



CLIMATE EMERGENCY MOBILIZATION OFFICE CHIEF HEAT OFFICER



Climate Equity LA Community Assembly Impact Report



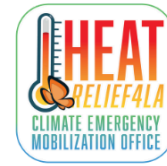
Climate Emergency
Mobilization Office

Board of Public Works,
City of Los Angeles





CLIMATE EMERGENCY MOBILIZATION OFFICE CHIEF HEAT OFFICER



CEMO-Climate Equity LA Community Assembly

Our mission is to drive the co-creation of equitable climate and extreme heat solutions for a resilient, thriving, healthy City of Los Angeles for all.

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1. Acknowledgements

The First People of the Los Angeles Region

We acknowledge the original Indigenous stewards and inhabitants of this land. Los Angeles was founded on the unceded land of the Tongva, Chumash, and Tataviam Nations. By drawing inspiration from Indigenous wisdom and the City's diverse cultures and experiences, we seek to create an equitable decision-making approach to achieving climate and heat resilience solutions for the present and future inhabitants of Los Angeles, while paying proper respect to this land and its original stewards.

We seek to build reciprocity while prioritizing Indigenous and frontline community resilience, with all Angelenos today and tomorrow, to respect the land, water, nature, and air that we share to create a livable, resilient Los Angeles for all humans, and our animal relatives and their homes.

CELA Community Assembly Planning Committee

Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE)

Accelerate Resilience Los Angeles (ARLA)

Comunidades Indígenas en Liderazgo (CIELO)

CSU Northridge (CSUN), Department of Chicana/o Studies

Homeless Healthcare Los Angeles (HHCLA)

Los Angeles Regional Collaborative for Climate Action and Sustainability (LARC)

Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator (LACI)

Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance (LANCSA)

Pacoima Beautiful

Physicians for Social Responsibility Los Angeles (PSR-LA)

UC Irvine

Urban Visionaries and Dream Allies Network

Visión y Compromiso

Water Drop LA

City of Los Angeles

Office of Mayor Karen Bass

Los Angeles City Council

Board of Public Works

Bureau of Street Services, Urban Forestry Division

Department of City Planning

Los Angeles Department of Water and Power

Bureau of Sanitation

Office of Forest Management, Department of Public Works



Community Assembly Facilitators

Momentum Solutions Team: Supported Planning Committee Facilitation

Nicole Hoegl: Day-of Facilitation and Healing Circle

Graphic Facilitator-Recorder: Christopher Fuller, Griot's Eye

All CEMO Staff: Production, Set Up, Logistics, Facilitation

Special Thanks to!

The 11th Hour Project

Los Angeles Trade-Technical College (LATTC): Facilities and Culinary Arts Pathway

ECODiversity: Community interviews and photography

Channel 35, City of Los Angeles

We especially want to thank the Climate Emergency Mobilization Office (CEMO) team and the talented advisors and community leaders who helped create the tone and setting to be vulnerable, human, and compassionate despite the immense pain, sacrifice, and sense of urgency.

2. Introduction and Overview

The Climate Equity LA Community Assembly was a uniquely participatory, equity-focused climate event for the City because to achieve our goal of truly open dialogue, we applied various methods of engagement such as storytelling, visual art, music, and healing circles; this community-driven event created a safe space of shared truths about a historically broken system that most harms pollution, housing, and energy-burdened communities in Los Angeles, but more importantly, highlighted solutions, which we can expand upon with greater depth and understanding because the City staff who are implementing these projects were present to discuss with communities via table-top dialogues and through popular education approaches that empower people to be their most authentic selves and solve problems by also breaking bread and being creative. Communities seek to create an equity-focused ecosystem of community investments, a collective understanding with brave and compassionate people who share their goals of building thriving and healthy communities.

The voices from this event also made it abundantly clear that we can and should accelerate climate solutions by investing first and foremost in the most pollution-impacted communities to reduce risks, create thriving areas with zero greenhouse gas emissions, improve healthcare access, add more affordable healthy housing, improve the built environment, and add more green jobs in these communities. The impacts of these investments will reverberate across the region, and the improvement and outcomes for everyone will be the greatest if we take this equity-focused, place-based approach to problem-solving for the City!

This Assembly was co-designed with collective inspiration through our planning committee process. It was clear that we were all grateful for the understanding and common ground established, the solutions proposed, and real talk about overcoming challenges.

3. Community Assembly Methods of Engagement, Outreach, and Design

The City of Los Angeles' "Climate Equity LA Community Assembly" meaningfully engaged community leaders, across sectors, regions, neighborhoods, Council districts that represent our most pollution-burdened and low-income areas to connect, increase civic participation with the City of Los Angeles, and to collectively identify solutions to the challenges of creating climate- and heat-resilient, thriving communities.

Most participants also represented multicultural and linguistically distinct populations. Through culturally-relevant, accessible engagement practices with the goal of ground-truthing and seeking wisdom from communities, we experienced extraordinarily open and solution-oriented dialogues. Thus, we prioritized the following approaches:

1. Storytelling of experiences with pollution, climate hazards, and extreme heat
2. Music, art, and healing circles
3. Graphic artistic recordings of the Assembly-wide conversations
4. Reels or interviews with community members
5. Testimonials at the podium of various community leaders and their purpose statements
6. City leader-facilitated roundtable dialogues, wherein participants were able to open up in smaller groups before sharing to the larger group
7. Participatory open space workshops (Gratitude Tree/Storytelling 101)

Furthermore, the Community Assembly sessions and workshops were inspired by the dynamic [Social Justice Framework](#) developed by the [Center to Support Excellence in Teaching \(CSET\)](#), Stanford University, Graduate School Of Education.



