



Community Solutions for Climate Resilience
An Equitable Path Forward for Santa Barbara County



ABOUT THE CLIMATE RESILIENCE ROUNDTABLES

Over the course of 15 months, the Community Environmental Council, guided by a steering committee of local climate leaders and community partners, held a series of Climate Resilience Roundtables that examined Santa Barbara County’s climate threats and explored ways to protect and strengthen communities in the face of climate change. This report summarizes what we heard, learned and gathered from all the roundtables on how we can achieve resilience.

These roundtables were designed as community listening and idea generating sessions organized around the key climate threats to our region: increased wildfire, sea level rise, extreme heat, drought, more intense storms, and decreasing snow pack and water supply. Roundtable participants considered these threats through the lens of public and mental health, social justice, economic impacts, infrastructure vulnerabilities, and natural systems and working lands.

There were **over 580 participants** in the series who attended one or more of the roundtables. This diverse group of stakeholder participants were from government agencies, community-based organizations, social justice and environmental advocates, grass-roots leaders, elected officials, climate practitioners and frontline workers impacted by climate change.

The first two roundtables were in-person meetings, one in November 2019 focused on wildfire and smoke, and one in March 2020 on sea level rise and flooding. The third and fourth roundtables, held virtually in August and September 2020, explored the intersection of climate-related disasters, health, and social and economic inequities that disproportionately impact our most vulnerable community members. *Community Solutions to Protect Against Climate Change* in March 2021 was the last roundtable of the series and the culmination of 15 months of community conversation and analysis.



ABOUT THE RESILIENCE OPPORTUNITY MATRIX

Key to the design of the roundtables was to create an inclusive space where all voices in the room had equal weight and consideration. The LegacyWorks Group, led by Carl Palmer and Carrie Kappel, skillfully facilitated these community conversations, setting the stage for rich dialogue and meaningful input. Participants worked collectively in breakout groups to discuss their ideas for addressing climate impacts and ways of adapting to future threats. A corresponding Resilience Opportunity Matrix was developed for each of the roundtables from the conversations, ideas and suggestions we gathered and transferred verbatim into the matrices. Collectively these contain over 700 **big bold ideas and solutions** generated over the course of the roundtable series and are available for anyone to explore. This final report highlights the top ideas, themes and guiding principles that emerged from all these four roundtables.

Stories of Resilience Opportunity Matrix - <http://cec.pub/crr-sor>

Vulnerability, Health & Equity Opportunity Matrix - <http://cec.pub/crr-vhe>

Sea Level Rise & Flooding Opportunity Matrix - <http://cec.pub/crr-slr>

Wildfire & Smoke Opportunity Matrix - <http://cec.pub/crr-ws>



ROUNDTABLE SERIES ANALYSIS

In order for this vast amount of community-generated data to be useful, it was necessary to consolidate, refine and make sense of all these ideas without losing integrity or intent of the contributors. Going from 700 ideas – ranging from conceptual ideas and values propositions to tangible project suggestions and existing activities – to the 50 top ideas and themes required months of sifting through the data and evaluating the rich outpouring of information generated through the series.

A work session was held in late 2020 with the project steering committee and key roundtable series participants to analyze and make sense of this data. Ideas were consolidated into three categories for deeper analysis: projects, networks and collaboration, and values and principles. The top 10-15 ideas from each roundtable were also elevated and compared, and a final scan of the entire ‘idea pool’ was done to ensure no important idea or concept was overlooked. This synthesis resulted in the top 50 ideas for the series. The sense-making team also identified common themes and insights that were threaded throughout the roundtables and created a set of guiding principles needed for a just climate resilience.



KEY THEMES & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Throughout the series, participants stressed that the challenges we face from compounding climate threats require collaboration across sectors at a pace and scale beyond anything we've yet attempted. This requires building trust, having a shared vision, social cohesion, and collective capacity support. That in turn requires empowering everyone in the community to show up with their whole selves with all their gifts and inviting them into a leadership role to be a part of the solution. Perhaps above all, the crises we face requires taking bold action together with urgency and learning by doing.

These key themes and insights lifted up from the roundtable series reflect a new way of thinking about climate resilience and, in many cases, demands a whole new way of working across boundaries and hand in hand with communities. The roundtable series has highlighted the need for a 'whole community approach' that works at the intersection of climate change, health, equity and the environment.

Guiding principles were developed from the themes and insights gleaned from the roundtable series that underpin true climate resilience – one that is just and equitable. They are reflected in a four-stage framework – vision, integration, empowerment and action, and should be used to guide planning process and serve as criteria for determining community priorities.

