

Memorandum

DATE	April 21, 2021		
TO	Sarah Neuse 831-420-5092 sneuse@cityofsantacruz.com	FROM	Meredith Rupp, Project Manager Emilio Balingit, Associate Planner

RE: “Estamos diseñando un Santa Cruz para Todos” Spanish-Language Event Summary

This memorandum summarizes the first Spanish language community event for the City of Santa Cruz’s Multi-Family Objective Standards Project entitled “Estamos diseñando un Santa Cruz para Todos (We are designing a Santa Cruz for All).” The event took place via Zoom webinar on Wednesday, March 24, 2021 from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm.

Although we tried a variety of ways to broadly promote this event amongst the area’s Latinx community, we only had one member of the community attend aside from a community leader who served as an introductory speaker. We are revisiting our approach to try to better engage the Latinx community moving forward.

The purpose of this memorandum is to:

- 1) **Memorialize a shared understanding** of the event across the project team by documenting and translating content from Spanish to English.
- 2) **Further our equity goals** by tracking who is represented at the event and who we need to try harder to reach with the materials that were created for the event, and in future outreach.
- 3) **Build community trust** by providing full transparency of the results we received.

CONTEXT

The City and consultants identified the following desired outcomes for this event:

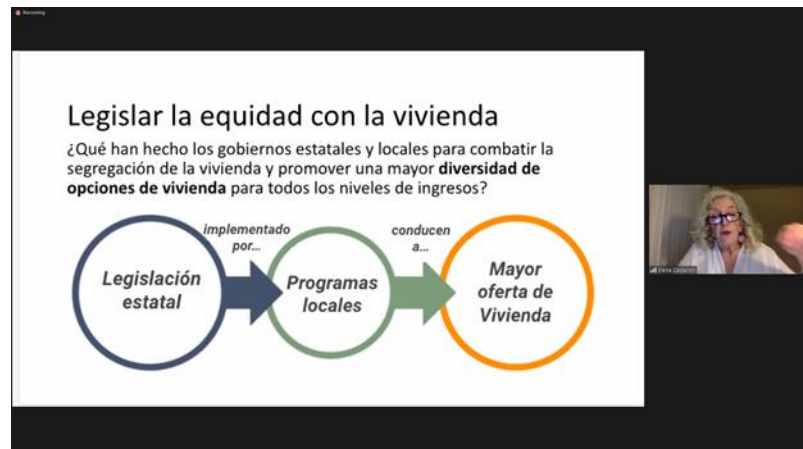
- A safe space for the Latinx community is created that attracts new voices to the discussion on housing;
- Relationships are built with members of the Latinx community;

- Community members understand why the project is needed relative to State legislation (e.g., RHNA, SB330);
- The Latinx community knows why their input is important for this project and is encouraged to continue to participate in the project and other housing projects;
- The discussion on housing is reframed to include racial justice and the connection between housing opportunity and race; and
- The event furthers the project team's racial equity goals by including the voices of underrepresented populations.

As discussed more thoroughly at the end of this memorandum, we were not successful in reaching a substantial number of Spanish speakers and we still have work to do to achieve our racial equity goals. We are optimistic that some outcomes above can still be achieved through additional outreach the City will undertake to disseminate project materials from the event. We will also incorporate lessons learned from this event into future engagement events.

EVENT DESCRIPTION

The event began with a brief introduction to the goals for the event by **Daniel "Nane" Alejandre**, the founder of Barrios Unidos. Following this introduction, **Elena Castanon**, Director of Latino Communications at InterEthnica, presented information about the Objective Standards project in Spanish, including the background local and State context for the regulations



Elena Castanon presents an introduction to the project.

governing new housing development. After this presentation from the consultant team, the attendants were shown a recording of Gretchen Regenhardt and Diana Alfaro's March 11, 2021 presentation on the history of the relationship between institutional racism and single-family zoning, which had been dubbed with a Spanish-language narration.

The presentation included a raffle for a \$50 gift card to Safeway and instructions for how to keep up to date on the project. Following the presentation, staff and consultants responded to questions submitted through Zoom's built-in chat function and asked verbally. After the Q&A, the schedule and next steps for the project were shown to the attendants.

WHO WAS THERE

Webinar panelists included representatives from the City of Santa Cruz, InterEthnica, Urban Planning Partners, and Kristen Hall City Design. Guest speakers Gretchen Regenhardt (formerly with California Rural Legal Assistance) and Diana Alfaro (MidPen Housing Corporation) also attended to answer any questions.