Social Justice Framework, Center to Support Excellence in Teaching (CSET), Stanford University

This participatory, humanistic, and artistic approach also created a dynamic where City staff, leading the table-top dialogues, organically expressed their gratitude for learning from community members' wisdom. This response was so ubiquitous among all the City facilitators that we followed up with a survey to gather feedback on their experience, which is detailed in the [Track B Participatory Session Report](#).

The commonality among the climate projects presented by the City leaders was that they were all equity-driven and represented distributional climate justice initiatives the City of Los Angeles has invested in, and continues to invest in. The clarity and visibility of these projects at a community event, with an opportunity to engage, challenge, and ask questions to the City leaders and representatives, built trust and knowledge that helped the community understand what solutions were underway, and how they could be improved upon or made more accessible to their areas and neighborhoods.

The storytelling activities resulted in moving and heart-wrenching stories of human suffering and crisis from living within close boundaries of refineries, oil wells, living next to freeways, and metal manufacturers. These were also stories of survival, courage, and leadership leading change which had a profound impact on our City leaders. Communities learned that the City leaders they met are committed to offering equitable climate solutions that invest more in their communities. This was a watershed moment that both revealed to the participants that many City leaders care, and thus they felt seen, understood, and humanized, and were thus able to envision how to move forward with the areas that continue to challenge their neighborhoods.

4. Key Impacts from Hosting a Climate Equity LA Community Assembly

Campaigns we co-design and how they can support other Citywide campaigns as a blueprint for human-centered dialogue and engagement

Leading with a community co-design approach for the event and curriculum planning resulted in the following:

1. Strong public outreach, exceeding our goal of 100 to 150 participants registered in less than one week of announcements, and meaningful community engagement, as well as great participation.
2. Participants expanded their political identity and their civic engagement capacity with multiple City Departments and leaders.
3. The multi-sensory and artistic approach CEMO used, such as storytelling exercises, the Gratitude Tree, music, and healing circles.

4. An amplified climate justice narrative across areas of LA that do not typically meet or communicate with one another.
5. CEMO demonstrated that City leaders can promote, compensate, and engage community health and climate educators on climate and extreme heat topics to effectively communicate risks and safety measures to protect our communities. This effort also supported the amplification of our mission to expand equitable investments in historically disinvested areas to accelerate climate solutions.
6. Catalyzed cross-sectoral connections: We saw many examples of community members and leaders making connections with City leaders, including heat safety community health educators and practitioners that had not worked together, community organizers, and County and State representatives. Those connections have led to additional partnerships and collaborations, such as sharing climate and heat educational materials, supporting campaign work from other parts of the City and region, as well as being more civically engaged with and informed by the City.
7. Deep engagement with historically pollution-impacted communities: The Community Assembly helped communities to identify allies (e.g., youth, outdoor workers, unhoused people, immigrants, Black women for reproductive health, Indigenous people, older adults), then follow up to collaborate with them to understand their needs and communication preferences.
 - a. **Quote:** *“After much research, I found out how the toxins in our environment affected my son’s mental health and everything that was going on. It really affected him so much. And so this took me on a journey where I searched for solutions everywhere.” - Carol Malo, Visión y Compromiso*
8. CEMO filmed interviews with several community leaders on their lived experiences, priorities, and solutions for heat and climate resilience.

5. Lessons Learned, Voices Heard, and Recommendations

Climate Resilience

1. Fund and/or facilitate resilience hub development, and combine resources with those provided by the City and County for seamless access.
2. Map extreme weather centers and resilience hub networks to make them more visible and accessible to the community.
3. Communities need additional tailored resources to address the disparate impacts of climate change, climate hazards, and climate emergencies, like extreme heat and flooding. Climate disasters disproportionately impact working-class communities of color by exacerbating existing racial, socioeconomic, and health disparities.

4. Traditional service delivery models do not address the unique barriers that these populations face, such as social isolation, dependence on public transit, limited English proficiency, reliance on medical equipment, and housing insecurity.
5. Cities and counties should be seamless, visible, and accessible.
6. Municipalities have not had the resources to invest in the workforce and services that support these populations and build resilient communities. As a result, the communities hit hardest by climate change have the least capacity to respond.
7. Improve climate and heat disaster public awareness, response, and coordination, especially for vulnerable communities.
8. Continue to offer more events that unite communities around the issues of climate justice.

Recommendations - Common Themes:

1. According to the Post-Assembly survey, climate equity and/or environmental justice were the top areas in which participants were most interested or brought to the attention of the facilitators, followed by climate impacts on community health, and then heat relief and adaptation solutions.
2. The two main topics that were brought up by participants during the table-top discussions were tree canopy equity, and mapping cooling infrastructure improvements (e.g., bus shelters, shade structures, cooling centers).

Pedagogical/Engagement

1. Both community assemblies and City-hosted community events should use a wide array of popular education tactics, including art, music, and healing circles, and prioritize partnerships and support with trusted messenger networks from diverse and representative communities.
2. Including community leaders in the co-design and facilitation of the events is critical to ensuring that there is bi-directional support, communication, and integration of ideas from the ground up.
3. Outreach channels: We need customized and multiple communication channels and methods to reach the historically marginalized, but some tactics may work better than others, especially communicating through community-trusted local organizations and leaders and their established methods of communication. For example, with the unhoused we are working with Homeless Health Care LA, and they manage the climate stations in Skid Row, but in other parts of the City, we will be better off with outreach teams and street medicine teams to get the unhoused support and communications where they are needed. There are many examples that were shared at the event.

