



Lake County 2050
Spanish-Speaking Community Focus Group Summary
Saint Mary Immaculate Church, Lakeport
October 16, 2024

Meeting Overview

Lake County hosted a focus group with Spanish-speaking community members the evening of Wednesday, October 16, from 6:00 pm until 8:00 pm as part of Lake County 2050, the comprehensive update to Lake County's General Plan. The event brought together 30 Spanish-speaking residents in the county to discuss pressing community needs and areas for improvement. The meeting was hosted by Lake County staff with support from AmeriCorps members and Equilingual Interpretation and Translation. This report synthesizes the key ideas discussed, highlighting the collective concerns and recommendations from the participants.

Process

The session began with a presentation providing background information about Lake County 2050, with a focus on the Environmental Justice Element and outreach conducted to date. Following the presentation, participants divided into four groups to discuss 5 guiding questions (listed below) designed to elicit feedback on community needs and priorities and best practices for engaging with the Spanish-speaking community. Each group recorded their responses on charts and then reconvened with the larger group to present their insights. During these presentations, many comments received affirmation from other groups, indicating widespread agreement on the topics discussed.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you like most about your community? What would you like to see supported, preserved, or enhanced as part of this planning effort?
2. What are the challenges facing your community? What would you like to see changed to make it a better place to live and work?
3. What do you see as the key issues related to the six environmental justice topics listed below in Lake County? Are there other aspects to environmental justice you would like to see the General Plan address?
 - Exposure to pollution and/or poor air quality
 - Access to needed public facilities and services, such as public transit
 - Affordable access to fresh produce and nutritious foods
 - Affordable access to healthy living spaces, free of crowding and unsanitary conditions
 - Access to recreation and physical activity
 - Opportunities for community engagement
4. What are the best ways to engage Lake County's equity priority communities, including Spanish-speaking residents, busy families, and those who are disabled?

5. What are the greatest housing-related needs or preferences of the Spanish speaking community?

Key Ideas Discussed

Detailed notes from each group’s discussion of the five questions are provided at the end of this summary. Key ideas are synthesized below.

Safety in the Community and Schools

Safety emerged as a primary concern, with many participants expressing worries over the lack of security in local neighborhoods and schools, citing frequent fights and a general sense of insecurity. Community members agreed on the need for improved safety measures across the county, particularly in educational settings.

Accessible Housing and Housing Programs

Affordable housing is a significant need within the community, with specific emphasis on housing accessible to low- and middle-income families and those outside of agricultural work. There was consensus on the need for programs to support homeownership and affordable rental options, addressing the high costs of housing that many residents face.

Community Resources, Information Access, and High-Quality Bilingual Services

Many participants noted challenges in accessing essential resources, particularly for healthcare, home ownership, and educational programs. There was strong agreement on the need for high-quality bilingual services and professional interpreters. Community members expressed frustration over the inconsistency in bilingual communication, noting that in many cases, information from agencies—such as schools—is not effectively conveyed. Instances of miscommunication have led to misunderstandings and a lack of clear information, causing residents to feel that progress cannot be achieved. Participants strongly encouraged the inclusion of skilled bilingual staff to ensure accurate communication and improved access to information.

Environmental Concerns – Lake and Cannabis Pollution

The condition of the lake was a shared concern among participants, who noted the unpleasant algae odor and potential chemical pollution affecting the lake's cleanliness. Additionally, many community members expressed concern over chemical pollutants associated with local cannabis production, highlighting the need to address both lake maintenance and environmental health impacts to benefit both health and tourism.

Infrastructure Improvements

The need for enhanced infrastructure, including street repairs, public lighting, and recreational spaces, was frequently mentioned. Participants expressed a shared desire for better maintained streets, particularly in underserved areas, and advocated for improved lighting in residential neighborhoods to enhance safety.

Take Aways

The focus group allowed Spanish-speaking community members to voice their concerns and aspirations for the Lake County area. Participants were enthusiastic about being included in this local planning initiative,

appreciating the opportunity to actively contribute to decisions affecting their lives. They expressed a strong interest in continued involvement in similar decision-making processes and emphasized the critical need for high-quality bilingual communication to facilitate their full engagement.

The community looks forward to prompt follow-up on these discussions and hopes for an increased focus on professional bilingual services that ensure clarity and accuracy. They are eager to see more inclusive community planning initiatives and sustained efforts by the County to keep them involved in future decision-making processes.

