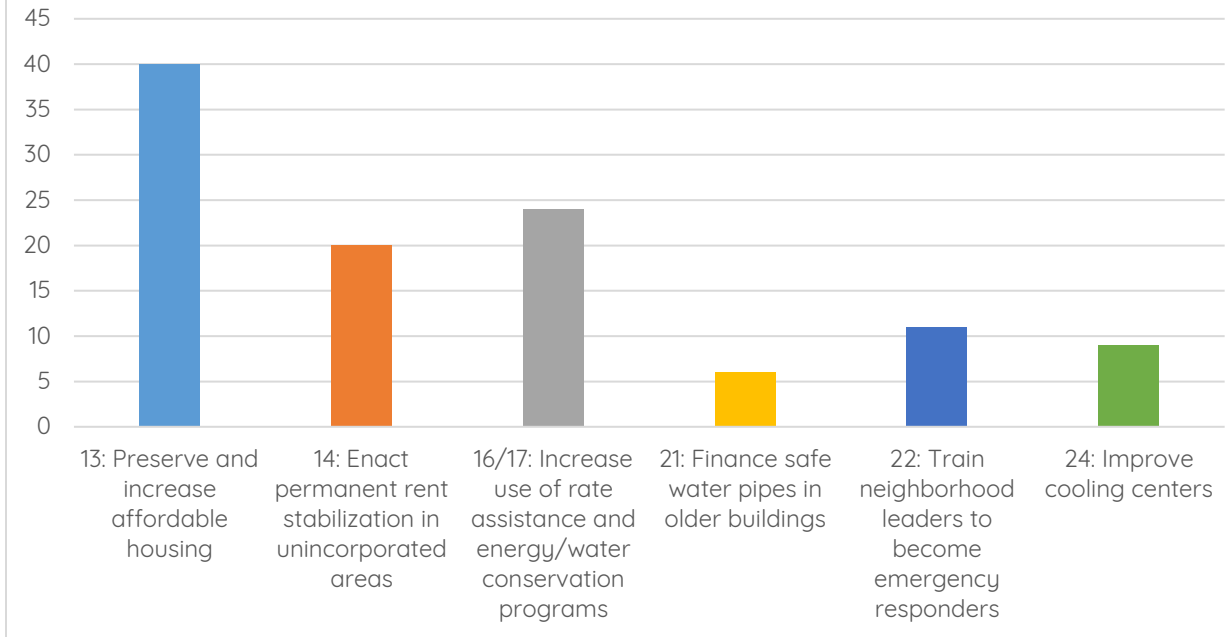
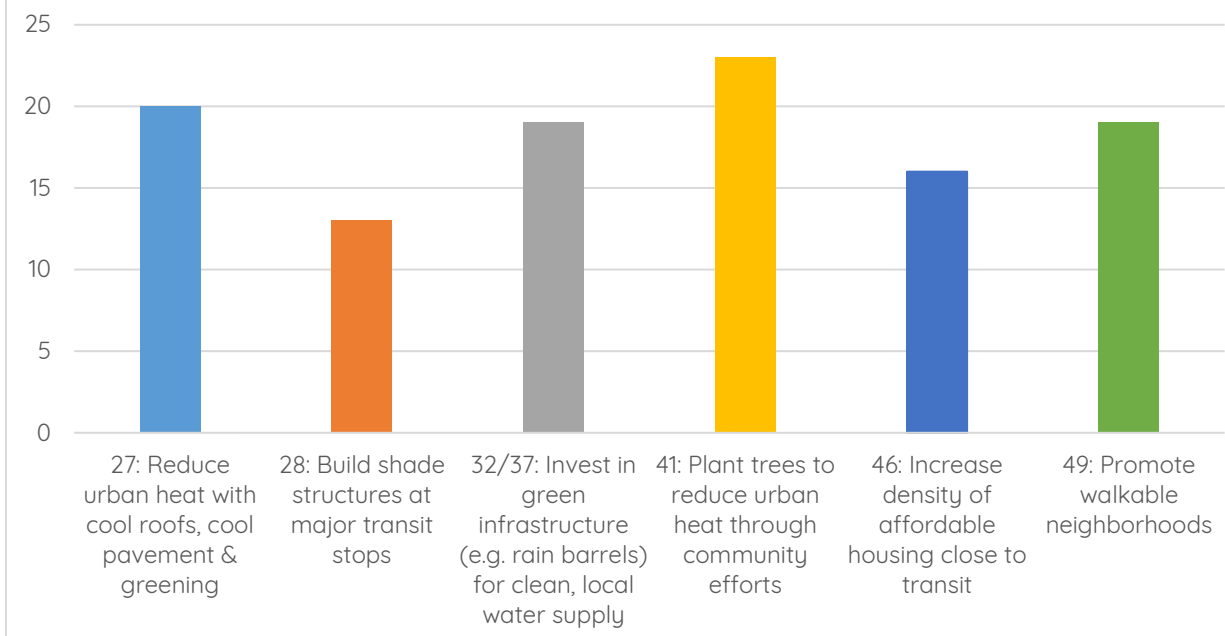
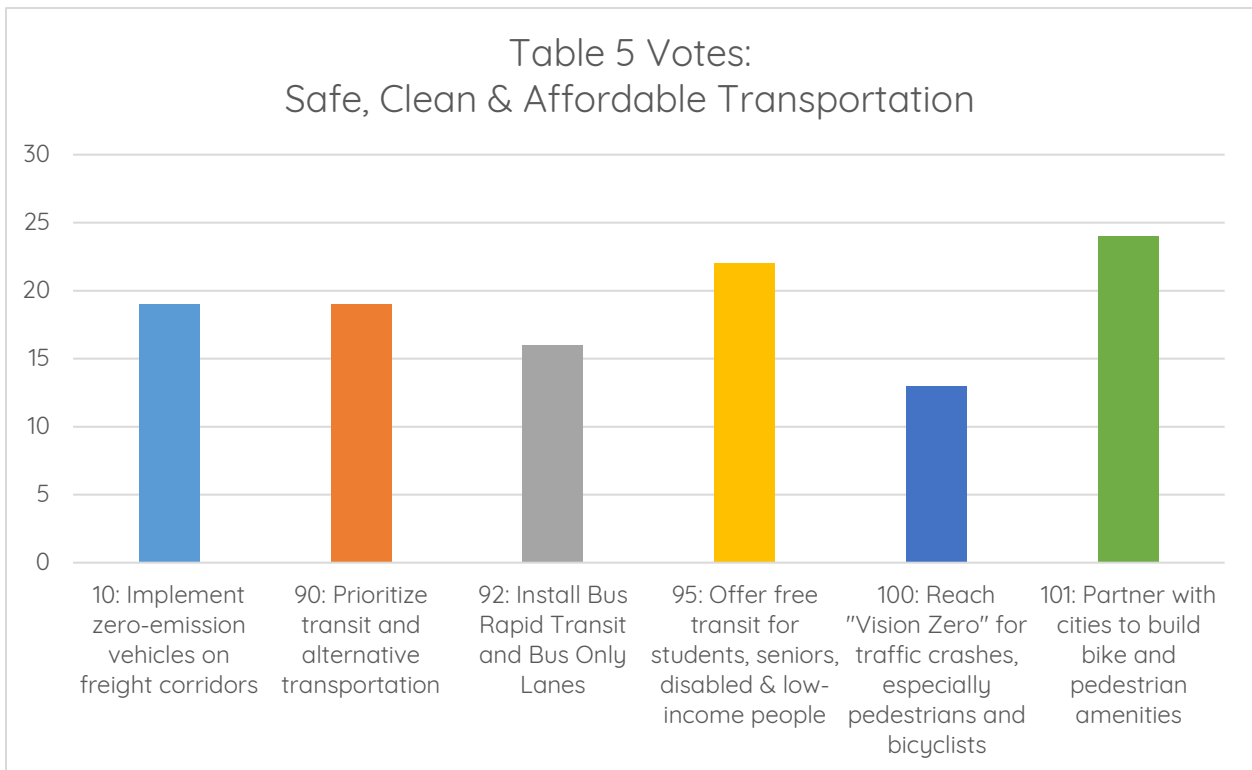
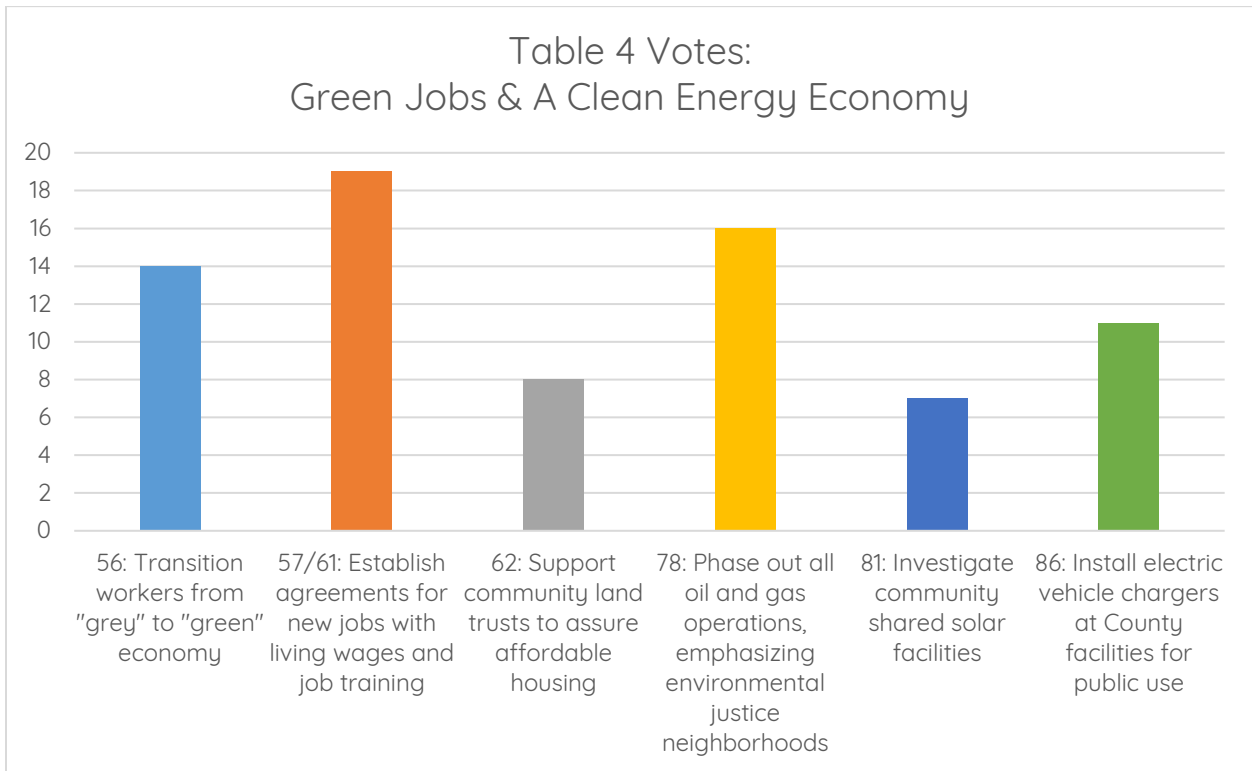
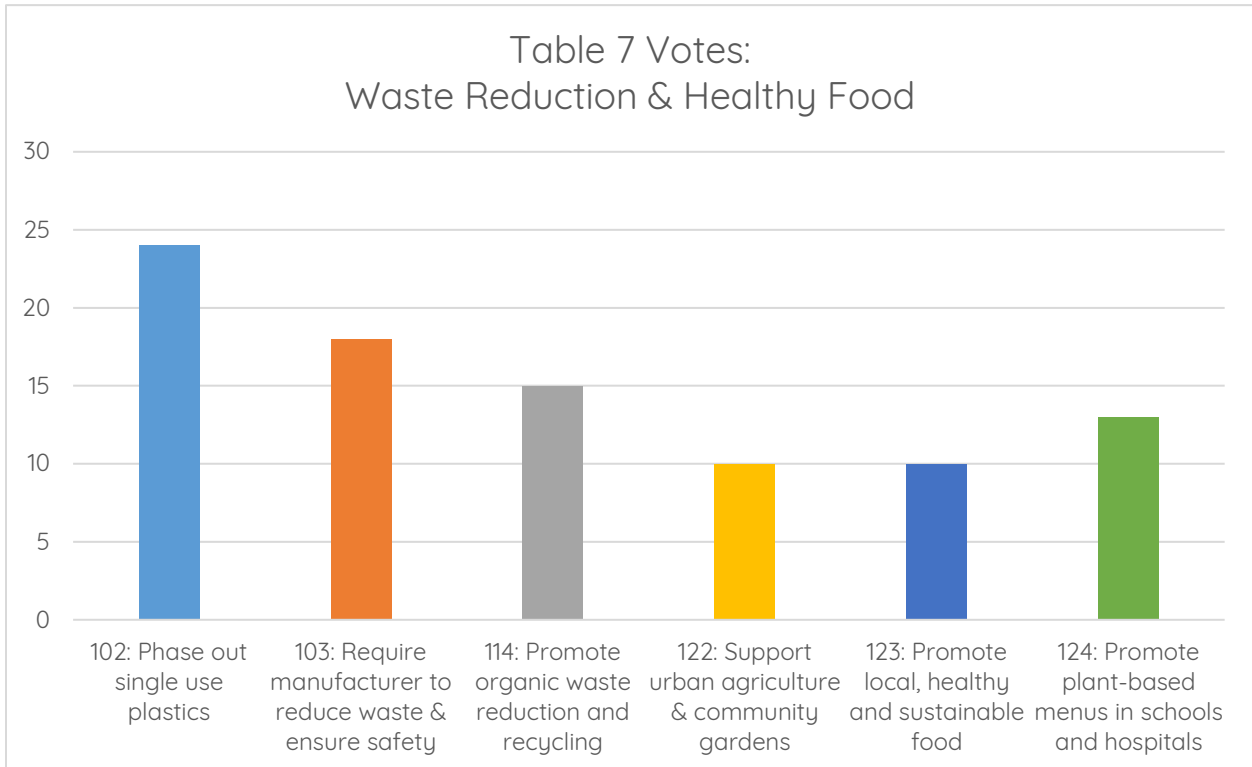
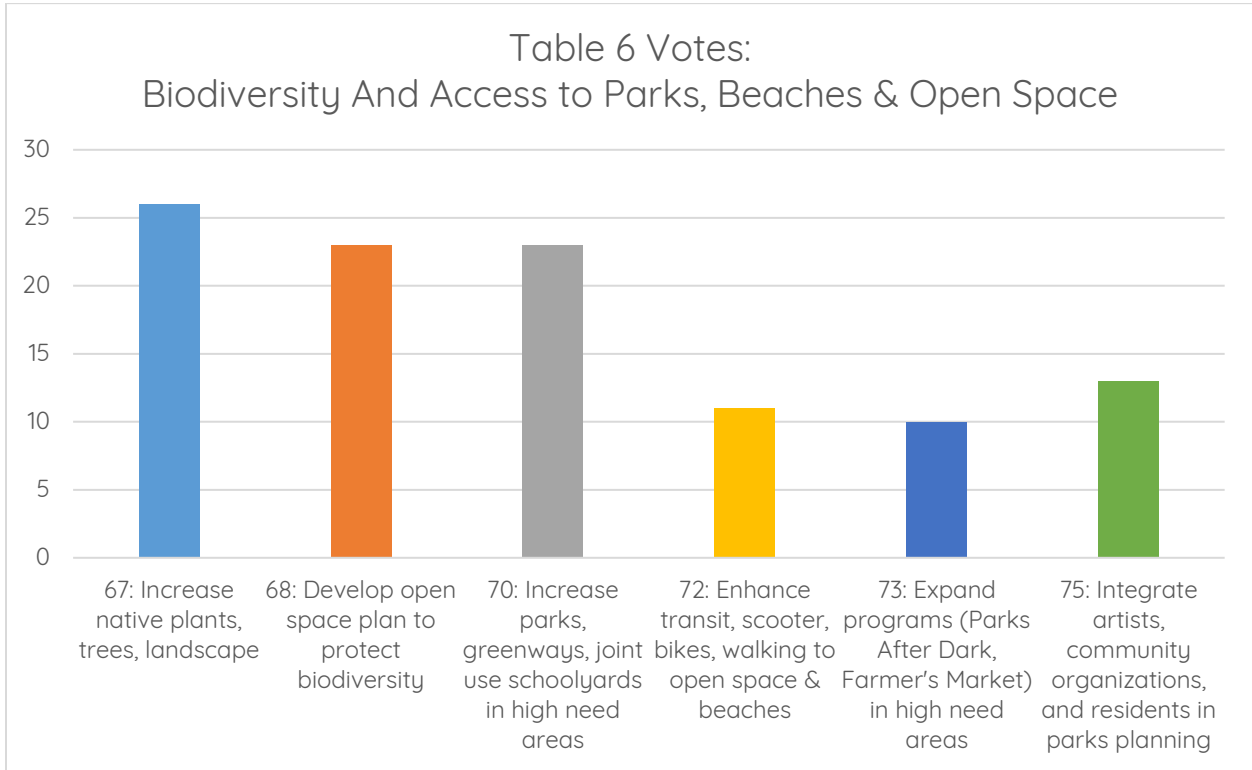
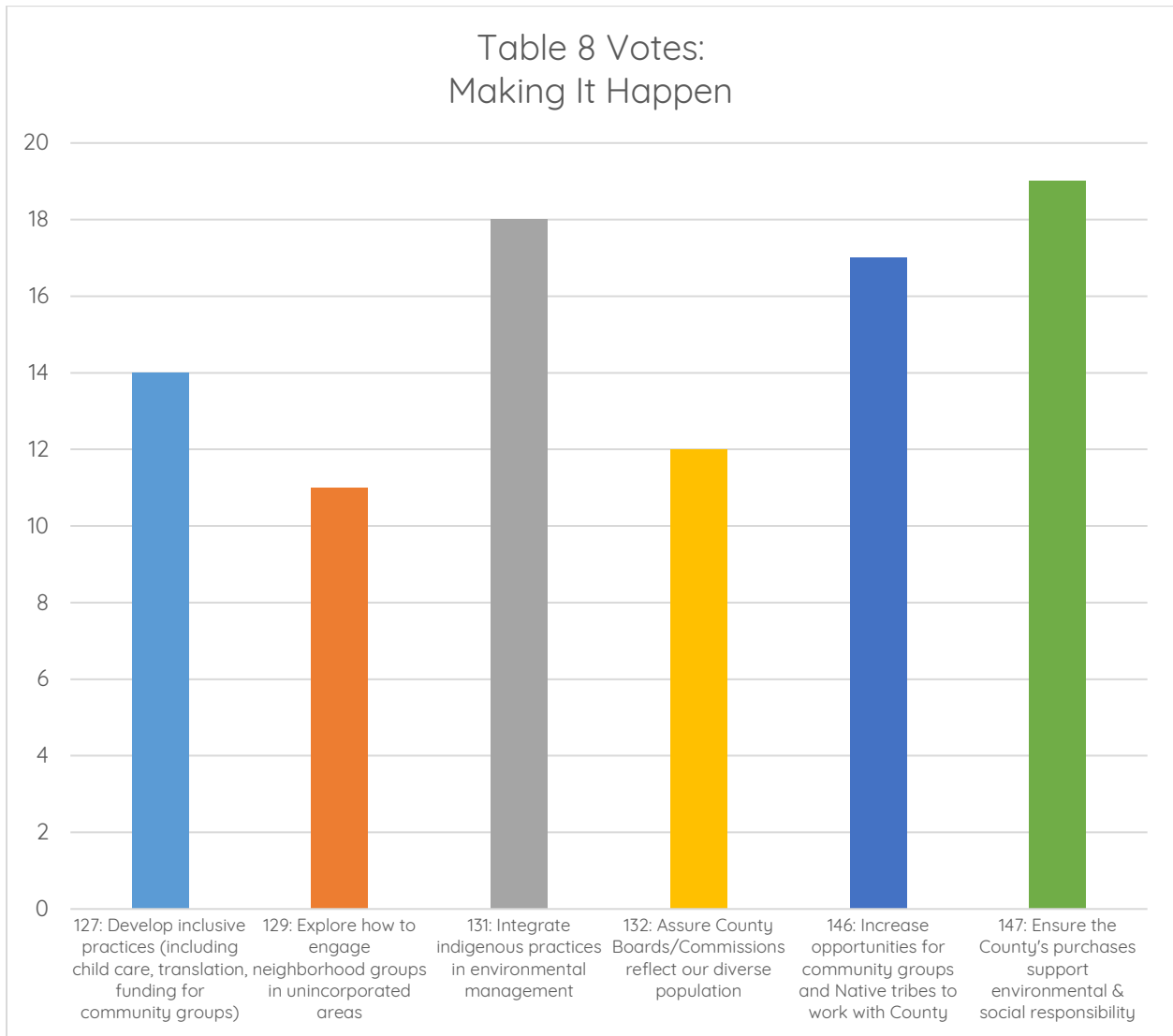


Table 3 Votes:
Green Neighborhoods











Appendix B: “Have Your Say” Post-it Notes Feedback

SELECTED COMMENTS

Below are just a few samples of “Have Your Say” comments that were most commonly offered by participants:

- Add regulations about leaf blower use – ban leaf gasoline blowers
- Recycle more water and more rainwater capture
- Give out EV vehicles to underserved LA County residents
- Increase pride, cleanliness and safety of existing public transit
- Add information about median household income relative to high heat days map
- Integrate Native peoples in planning
- Add more support to accommodate heavy use of mountain areas — trail maintenance; restrooms; shuttles to trailhead
- Focus on homelessness
- Highlight our rivers as biodiversity hotspots
- Develop a community advisory board to provide feedback and report on progress



Appendix C: Organizations with Resource Tables at Our Voice, Our County Supervisory District 5 Expo

- County Regional Planning
- County Public Works
- County Library
- County Beaches & Harbors
- County DPSS
- County Fire
- Kiss the Ground
- US Green Building Council
- Tree People
- EmPower Table
- Day One Resource Table

Photos by Giovanni Solis