4. Community events should be co-designed, and apply multiple participatory, multilingual approaches, with community knowledge at the center of the workshops and approaches.
5. Multiple participants voiced appreciation for the format and method of the sessions, allowing for communication and sharing of information and ideas.

6. Participatory Session Reports

Track A: Climate Justice and Gratitude Tree

Objective and Method: This session was a facilitated participatory workshop, through table-top dialogues that gave participants the opportunity to discuss and share both ideal and achievable climate justice solutions based on the prepared discussion questions. After icebreakers, participants were asked two questions:

1. “What should climate justice look like in your community?”
2. “What climate solutions are you grateful for?”

The participants were encouraged to discuss both existing and possible climate justice solutions for the City. There were six (6) tables, and each table had six (6) to eight (8) participants who shared their own stories and ideas with the larger group. Once the group identified and shared their answers, they wrote down their answers on sticky notes, and pasted them onto the paper tree mural (see Exhibits A and B).

Overview: The exercise provided a safe space for dialogue on envisioning climate justice, and provided a creative, interactive outlet to share gratitude for what individuals have done or have accomplished collectively to realize our shared vision of equitable climate justice. The idea of this workshop was derived from the article “[How Gratitude Can Help Combat Climate Change](#)” which posed the idea that expressing gratitude was integral in the fight for environmental justice. This opened up the idea to existing solutions that could lead to more long-term, comprehensive solutions. Introducing the concept of gratitude behind existing and potential climate solutions gave participants an opportunity to review their lived experiences, and to identify and appreciate the space around them.

Frontline Communities Represented: Wilmington, South LA, San Fernando Valley, MacArthur Park, Watts, Pacoima, Chinatown, Boyle Heights, and Leimert Park, among many other Los Angeles neighborhoods.

Demographics Represented: Homeless service providers, environmental justice (EJ), housing, immigrants' rights groups, Indigenous, Black, Latino/a/e, AAPI, and LGBTQ+ communities, Neighborhood Council (NC) and Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance (LANCSA) leaders. See this report's appendices for the list of organizations represented on the planning committee, which includes workers' organizations, promotora organizations, healthcare workers, and university representatives (USC, UCLA, etc).

Recommendations - Common Themes: The themes of Track A were based on collected responses from the workshop.

1. Community-Centered Solutions for Climate Action and Mitigation: Strong emphasis on community involvement and empowerment in addressing climate issues and environmental justice, including local voices informing local solutions, equitable funding and programs, and building community trust in climate efforts. Various suggestions and desires focus on practical actions to mitigate climate change, such as reducing carbon footprints, protecting trees/green spaces, promoting sustainable agriculture, advocating for renewable energy sources, and reducing pollution from big factories and vehicles.

a. Quotes:

- *"Integration of resources, services, education-driven by community experience needs and inclusion"*
- *"Community resilience enabled community to respond to multiple stressors"*
- *"Land - commodity to transform our thinking and transform our relationship with stewardship"*

2. Collaborative Environmental Justice and Equity: Participants repeatedly highlighted the need for fair and equal representation, accountability, and protection for marginalized communities, particularly Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) who are disproportionately affected by climate change and environmental harm. Many also wrote on the importance of collaboration between different stakeholders, including community members, government agencies, and businesses/corporations, to effectively address climate challenges. Equity should be integrated into decision-making processes, and businesses, especially those doing the harm to the community, should be involved in finding solutions.

a. Quotes:

- *"No more top down solutions"*
- *"Holding Businesses, corporations and other climate violators accountable for harm to frontline communities."*

- *“Building community trust in neighborhoods greening efforts through existing relationship of trust”*
- 3. Urban Planning and Infrastructure:** There is an emphasis on desiring more walkable communities, which includes improving public transportation, implementing bike lanes, and investing in green infrastructure like parks, trees, and clean water sources. Calls for better infrastructure maintenance and street cleaning. Concerns about the quality of life in communities are evident, including access to clean air, water, and green spaces, as well as addressing homelessness, and improving public amenities like parks and streets.
- a. Quotes:**
- *“WALKABLE communities, 15 minute communities”*
 - *“Cleans areas schools with lots of green spaces, flowers in the street”*
 - *“Climate justice looks like transformation in the built environment with zero polluters”*

Areas That Worked Well:

1. The facilitator focused on two questions in the lesson plan, which led to more time for participants to discuss personal and work backgrounds to better contribute to the backstory and experiences of each individual.
2. People discussed in small groups at six separate tables, they focused on gathering relevant stories and sharing their experiences, which worked well for the timing and size of groups.
3. People took time to write down their stories, excellent participation, at most tables. They were also encouraged to write down more than one idea.
4. Participants shared they appreciated the opportunity to engage with different members of the community, which included City Departments and community organizations, who worked in a similar environment space but had never had the opportunity to collaborate before.
5. Participants got the opportunity to walk up to the Gratitude Tree as they were putting up their “leaves” and read other answers.
6. Many participants also shared that they had fun and it was visible to the facilitators.
7. Leaves were color coordinated to the question and readers could easily discern which question the leaf was in reference to.

Areas That Need Improvement:

1. More isolated space needed: Track A shared the same space as Track C storytelling. The beginning of each Track C session started with a loud video, which overpowered any ability to talk to the group, and the facilitators had to wait until the video was over. The time to do icebreaker was either shortened or skipped/merged into the first question.
2. More time to answer questions: The groups only had enough time to answer two out of three questions and would have more time to discuss questions.
3. Participants asked if their answers would be used to apply to future policy.