“

What most resonated for many participants was the need for more access for people to participate in climate planning and government processes, and to eliminate barriers that prevent people from having their voices heard. Our community members should be in decision-making positions – not just used for their knowledge or to 'check a box'. This roundtable is the first step of many towards inclusive planning practices that will bring change to the Central Coast.

”

Genevieve Flores-Haro
Associate Director
Mixteco Indígena Community Organizing Project
Proyecto Mixteco Indígena Organización Comunitaria
(MICOP)

Center Equity - There can be no resilience for anyone without resilience for all, so resilience building initiatives must center equity and meet core needs of under-resourced community members.

Build Capacity - We don't yet have the capacity needed to build resilience and address our intersecting challenges, so we need to structure our investments and our undertakings to maximize capacity building as a priority outcome while generating the immediate project outputs we need.

Expand Leadership - We have vast reservoirs of untapped leadership potential in all of our communities that we can access by expanding leadership opportunities and directing resources thoughtfully to compensate under-resourced community member time to play leadership roles.

Self Determination/Empowerment - Our under-resourced and under-estimated communities are resilient by nature and necessity. Their voices are often missing or under-represented in planning and governmental processes that determine public investment and direction, disempowering them. We need to ensure their voices are heard by redesigning planning processes around their needs so that public policy and investment become empowering rather than disempowering.

Education and Awareness Raising - Look to those with lived experiences and indigenous knowledge for insights and wisdom that can be incorporated into education campaigns. Ensure education is culturally relevant, coordinated and utilizes innovative ways to engage and inspire people to act.

Learn by Doing - No one has the answer or answers, so get into action and learn by doing, treating each undertaking as a learning opportunity.

Work at the Intersections - Our challenges are intersectional, interdisciplinary, inter-organizational and require integrated, holistic, networked approaches. Prioritize projects at these intersections to generate multifaceted impact and community benefit and to build the skills and experience needed to work in these more complex arenas.

Neighborhood/Relational/Human Scale

- Resilience begins at the relational level, between individuals, families, neighbors and neighborhoods. Invest in this social foundation first and in parallel with larger scale physical infrastructure.

Invest Locally - Redirect resources wherever possible from top down expert consultants to local 'solutioneering' facilitated by local partners and tapping local expertise from throughout all community social and economic strata, building solutions on local wisdom and generating positive externalities like capacity building, agency, empowerment, distributed leadership

Shift Role of Government - Do more through partnerships, less through direct service. Build collaborative capacity of individuals, neighborhoods, communities, non-government agencies, advocates to take on greater control.

Align Plans and Work Effort - Alignment is key to interagency and beyond. Ensure that all the various planning efforts have common threads, goals and purposes. Eliminate conflicting efforts and look for ways to extend resources for multi-benefits.

Prepare for Resources - Prepare to tap resources that flow in/post disasters and in climate directives from state and federal government. Be prepared to build resilience when you can.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

VISION

Shared Vision
a shared framework of meaning and purpose for climate/community resilience

Whole Hearted
embraces of other ideas, lived experiences, and non-Western institutional thinking and approaches

Capacity Building
provides tools and resources for individuals, neighborhoods, organizations and agencies to engage and broaden leadership

Empowering
empowers people at the individual, household, neighborhood, community and county level to engage in decision-making, set priorities and implement actions

Trust Building
builds community trust in resilience leadership at government, nonprofit and community level; instills feeling of safety and support

EMPOWERMENT

Social Cohesion
builds and strengthens relationships within and across neighborhoods, communities and populations

Systems Thinking / Integrative
meets triple bottom line: equity/climate-environment/economy

Collaborative
includes multiple entities, stakeholders, networks; cross-jurisdictional, cross-organizational and cross-sector

INTEGRATION

Action Oriented
solutions or actions (large and small) build toward long term resilience vision

Scalable
solutions or actions are innovative, scalable and transferable

Measurable
solutions or actions have tangible results that can be measured and documented

ACTION

ROUNDTABLE EXERCISE

The final roundtable of the series, Community Solutions to Protect Against Climate Change, was in two parts – a morning webinar to present the findings from the Climate Resilience Roundtable series, and an afternoon work session designed for participants to explore opportunities for collaboration. The ‘Top 50’ climate resilience ideas, along with the key themes and principles were presented at the webinar. Participants were given the opportunity to review these top ideas on a shared electronic workspace and to ‘upvote’ those that were the most compelling or felt most relevant. Sixteen ideas were crowd selected through this process.

