

TO: Contra Costa Sustainability Commission
FROM: Nick Despota, Doria Robinson, Wes Sullens
SUBJECT: Draft Proposal for Environmental Justice Rubric
DATE: February 25, 2019

In 2007, Contra Costa County has passed an Environmental Justice Policy. The Sustainability Commission recommends adoption of a simple rubric, or assessment tool, that can be applied to any program or initiative to test its compliance with principles of the county's EJ policy.

The purpose of the rubric (an example is attached) is to bridge the gap between broad statements of principles and day-to-day operations within each department.

Our recommendation is to incorporate this assessment tool within the General Plan. Rather than consigned to an appendix, separate from each of the document's elements, we envision that the rubric be woven throughout the General Plan.

After reviewing the proposed rubric (next page), please consider these questions:

Framing: Does the reference to the County's Environmental Justice policy tacitly exclude departments whose work is not "environmental," such as the Probation Department or Veterans Services? Does framing this as "Environmental Justice" let some departments off the hook for inviting public participation and engagement? Should this rubric be framed and titled differently?

Positioning: How do we position this document on the mountain of policy statements that govern operations so they are most likely to be woven into a department's standard operating procedures? How can we cultivate a *disposition* to think in the Justice perspective, not just a requirement to do so? We're talking culture.

Timing: How can we insure that the public is engaged *early on* in the process of developing a project or initiative, and not after its most fundamental features have already been nailed down.

Accountability: Without adding to the burden of paperwork and reporting, is there a way to insure that this rubric is *really being used* to guide the development of policies and initiatives?

Do our county's projects and policies meet environmental justice goals?

The following is a rubric for assessing the degree to which environmental justice goals are being met, or neglected, by a proposed project or policy.

1. Are public materials and workshops presented in the languages of residents who may be affected by a project or policy?
2. Are meetings and workshops scheduled at times and locations that enable participation by working people and those without cars? Are notices of these events distributed through diverse media, not just online media?
3. Do all neighborhoods have opportunities to engage in decision-making conversations?
4. Has data collection reflected the economic, gender and racial diversity of the affected population?
5. Are the costs and benefits of a project or policy shared equally by all who may be affected, or are there disproportionate impacts?
6. Are economic opportunities concentrated within one segment of a population or area, or are they available to all who may wish to take advantage of them?
7. What will be the indirect or unintended impacts on the quality of life of residents within different communities?