Top Three Benefits to Participants:

1. Participants appreciated the workshop as they were randomly seated with both City and community organization members, as well as different neighborhoods and demographic representation that encouraged a more rich and diverse conversation about ideal climate solutions.
2. By examining both ideal and experienced climate solutions, participants shared and exchanged unique ideas and perspectives.
3. The concept of gratitude gave a new perspective for the participants. Instead of focusing only on new solutions, it gave everyone a moment to pause and appreciate existing solutions and perhaps infuse hopefulness into the possibility of future solutions.

Curriculum - Lesson Plan:

- [Facilitator's Guide: Track A, Climate Justice and Gratitude Tree](#)

Facilitators: Nicole Hoegl (supported by Christine Lee)

Takeaways for the City to use in future Engagement and Outreach:

1. Whether the individual expected this experience or not, participants truly enjoyed the exchange of personal experiences and stories. The City should create more opportunities for both City employees, non-profit organizations and community members to sincerely share and learn from each other.
2. Many of the participants were encouraged and excited that the information written on the leaves would not only be used for the workshop but shared in a report and potentially part of the great process to improve the climate resilience of the City. More opportunities where participants feel empowered and encouraged to use their voice for a greater impact would be beneficial for Angelenos and the City alike.

Exhibit A. Gratitude Tree, empty



Exhibit B. Gratitude Tree, filled



Track B: Demystification of City Climate Equity Projects

Objective and Method: The objective of the sessions was to demystify equity-focused climate projects and programs that exist at the City of Los Angeles with the participants of the assembly. The format of the track consisted of table-top dialogues with six (6) topics and tables, each table staffed by at least two (2) City staff representing five (5) different Departments and Offices engaged in climate equity-focused programs. At each of the three sessions of the Assembly, six (6) to eight (8) participants were assigned to each table. The method employed a conversational approach, with City representatives introducing and then facilitating dialogues at their respective tables for their participants to learn and ask questions, and for City staff to answer or receive feedback and concerns relating to climate equity projects.

Overview: Marta Segura, the lead facilitator, Chief Heat Officer, and CEMO Director, greeted participants and explained the activity's purpose and flow. City co-facilitators staffed the session's tables, with their names and roles displayed on placards. Participants in each session could choose which of the six (6) tables and equity projects to attend. The equity projects and programs represented were Urban forest and tree canopy planning and equity initiatives (Office of Forest Management and LASAN); Tree planting and maintenance (StreetsLA); Sidewalk and Transit Amenities Program (STAP) and shade structures (StreetsLA); LA100 Equity Strategies, Community Partnership Outreach Grants, and Energy Efficiency programs and rebates (LADWP); and Heat Action and Resilience Centers (CEMO and LADWP). See the additional information section below for a table with the complete list of staff and roles.

At each table, City staff described their climate or energy equity projects and initiated a dialogue to allow for awareness of their work. The City table-top facilitators started the conversations by briefly explaining the background and highlights of current climate equity projects they are working on. Participants asked questions about the programs and projects or related City programs, and provided their own perspectives and recommendations for the facilitators to respond to, or take back to consider. Each session lasted approximately forty-five minutes.

Several of the table-top facilitators were dual English-Spanish speakers, and were able to present their information and answer questions in a bilingual format. Spanish-language interpreters were also on-hand to assist where needed. At least one of the tables during the course of the day was dedicated to exclusively Spanish-language dialogue, owing to the language proficiency of the participants. This multi-level and flexible approach encouraged inclusivity and dialogue among participants in keeping with the theme of equity.

Summary of Facilitators' Survey Questions and Answers: A Post-Assembly survey was sent out by CEMO to the table-top facilitators to gather responses to inform the summary report, to convey the outcomes of the exercise, and also to guide future engagement planning. The survey focused on the facilitator's experiences in the Track B sessions, consisted of nine questions in various formats, and took ten (10) minutes or fewer to complete. Nine (9) out of sixteen (16) total table-top facilitators responded to the survey. Each of the five different Departments or Offices engaged in equity-focused climate programs were represented in the survey responses.

Survey questions and answers summary:

Q1: What were the most valuable takeaways from the table-top sessions for you as a City representative and leader?

- Participants came already engaged, and expressed that these types of outreach and engagement efforts should continue especially for underserved communities.
- The table-top format was valued for community members to meet with City leaders and have useful discussions.
- Participants valued the information shared at the discussions, and hoped for more of this type of dialogue as well as more effective communication from the City on important topics.
- **Quote:** *"The passionate advocacy for benefits to be brought to the Wilmington area of Los Angeles was surely felt even with a language barrier."*

Overall the responses show that the most valuable takeaways were the format of the table-top sessions to facilitate dialogue, the engagement level and advocacy brought to the sessions by the participants, and the desire for more of these types of outreach/engagement events.

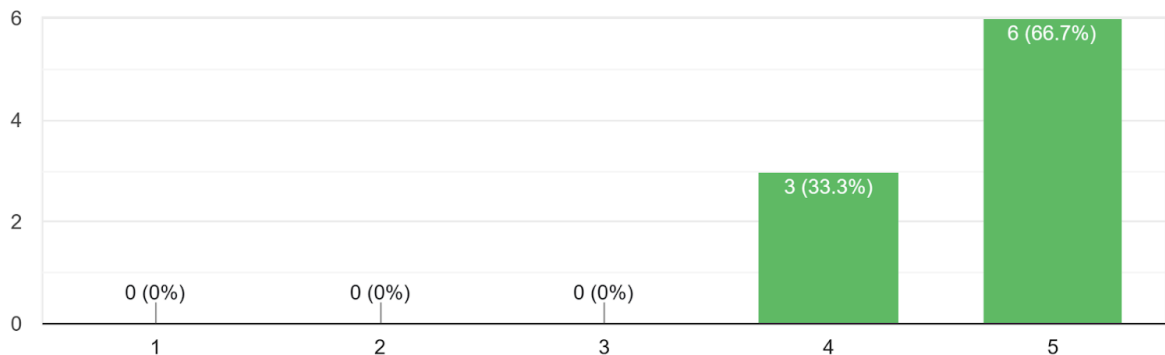
Q2: Briefly describe your experience with the table-top dialogue approach for sharing your climate equity projects with the public.