Outreach efforts were only successful in garnering attendance from one member of the public for the live webinar. In addition to the one attendee, Nane Alejandrez also participated as a member of the public by providing feedback and asking questions after his introduction.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Feedback was gathered via a live Question and Answer (Q&A) session during the webinar and an exit survey circulated after the event. Some questions were also answered in the Zoom chat function.

Zoom Q&A

Due to the small number of attendants, the post-presentation question-and-answer portion of the event was informal. Where needed, questions and responses were translated live into Spanish.

All the questions posed in the chat were answered live, including several questions regarding how development standards are applied and enforced, and how recent state laws affect how the City creates these development standards. In addition to questions regarding specifics of development standards and how the project will affect these standards, this portion of the event also included a discussion of broader issues related to the Latinx community in Santa Cruz. Attendants voiced concerns that the City's engagement efforts with the Latinx community were not robust enough and that projects focused on long-term housing goals do not take into account the immediate housing needs of low-income families.

To hear live answers to select questions, watch the webinar recording here:

<https://www.cityofsantacruz.com/Home/Components/Calendar/Event/19177/4251>. The Q&A portion begins at timestamp 39:21. Discrete questions apart from the more informal discussion regarding the relationship between the City and Latinx community were all answered verbally. The summary below is a mix of written questions in the chat and verbal discussion.

1. What is the state law [that limits City discretion on approving housing developments] that she is talking about? [9:20 in video].
 - a. SB2, SB 35, SB 167, and SB330 are State laws restricting the City's use of subjective standards for evaluating housing development proposals. See the [City's Housing 101](#) handout for more details.
2. If more people from the Latinx community get involved, how can our participation affect the new standards for housing? [1:07:55]

- a. The community will help decide what the standards for new developments are – building height, parking, the size of new buildings. Many times, community feedback focuses only on what these buildings are like from the outside – we hope that participation can help us write standards that create buildings that are great to live in as well as live next to.
3. Are the standards laws? Will these standards be applicable, and how? [1:07:25]
 - a. Yes, these standards are local laws. The Planning Department evaluates each proposal for new housing developments to ensure that they are following all of the standards such as building height, providing enough parking, etc.
4. How can people access units that are available when they are facing other barriers (credit, financial) to renting units? [1:03:01]
 - a. The City maintains a list of affordable housing units that is run by the Economic Development Department – a link to the City’s resources for tenants looking for affordable housing is here: <https://www.cityofsantacruz.com/government/city-departments/economic-development/housing-assistance-information>
5. In 5 years, how many housing units will be constructed in Santa Cruz? [1:11:11]
 - a. It is tough to know exactly – the City only controls the laws governing new housing and cannot finance or build housing on its own. The State estimates that we need 1.8 million more housing units to make up our housing shortage. The City cannot solve all of this on our own, but this project will help to allow a variety of housing types to be constructed in the City. We will continue to work on preserving existing affordable units and protecting existing residents affected by the housing shortage.

Exit Survey

An exit survey was distributed via a link on the project webpage and advertised at the end of the webinar event. At the time of writing, no responses have been received.

DEMOGRAPHICS TRACKER

The live event reached one member of the Latinx community. Additional demographic information was not collected. We are hopeful that disseminating the presentation recording, slides, and video outside the event will increase the number of Spanish speakers that the content reaches.

MEASURING SUCCESS

The event was successful in creating quality Spanish language content that will be accessible to community members who are not typically involved in planning projects. If we succeed in sharing this content with a wider audience online and through more targeted in-person follow-ups, there is potential to achieve more of our outcomes, especially those related to 1) a well-informed community that understands why the project is needed and 2) reframing the discussion on housing to encompass racial justice.

The event was also successful in reaching leaders of the Latinx community who are well-respected in their communities and have access to many people through community-based organizations. Both community leaders were complementary of the authenticity and transparency the City's lead project planner showed and agreed to meet with the City at a later date to talk discuss concerns in more detail. Nane Alejandrez also offered to give the project team in-person access to Latinx community members at the Barrios Unidos center he leads given how important in-person engagement is for the Latinx community.

The event's low attendance indicates that the project team still has work to do hearing from the Latinx community, disseminating why input from the Latinx community is important for the project, and achieving our racial equity goals. The candid discussion we had with attendees is an important first step in creating a safe space for Latinx voices and building relationships. The City and project team members are committed to following up with attendees and we are reconsidering our outreach strategy in terms of what will be most effective in getting meaningful input from the Latinx community moving forward.