Participants in the afternoon work session self-selected their breakout groups based on the top 16 ‘upvoted’ ideas from the morning webinar. Using a collaborative project planning framework, the groups worked collectively on an initial project outline for their selected ideas by identify critical needs and next steps for moving toward action. The project framework exercise was intended to stimulate a broader conversation about what is needed to move ideas from concept into proposals that are ready for funding. In total, eight project frameworks were developed at this work session. These are still evolving and it is hoped that their future development will be aided by collective interests and capacity funding to further develop their scope.

Category	Strategies
Community Resilience Planning and Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Inclusive planning + Mutual aid planning + Leadership, empowerment & capacity building
Neighborhood Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Resilience centers & Hubs + Neighborhood networks
Structure, Infrastructure and Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Structure protection & home resilience + Zoning & land use strategies
Nature-based Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Natural Buffers + Ecosystem Services
Energy, Transportation and Equitable Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Distributed energy & innovation + Transportation planning + Green jobs & equitable economy
Safety Net Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Housing Affordability + Food Access + Health & Wellness + Financial aid
Education & Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Climate resilience campaigns + Educational tools & strategies + Teaching climate science

REPORT ORGANIZATION

The 'Top 50' ideas and solutions generated at the Climate Resilience Roundtables are sorted into seven categories and 19 strategies. These correlate to discussions and themes that came up consistently at one or all of the roundtables. Some strategies were specific to the roundtable topic or focus, while others were cross-cutting and came up throughout the series. For example, the Wildfire & Smoke and Sea Level Rise & Flooding roundtables had the most emphasis on structure protection, land use planning, distributed energy systems and use of nature-based strategies as resilience solutions. In contrast, the two roundtables focused on health, equity and vulnerable populations emphasized the need to increase access and inclusion in public processes, community empowerment and engagement, and economic equality as the best strategies for building resilience. Strategies that cut across all roundtables included building resilience at the neighborhood level through networks and multi-function resilience centers, and ensuring basic human needs are met in recognition that access to housing, food and jobs are essential elements to resilience. The need for more collaboration across all sectors, agencies, networks and cultures was an overarching theme in the roundtable discussions and recommendations.

The top 50 ideas are presented in the chart (pages 10-11). The 'upvoted' 16 ideas are embedded in the Top 50 in order to see them in context to the other strategies. We also provided these 'upvoted' ideas in a separate chart (pages 12-13). Many of the top ideas cut across multiple issue areas. Their success will require the coordination and collaboration of many different entities. Some ideas are already being worked on by government agencies, community-based organizations and advocacy groups, and others are in early-stage development as we seek collaborators and capacity needed to move them forward. It is our hope that this matrix serves as a resource and incubator for community-generated climate resilience initiatives and projects.

“

I was astounded to see so many leaders from different sectors come together to acknowledge climate issues, brainstorm solutions, and affirm that collective action is critical to making the changes necessary to build resilience in our community. I was energized by the breadth of knowledge roundtable participants offered and the group's commitment to using our diverse experience to strengthen Santa Barbara County's climate resilience.

”

*Van Do-Reynoso MPH, PhD
Director, Santa Barbara County Public Health*

7 Categories

19 Strategies

50 Objectives/ Tactics

👍 Upvoted at roundtable - top 16

Community Resilience Planning and Empowerment

Inclusive Planning

- Meaningful, accessible and culturally competent engagement early in the process 👍
- Include diverse knowledge systems and lived experiences in visioning and planning

Mutual Aid Planning

- Map community resources, create deployment plan with mutual aid agreements
- 'Code of conduct' for mutual aid responders from other jurisdictions (cultural sensitivity)

Leadership, Empowerment & Capacity Building

- Support and incorporate community centered place-based planning
- Increase community representation in decision-making bodies
- Develop youth 'Climate Justice Fellows' to train leaders to weave social/enviro. justice and climate actions 👍

Neighborhood Connectivity

Resilience Centers & Hubs

- Utilize existing trusted locations (i.e., school, community center, churches, gov. build) to support the community before, during and after disruptions (i.e., clean air, cooling, food distribution, training, services, off-grid charging, information) 👍

Neighborhood Networks

- Network development and cohesion through block parties and 'Get to Know Your Neighbor' day
- Deploy 'community ambassadors' working across agencies to connection and listen at the neighborhood level