- The table-top or round table set up worked well to facilitate respectful, informal yet productive dialogue, better explanation and set up may help in the future.
- Participants came with open minds and diverse contributions.
- **Quote:** *"I like the small group of 8 at the round table. Able to give our updates and invite feedback and questions. Others were also able to share what their dep[artment] and/or non-profit climate projects [does]. It was a conversation rather than a presentation."*

Q3: How productive did you find the table-top session format for conveying information about your program(s) and discussing access or understanding to your resources? (1 = Not successful; 5 = Very successful)

How productive did you find the table-top session format for conveying information about your program(s) and discussing access or understanding to your resources?

9 responses

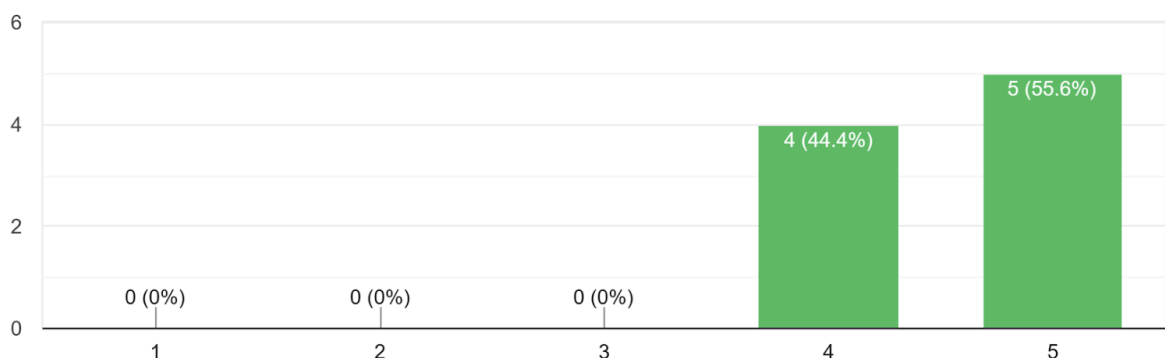


All respondents found the table-top format very successful (66.7%) or mostly successful (33.3%) for conveying information and discussing access and resources.

Q4: Overall, were participants engaged and interested in the topics you presented? (1 = No participants, or only one; 5 = All participants)

Overall, were participants engaged and interested in the topics you presented?

9 responses

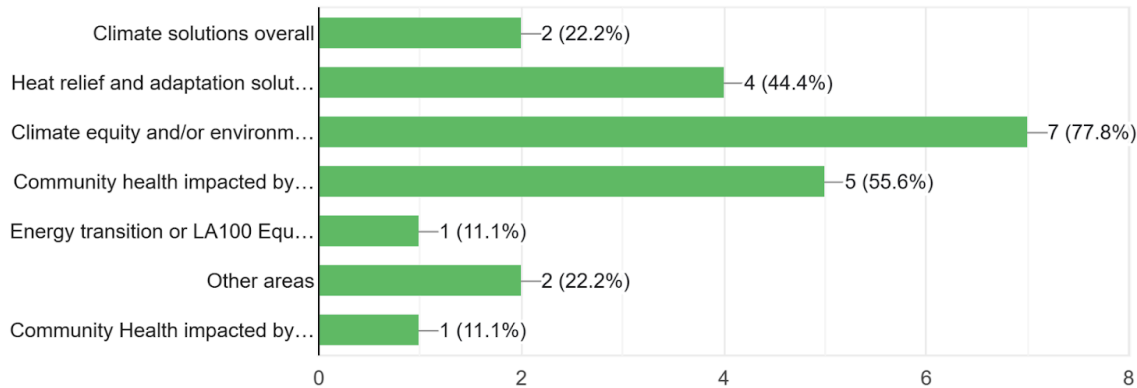


All respondents surveyed reported that overall, all or a majority of participants were engaged and interested in the presentation topics.

Q5: What top 3 overarching areas were the participants at your sessions most interested in or brought to your attention?

What top 3 overarching areas were the participants at your sessions most interested in or brought to your attention?

9 responses



Note: The category “Community health impacted by climate and heat” appears twice, the survey form divided responses into two.