GROUP 1 CHARTS

Participant Name Omitted

Participant Name Omitted

Participant Name Omitted

Lucerne

Fix Streets 1-2

Lake, Nothing for youth, Entertainment

Public Facilities

Rain, There are no buildings to go out
(for recreation)

Housing for home ownership

Safety in the community/ Schools

Lighting for the homes

Childcare facilities, not enough spaces (to enroll
children)

Safety

Help to find resources and more information for all
i.e. how to own a home, Doctors, and School
programs etc.

2.

Safety in the community, schools (too many fights)

Street lighting

Improve Street

There are no places

Public Services

When it rains there are no buildings (places) to go out.

Not inclusive of children

Only homes and commerce

Environmental Justice

Childcare, Free childcare programs for low in-
come.

No air pollution

Cannabis chemicals

Lake pollution, algae, smells bad, chemicals

More Representation

Resources, do not know how to access for youth,
adults

3.

More childcare

Free centers, programs

Cannabis Chemicals

Lake Pollution, algae, smells too much

4.

More Representation

Resources for all and easy to access for youth and adults

Find information to places or doctors.

Seek and help and refer to places for information

Lack of information

Housing, programs to help people become home-owners

-Too much noise at night
2 & 3

Safety in the community and schools (too many fights)

Street lighting

Improve streets (1st and 2nd street Lucerne)

There are no public places and services

When it rains there are no buildings to go to.

More childcare options

free centers, programs

Cannabis chemicals,

Lake pollution smells too much

4.

More Representation

Resources for all and easy to access for youth and adults

Find information to places such as doctors.

GROUP 2 CHARTS

Oct.16.2024

1. Safety

Tranquility
Small town
Nature
Scenic Landscape

2. Situation, community unity

Lake pollution-algae odor
More community participation
Community workshops
Street lighting
Better roads
Fire hazards mitigation in vacant lots
Large retailers for basic needs/ more options
Bicycle lanes
Public transportation and medical transportation
Regular maintenance of rain drainage systems

3. Fires

Flooding
Electrical PSPs
High (cost) of utilities
High (cost) of housing
Access to housing for low and medium income
Food and gas high prices
Access to fresh foods
Property insurance
Medical insurance
Canceled fire insurance
First responders (police and firefighters)
Housing programs for first time buyers
More specialty doctors
No planting cannabis with permission from neighbor
Cablecars on Lake to promote tourism
Cleaning and environmental health of schools
Centers for youth/ women/ children
Attention (services) for senior citizens
Better distribution of information regarding resources available.
Recreational parks, community gardens
Parties
Promote events i.e. walks
Having the vision of heritage for our children

GROUP 3 CHARTS

Housing for all

1

- Healthy Environment
- Improve the cleanliness of the Lake
- Improve the roads in areas that are not maintained by the county
- The festivals that represent our culture/ history
Dia de la Independencia (Independence Day), 5 de Mayo, Dia de los Muertos

2

- Housing for all
- Transportation
- Many agencies use technology for applications (for jobs, services)
- Interpreters in agencies
- More job opportunities
- Places to exercises/ activities (community centers)
- More assistance resources
- Free floor space for sports (soccer for children)

3

Air-no problem
More access to bilingual staff

4

Meetings/ informational workshops i.e. help for women
Drug use prevention
Ana Santana—Healthy Start

5

- Affordable Housing for all (without it having to only be for agricultural works or having field of work be a determining factor)
- Accessible Medical Insurance
- Free clinics for medical services

GROUP 4 CHARTS

1

- * The Lake
- * Coexistence and Tranquility
- * The church
- * The help in terms of the community food banks

Improve:

Improve touristic spots (Lake)

Improve education

Improve the observation and attention in the schools in terms of emotional wellbeing

- * Prevention for youth
- * Staff that are trained to listen

2. Challenges

- Language
 - *Housing
 - * Centers for addiction prevention
 - * Recreational places for children
 - * Counseling for parents (emotional support)
 - *Childcare

Changes

- * Politicians
- *More Supports
 - Educational
 - Recreational
 - Food

3

- *Cannabis
- *Excessive use of chemicals
- *Lighting
- *Fix the streets

4 Community Involvement

- * Invitation to community events
- * More notifications in Spanish
- * More programs to participate in
- * The help in terms of the community food banks
- * Attractive events
- * More ramps for people with disabilities

5 Major Needs

- * Accessible housing for those who do not work in the fields or are low income
- * More laundromats in the community
- * Hotels
- * More stores
- * More health (general) clinics
- * More homeless shelters
- * More parks
- * More places to do physical activities—run, dance, swim

ORIGINAL MEETING NOTES