Energy, Transportation and Equitable Economy

Distributed Energy & Innovation

- Create mechanisms that allow renewable energy to be sold back into the grid (with transparent pricing) 👍
- Foster innovation within utilities and regulatory agencies that encourages local distributed energy growth 👍
- Develop network of distributed energy microgrids and prioritize installation at government and key community centers/hubs 👍

Transportation Planning

- Hwy 101 Alternative transportation plan between Ventura and Santa Barbara County to alleviate disruption to commerce and workers getting to jobs 👍

Green Jobs & Equable Economy

- Support Green New Deal policies for local economic empowerment and opportunity
- Foster a sustainability labor network and link to Green New Deal
- Create 'Civilian Resilience Corps' funded by public dollars to support

Structure, Infrastructure and Land Use

Structure Protection & Home Resilience

- Home hardening for fire and climate extremes (through tax incentives, rebates, loans, grants) 👍
- Internet and hardware for all - for access to public health and disaster info; options for home schooling and work from home

Zoning & Land Use Strategies

- Climate-safe land use plan aligned with all General Plans (consider down-zoning, new development standards, rebuilding alternatives in high climate risk areas) 👍
- Prioritized protection plans for socially vulnerable neighborhoods at highest risk for climate impacts
- Comprehensive regional plan for managed retreat (high fire areas, flooding and sea level rise risk, etc.) 👍
- Use SOAR-type initiative to prevent loss of ag lands that serve as climate buffers (slow fire, flood and provide local food)*

*SOAR = Save Our Agricultural Resources

Education & Communication

Climate Resilience Campaigns

- Develop a regional coordinated education campaign on climate impacts, threats and resilience 👍
- Seek input/learnings from community and adapt into culturally appropriate education materials and outreach strategies
- Invest in multilingual communication capacity within all disaster, public health and service agencies, and provide info. in all native languages

Educational Tools & Strategies

- Utilize innovative educational tools and simulations of climate projections (i.e., Virtual Reality, art, film, discussion forums, etc.)
- Attract and elevate youth voices and youth-led initiatives by designing events they want to attend (have them design the event)
- Create opportunities for people to share messages of hope, grief, loss of nature, etc. through art and other mediums
- Identify personal and community low-cost resilience and emergency planning actions anyone can take (everyone feels part of the solutions)

Teaching Climate Science

- Incorporate climate science and resilience planning into school curriculum 👍
- Increase climate science literacy for Spanish-language speakers
- Use more inclusive terminology and make climate science easier to understand and absorb by the general public

Nature-based Strategies

Natural Buffers

- Community envisioned and designed fuels management network
- WUI fire buffer using a mosaic of ag, veg. treated areas, and open spaces (through easements, incentives, land use policy and buy-out programs) 👍

Ecosystem Services

- Regional sediment management program to ensure sand on beaches for coastal protection
- Green infrastructure master plan (restore ecosystems, living shorelines, etc.) 👍
- Restore indigenous access to use and manage lands to reduce fire risks and improve ecosystems 👍

Safety Net Support

Housing Affordability

- Address housing affordability, inequities and risk factors (i.e., next to freeways, high hazard areas, etc.)
- Work with business and ag to problem-solve and invest in housing solutions for the most vulnerable people (low-income, ag workers, homeless)
- State level land use changes to increase local housing
- Look at co-operative housing and transportation models

Food Access

- Expand access to healthy local food (i.e. free community garden space, grow your own, reclaim 'commons' for food growing, humanitarian food programs, etc.) 👍

Health & Wellness

- Comprehensive whole-community wellness support system for mental health recovery post-disaster (immediate and longer-term)
- Targeted mental health support for high risk, vulnerable communities and individuals (those with PTSD, clinically depressed, etc.)
- Alignment with Public Health and the health care system on climate resilience goals
- Fund a community supportive system that shifts resources from policing to social programs

Financial Aid

- Utilize a Mutual Aid response model to support minimum wage workers displaced during disruptions
- Create a County & State relief fund for undocumented immigrant workers & families
- Use a carbon tax to support the most vulnerable populations in climate disasters

Big ideas and projects from over 700 ideas, solutions, suggestions generated at the Climate Resilience Roundtables

Top 16 Ideas

Community Resilience Planning and Empowerment

Inclusive Planning

Meaningful, accessible and culturally competent engagement early in the process

Community Resilience Planning and Empowerment

Leadership, Empowerment & Capacity Building

Develop youth 'Climate Justice Fellows' to train leaders to weave social/enviro. justice and climate actions

Safety Net Support

Food Access

Expand access to healthy local food (i.e. free community garden space, grow your own, reclaim 'commons' for food growing, humanitarian food programs, etc.)