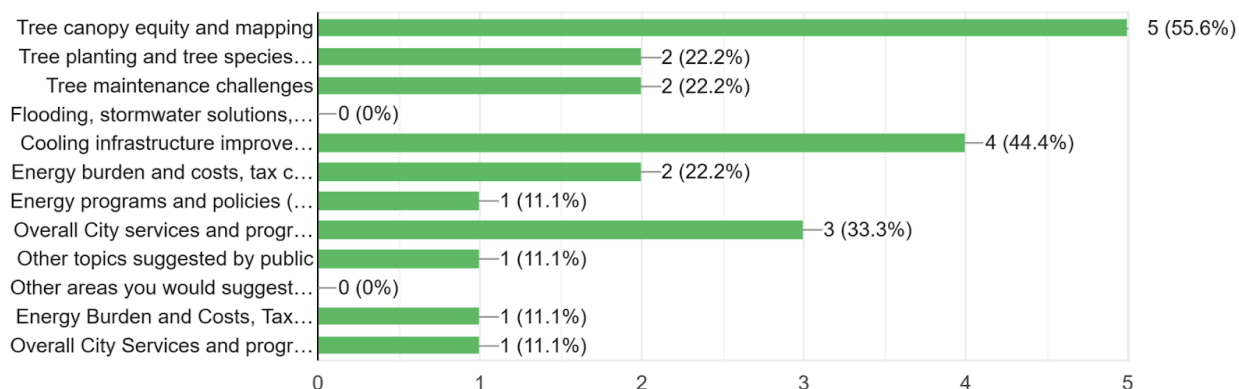
The three top areas of interest to or brought up by participants were “Climate equity and/or environmental justice” (7 respondents), “Community health impacted by climate and heat” (6), and “Heat relief and adaptation solutions” (4).

Note that these topics represent broad subjects; multiple City projects can fit under these categories. Respondents mentioned two other areas of interest: “Community participation in bus shelter improvements” and “Saving and planting trees”.

Q6: What were the 2 main topics that were brought up by participants during your table-top discussions?

What were the 2 main topics that were brought up by participants during your table-top discussions?

9 responses



Note: The categories “Energy burden and costs, tax credits and funding to reduce energy burden for tenants” and “Overall City services and program access or understanding” appear twice; the survey form divided responses into two.

Trees and urban forestry categories were significant topics according to the responses. Five (5) survey responses indicated “Tree canopy equity and mapping”, along with two (2) each for “Tree planting and species”, and “Tree maintenance challenges.”

Also significant were “Cooling infrastructure improvements” and “Overall City services and program access or understanding” which had four (4) responses each. “Energy burden and costs, tax credits and funding to reduce energy burden for tenants” and “Energy programs and policies (decarbonization, green energy, rooftop solar, Cool LA, etc)” accounted for three (3) responses.

One respondent entered another important area brought up during discussions: “There was a question about finding funding opportunities or collaborative connections to create urban gardens for communities, possibly in abandoned lots or pocket parks across the City.”

Q7: What areas of improvement were suggested by participants that you found useful?

- Better information, communication from the City about programs and opportunities to dialogue
- Uncomplicating the various City programs and things like permits
- Understanding how policy and programs apply to tenants

Quotes regarding areas of improvement:

- *“There was interest in Tree Equity Mapping and shade structure mapping, and fortunately, the City leaders were ready”*
- *“Understanding how policy applies to them as tenants, policy is created but not properly relayed to the community (i.e. the cooling apparatuses and how tenants will not use AC since it is so expensive)”*

Q8: Any other feedback or suggestions to help improve our next Community Assembly or engagement event.

- A full work day is hard to commit to
- Add resource fair to assembly event
- Better note collecting and summing up of sessions is needed

The final question (**Q9**) asked if there was any follow-up for issues or information raised by participants needed by CEMO or other City Departments or Offices, and to email those to CEMO. No further issues or information was received.

Areas That Worked Well: Participants came to the session enthusiastic and engaged and were willing to learn about and discuss topics at the table-top format. The set up fostered an open, informal, and inclusive dialogue.

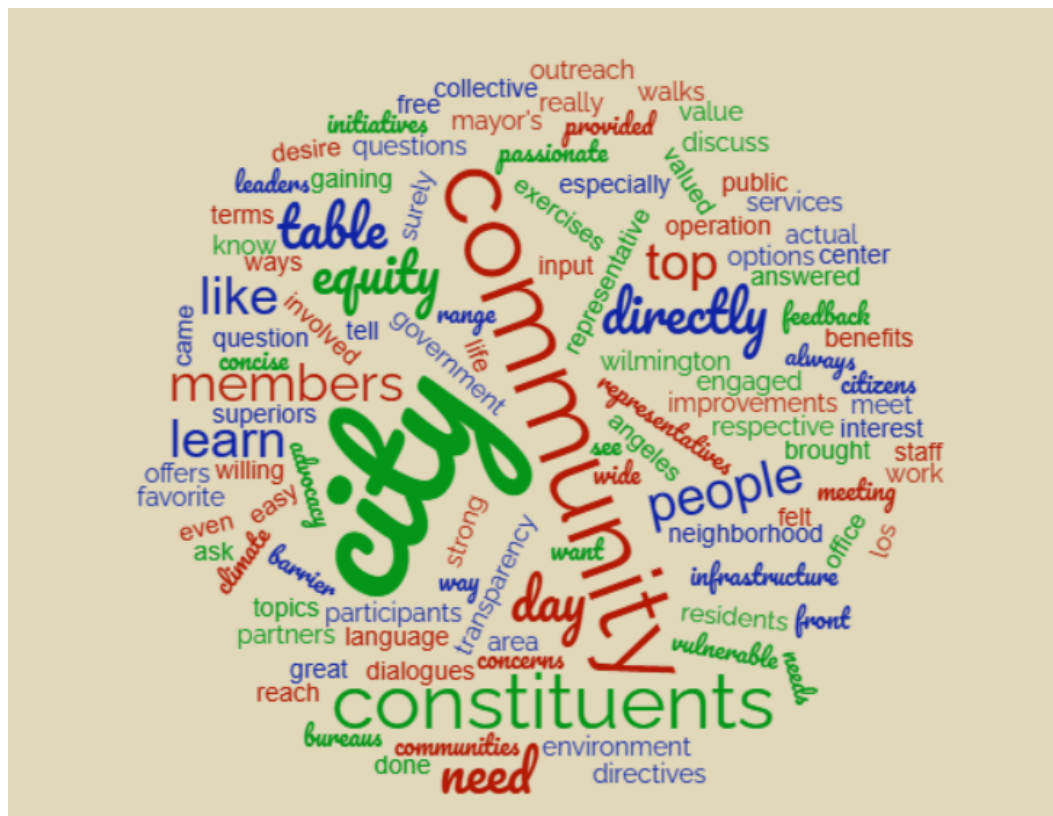
Attendees were able to learn new things about climate equity projects, and have questions about City programs addressed and answered at the table or with follow-up. Table-top facilitators also were able to gauge how well known their projects and programs were in the community, and hear feedback and questions that would help improve the delivery of these initiatives. The availability of multilingual staff and interpreters for Spanish-language speakers during the table-top sessions allowed all participants to be engaged in the conversations.

