

Event: Compton Tenants Union Listening Session

IRWM Region	Greater LA County	Date and Time	3/28/2021 12:00:00 PM
Community Engagement Partner	East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice	Location	Compton, CA
Event Facilitator Contact	Cindy Donis	Community Attendance	15
Event Facilitator Contact Email	cindyd.eycej@gmail.com	Agency/Elected Attendance	None noted

Description:

Compton Tenants Union (CTU) hosts in person meetings with unhoused community members. The intentions are to provide direct resources and supplies, give any updates on issues in the community, hear from unhoused folks directly on support they need if they are facing displacement and empower advocacy by engaging them in dialogue. East Yard worked collaboratively with CTU to present on WaterTalks, IRWM and hear from unhoused folks on their specific water needs. We actually met in an alley next to a local water provider, a fact that many of them hadn't realized but also lead to the question or idea if water providers could offer free drinking and potable water to houseless folks directly at their facilities.

Questions / Comments:

We realized that while the 1st question of the survey is inclusive of unhoused folks, the rest of the survey makes assumptions that the respondent is a tenant or landowner. This is something to consider in the future.

Unhoused folks face a large amount of targeting and are constantly being pushed out/displaced from their encampments, forcing them to move from one place to another and also leads to essential material items to be lost, destroyed, or taken away from them. The displacements in Compton are led by numerous agencies, including Code Enforcement, Sheriffs, Union Pacific Railroad Police, and Compton Unified School District Campus Police. These displacements happen without proper and meaningful support to unhoused folks. The question they consistently ask is, "Where are we supposed to go?" When it comes to water, they shared that they don't have direct access to safe drinking water other than donations folks offer them like from the Compton Tenants Union or the water they access directly from water hydrants. The latter option however, further criminalizes and makes them targets when they just really need water.

Another need that folks have is access to job training and career opportunities. This is directly connected to the criminalization and records that have been created once they became houseless. Most unhoused neighbors have "side hustles" or temporary jobs where they help a local business or resident with a specific task, but note that the money they receive is not enough to pay for basic living necessities.

In the conversation, they brought up there are various empty lots in the neighborhood owned by the city that can be adequate for them to have a safe space.

A community member shared "I know very clearly that trash isn't the problem for the city, we are" emphasizing that trash is the excuse used to push out houseless community members. On the other end, trash is an issue for them because (1) they don't have safe and adequate locations to throw the trash they accrue and end up needing to carry it (2) non- housed folks go to the locations where encampments exists and dump their trash and waste there (including remains of dead pets) and (3) the City of Compton uses the problem of trash as the impetus for displacements. Therefore for any projects that are meant to beautify community areas, it is important to be in conversation with houseless community members and ensure they aren't further pushed out and criminalized by the project but instead included and provided with resources.

Folks also do not have stable access to phones and internet and in terms of communication folks prefer direct communication and in person.