Neighborhood Connectivity

Resilience Centers & Hubs

Utilize existing trusted locations (i.e., school, community center, churches, gov. build) to support the community before, during and after disruptions (i.e., clean air, cooling, food distribution, training, services, off-grid charging, information)

Structure, Infrastructure and Land use

Structure Protection & Home Resilience

Home hardening for fire and climate extremes (through tax incentives, rebates, loans, grants)

Structure, Infrastructure and Land use

Zoning & Land Use Strategies

Climate-safe land use plan aligned with all General Plans (consider down-zoning, new development standards, rebuilding alternatives in high climate risk areas)

Structure, Infrastructure and Land use

Zoning & Land Use Strategies

Comprehensive regional plan for managed retreat (high fire areas, flooding and sea level rise risk, etc.)

Energy, Transportation and Equitable Economy

Distributed energy & innovation

Create mechanisms that allow renewable energy to be sold back into the grid (with transparent pricing)

Energy, Transportation and Equitable Economy

Distributed Energy & Innovation

Foster innovation within utilities and regulatory agencies that encourages local distributed energy growth

Energy, Transportation and Equitable Economy

Distributed Energy & Innovation

Develop network of distributed energy microgrids and prioritize installation at government and key community centers/hubs

Energy, Transportation and Equitable Economy

Transportation Planning

Hwy 101 Alternative transportation plan between Ventura and Santa Barbara County to alleviate disruption to commerce and workers getting to jobs

Nature-based Strategies

Natural Buffers

WUI fire buffer using a mosaic of ag, veg. treated areas, and open spaces (through easements, incentives, land use policy and buy-out programs)

Nature-based Strategies

Ecosystem Services

Green infrastructure master plan (restore ecosystems, living shorelines, etc.)

Nature-based Strategies

Ecosystem Services

Restore indigenous access to use and manage lands to reduce fire risks and improve ecosystems

Education & Communication

Climate Resilience Campaigns

Develop a regional coordinated education campaign on climate impacts, threats and resilience

Education & Communication

Teaching Climate Science

Incorporate climate science and resilience planning into school curriculum

STEERING COMMITTEE

Mimi Audelo
City of Carpinteria
Emergency Services

Rachel Couch
California
Coastal Conservancy

Genevieve Flores-Haro
Mixteco Indigena Community
Organizing Project (MICOP)

Aeron Arlin Genet
Santa Barbara County
Air Pollution
Control District

Jennifer Hernández
Community
Environmental Council

Dr. Carrie Kappel
LegacyWorks Group

Iris Kelly
Community
Environmental Council

Sharyn Main
Community
Environmental Council

Lucia Marquez
Central Coast Alliance United
for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE)

Monique Myers
California Sea Grant

Carl Palmer
LegacyWorks Group

Abe Powell
Santa Barbara Bucket Brigade

Christopher Ragland
Healing Justice: BLM S.B.

Ana Rosa Rizo-Centino
Facilitator
Stories of Resilience Roundtable

Theresa Romero
Santa Ynez Band
of Chumash Indians

Michelle Sevilla
Office of Assemblymember
Steve Bennett

Ashley Watkins
Santa Barbara County
Sustainability Division

Garrett Wong
Santa Barbara County
Sustainability Division

Sigrid Wright
Community Environmental Council

Lucas Zucker
Central Coast Alliance United
for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE)

THANK YOU SPONSORS



JAMES S. BOWER
FOUNDATION
Re-envisioning.



SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to acknowledge LegacyWorks Group, led by Carl Palmer and Carrie Kappel, in designing and facilitating the Climate Resilience Roundtable Series. Their leadership, guidance and innovative approach to generating respectful dialog and idea generation was the hallmark of these roundtables and has become the model for other community convenings.



CEC builds on-the-ground momentum to reverse the threat of the climate crisis.

We transform the systems that fuel it.

We safeguard the community from its impacts.

We lead, we partner, we act.

And every day, we move people to create a more resilient Central Coast.

1219 State Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101
805-963-0583
EIN: 94-1728064



[Learn more at cecsb.org](https://cecsb.org)

PHOTO CREDITS

Gabriel Vargas & Blake Bronstad
Jenna Driscoll / Santa Barbara Channelkeeper
Sarita Relis
Teresa Romero
Shutterstock
USDA / Public Domain