Areas That Need Improvement: There was a need to better capture notes and take-aways from the sessions. Having one of the participants assigned as note taker did not always work, as that person felt they were not completely engaged in the session. City staff took note of questions and requests from the participants, but did not capture the full breadth of the dialogues. Also, for future assemblies, a full day versus half day schedule should be considered, owing to the time commitment staff and for participants.

Recommendations - Common Themes: According to the survey, climate equity and/or environmental justice were the top areas in which participants were most interested or brought to the attention of the facilitators, followed by community health impacted by climate, and then heat relief and adaptation solutions.

The two main topics that were brought up by participants during the table-top discussions were tree canopy equity and mapping and cooling infrastructure improvements (bus shelters, shade structures, cooling centers). Multiple participants voiced appreciation for the format and method of the sessions, allowing for communication and sharing of information and ideas.

Word cloud generated from first Question most valuable takeaways



Question 2, describe your experience with the table-top dialogue approach



Top Three Benefits to Participants:

- Introduction to new or (previously unknown to them) City climate equity projects and programs.
- Obtaining additional information about City programs they had heard about but didn't know the details. Hearing feedback and answers to questions asked about City programs and concerns.
- Listening to other attendees, and the discussion around each session.

Curriculum - Lesson Plan:

- [Facilitator's Guide: Track B, Demystification of City Climate Equity Projects](#)

Lead Facilitator: Marta Segura, CEMO Director and Chief Heat Officer, supported by Gordon Haines, CEMO Environmental Affairs Officer/Deputy Heat Officer

The following table lists the City staff assigned to each of the six (6) tables at the event as co-facilitators, with their respective organization and role.

Table #	Name	Dept / Agency	Role
1	Jeremy Delos Santos	LA Sanitation	Tree Equity Initiatives
1	Hope Escario	StreetsLA	STAP: Shade Structures
2	Jose Gonzalez	StreetsLA	Tree Planting
2	Elias Najar	StreetsLA	Tree Maintenance
3	Diana Jih	StreetsLA	STAP: Shade Structures
3	Kenneth Tang	StreetsLA	STAP: Shade Structures
4	Greg Reed	LADWP	LA100 Equity Strategies
4	Emil Abdelshehid	LADWP	Energy Efficiency programs and rebates
5	Aaron Gross	LADWP	Resilience Centers, Community Partnering
5	Gordon Haines	BPW: CEMO	Heat Action Resilience Planning
6	Tanzi Cole	BPW: Forest Mgmt	Tree Canopy Equity
6	Rachel Malarich	BPW: Forest Mgmt	Equitable Urban Forests

Track C: Environmental Justice (EJ) Visual Storytelling

Objective and Method: A facilitated dialogue on demonstrating the power of visual storytelling for sharing experience on environmental and climate inequities, that showed participants curated videos - Storytelling 101 and a local CBO's environmental justice story - to encourage participants to focus their strategic communications about their experiences with climate inequities and challenges through accessible language and solutions. There were six (6) tables, and each table had six (6) to eight (8) participants who developed from the lesson their own stories to share with the larger group.

Overview: CEMO facilitators created a participatory dynamic to encourage engagement amongst participants by elevating community experiences and stories through popular education techniques and table top dialogues, and curated storytelling videos with a lesson plan, created by Chief Segura. The themes explored and discussed included climate resiliency, climate justice, the built environment, and the relationship between public policy, environmental justice and health, and the key was the participants sharing their lived experiences with toxic environments.

It is evident that community members and groups are motivated to elevate and foster social-political climate justice campaigns to advance progressive wins for regulatory policies, public awareness, and accountability with entities/institutions inflicting and or corroborating pollution in lived-in communities. There was a unified sense of belonging and desire to continue the dialogue among civic led groups and the City leaders to create solutions and accountability. Participants were encouraged to tell their own stories with inspired lessons from the curated videos.

Frontline Communities Represented: Wilmington, South LA, San Fernando Valley, MacArthur Park, Watts, Pacoima, Chinatown, Boyle Heights, and Leimert Park, among many other Los Angeles neighborhoods.

Demographics Represented: Homeless service providers, environmental justice (EJ), housing, immigrants' rights groups, Indigenous, Black, Latino/a/e, AAPI, and LGBTQ+ communities, Neighborhood Council (NC) and Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance (LANCSA) leaders. See this report's appendices for the list of organizations represented on the planning committee, which includes workers' organizations, promotora organizations, healthcare workers, and university representatives (USC, UCLA, etc).

Recommendations - Common Themes:

Buoyant topics threading through the discussions were topics such as:

- Role of community education programs and forums
- Advocacy and empowerment
- Sustainability resources and tools to improve the built environment
- Tree canopy, sidewalks, green spaces, and environmental justice stories, especially related to affordable access to water and energy

Areas That Worked Well:

- Opening with videos first and moving past them quickly led to more conversation in breakout sessions.
- To elicit more engagement, the facilitator focused most on the final two questions in the lesson plan, which led to more individual/group EJ Storytelling).
- The participants were asked to tell their own stories; they opened up after being shown the Storytelling 101 videos.
- People discussed in small groups at six separate tables, they focused on gathering relevant stories and sharing their experiences, which worked well for the timing and size of groups.
- People took time to write down their stories, excellent participation, at most tables.
- The third session was a bit smaller, but was the most creative. Also, smaller groups and longer sessions allowed for more sharing.
- Participants shared they appreciated the opportunity to share and be listened to and hope to see more of these opportunities in the future.
- Many participants also shared that they had fun and it was visible to the facilitators.
- Spanish speakers chose to sit together and there was a translator at their table, at their request; this was part of the community led planning decision.

Areas That Need Improvement:

- If more time, a second story example would be helpful for compare/contrast.
 - **Suggestion:** there are a lot of great materials out there, regarding EJ leaders and other stories and would be a great addition (for example, EJ campaigns and narratives).

- Sharing the storytelling 101 videos was key and instrumental to seeing a story well-told, but there was not as much of a need for participant takeaways as was planned, and facilitator preferred to have more time invested in making sure the participants at the tables were in discussion and had time to share their own stories and experiences.
- There should be more time in the larger session, to be able to hear these stories. At least 5-10 minutes per track to present to all at the end. Perhaps facilitators that were able to listen to everyone nominate a participant so certain stories can be shared across the great group.
- 3rd group also came after lunch, and got a chance to network and get comfortable
 - **Suggestion:** Open with an icebreaker
 - **Takeaway:** Experience needs to be enjoyable rather than just extracting information

Top Three Benefits to Participants:

1. Most participants stated how much they learned and enjoyed being able to share the personal stories with others in the table top setting as well as hear from others - felt very personal, connecting, and inspiring.
2. Participants also realized that by sharing personal experiences, they were more able to connect with common themes and experiences between others at their table (and in the larger groups) which facilitated easier networking and connections between strangers, due to the personal connection and sharing.
3. Participants learned some storytelling skills and tips from the videos and from the sharing with others that they can take with them and integrate into their future environmental justice advocacy work.

Stories and Quotes from EJ Storytelling Participants:

- *“There are photos of Los Angeles in the 1960s of people wearing gas masks standing on street corners because of high smog days. A massive win was taking the lead out of gasoline. Today we are at a Community Assembly and so it is not one massive win like the lead out of gas, but a lot of smaller wins that are massive when you assembly as a community.”*
- *“It is humbling and inspiring to be able to come together and connect with others in these smaller group settings and hear real stories from and make alliances with others.”*

[Sample Video Link](#) of EJ storytelling by Assembly participants in table-top format

Curriculum - Lesson Plan:

- [Facilitator's Guide: Track C, Environmental justice \(EJ\) Visual Storytelling](#)
- **Storytelling training videos:**
 - [Storytelling 101](#) (Career Girls)
 - [Excerpt from District 15 - Communities for a Better Environment, Wilmington](#) (Patagonia Films)

Facilitators: Alex DeLeon, ECODiversity, and Amy Clarke, CEMO Deputy Director of Operations, CEMO

Takeaways for the City to use in future Engagement and Outreach:

1. Participants really want to tell their own stories, and in doing so, connections and understanding are shared more easily. The City should ensure to make spaces for community members to share their own stories and participate in table top formats in future engagement and outreach events, as this format breaks down barriers more easily and gives an opportunity and a space for the natural inclination of participants to share their own stories.
2. The City should also perhaps consider scheduling an EJ forum in front of City Council to invite certain constituents from groups represented at the CEMO event to share their stories in 5-10 minute presentations to allow for further context, awareness, follow-up, and action in a format that allows for greater detail and depth than regular public comment at public meetings provides.

7. Conclusion

The collective voices from this Assembly recommended that the City of Los Angeles should prioritize climate justice as a focal point and strategy for accelerating climate solutions, and should coordinate solutions with LA County and other agencies, as the climate crisis knows no boundaries, and government should be seamless to our constituents.

It was also highlighted that the frontline communities have not been the cause of the climate crisis and yet continue to experience the most harm from it. These harms, in turn, often make [existing challenges](#) even worse, including those based on pre-existing health conditions (such as age or health issues) and social factors (such as [systemic racism](#) and poverty). Finally, communities that face more significant harm are also often excluded from the decision-making process, resulting in climate solutions that can [disproportionately benefit](#) less-impacted people.

The City's forthcoming Climate Action and Adaptation goals, as well as its Heat Action and Resilience Plan goals, should prioritize climate justice, including reducing the unequal harms of climate change, providing equitable benefits from climate solutions, and involving affected communities in decision-making to avoid patterns that led to the disparate harms to their communities. Creating equal partnerships and compensating these organizations and community members for their wisdom, advice, and input is necessary for these outcomes to be realized. There are many examples and research that support that investing first and foremost in collaborative equitable climate solutions is the most effective way of accelerating climate solutions, and bringing about a more heat-resilient Los Angeles for all.

8. References and Resources

- [Channel 35 Reel: Climate Equity LA Community Assembly](#)
- [Event Program and Agenda](#)
- [Event Slide Deck](#)
- [Griot's Eye Photo](#)
- [NIEHS/USC/PSR-LA Heat Survey](#)