COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE SALTON SEA MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

December 2018

ALIANZA
COACHELLA VALLEY

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Members of the Alianza CV Team:

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Executive Summary

This report on Community Engagement Strategies and Recommendations for the Salton Sea Management Program (SSMP) aims to create a clear framework through which the State of California can effectively engage communities around the Salton Sea, with an emphasis on environmental justice (EJ) communities, and gather input on the Phase I 10-Year Plan. Because of our expertise working with residents in the Eastern Coachella Valley (ECV), the Alianza team was asked by the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and the Salton Sea Authority (SSA) to advise on how to move beyond traditional outreach to effectively engage "hard to reach" residents as partners in the SSMP design and decision making process.

The goals of this report are to:

- Provide engagement best practices that can be applicable to a variety of projects and scales

- Provide concrete suggestions for how to best engage the communities around the Salton Sea, formulated in conjunction with local residents

- Give recommendations on how to institutionalize engagement within the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and CNRA

- Provide a clear pathway forward for developing a more holistic engagement strategy for the SSMP

- Illustrate a broad cross-section of case studies and tactics that have been used successfully in other projects around the country

To achieve these goals, this report proposes an accountable, clear, and transparent process that emphasizes community input and needs alongside biological and infrastructural parameters.

There is no one recipe for community engagement. Even in one community, different types of projects require different engagement approaches, and the project team needs to be flexible enough to evaluate what typologies are successful and which need improvement. However, we can provide some key recommendations to move this process forward in a productive direction that integrates community input without hindering the design of the SSMP projects. A summary of recommendations are below, and are further refined throughout the report.

- Create an **engagement strategy for each existing SSMP project**, developed in conjunction with local organizations, that can serve as a roadmap for outreach and engagement decisions over the long-term.

- Develop **community design parameters** alongside biological and infrastructural parameters, giving equal weight to these three facets of resiliency.

- Include **community amenities upfront**, and in the first phase of any built project. These amenities should be included throughout the design concept and planning process.

- Construct community **pilot projects**, as a way to provide amenities to residents in the short-term while refining the larger design.

- Create opportunities for **participatory budgeting**.

- Amend RFP language to specifically require design-build contractors to **continue with community engagement** throughout the design and construction of the built works.

- Designate **engagement budgets** at both the 10-Year Plan level, and for each individual project.

This report envisions a Salton Sea that is shaped by community input and the needs of the residents that live around the Lake. To achieve this vision, this report aims to provide tools to create community buy-in and long-term resident involvement, resulting in projects that prioritize public health and well-being in conjunction with habitat restoration and dust mitigation.

I. Checklist

The below checklist summarizes the recommendations from this report, and provides a list by project phase of recommended actions to take in the preparation and implementation of a successful engagement strategy.

Structural Changes for Success (all projects)

☐ Identify a lead Project Manager within DWR responsible for creating a detailed engagement strategy for each project

☐ Develop a workplan for transparent decision making and approving/denying resident priorities

☐ Establish an overall engagement budget for the coming three years

☐ Establish an evaluation framework to learn from successes and failures throughout the process

☐ Establish project must-haves and a method for accomplishing them that includes:

　☐ Engagement transparency

　☐ Providing community amenities upfront

　☐ Specific community design parameters

　☐ Community Pilot Projects

　☐ Participatory Budgeting

Project Changes:

Planning Stage

☐ Create a dedicated budget for all engagement activities for the project

☐ Establish a core group of youth or interested residents that can serve as ambassadors for the project and key points of contact

☐ Learn about community identity and the needs that each different community has

☐ Conduct educational outreach on the regional scale to familiarize residents with the project and purpose

☐ Complete Engagement Framework provided in this report in conjunction with a community organization

Concept Stage

☐ Determine the strengths and challenges of the community, and how the project design can help to address these needs

☐ Define areas of projects budgets that can be turned over to participatory budgeting

☐ Review the overall budget with residents, and workshop what should be prioritized first or what elements could potentially be constructed as a pilot project

☐ Begin data-collection work with residents

☐ Create a specific Community Advisory Committee (CAC) for the project

Development of Design Criteria

☐ Create community design criteria and public health design criteria for all projects in consultation with residents

☐ Develop a list of "must-haves" and "wishlist" criteria

☐ Provide a clear roadmap for how these parameters will be implemented in the future

Bid Process

☐ Require that contractors continue community engagement efforts with specific RFP language

Project Design

- [ ] Undergo site mapping to determine what amenities would be best suited for the community

- [ ] Provide points of follow-up with residents to show how their requests are being implemented in the projects

- [ ] Establish a feedback loop where residents can influence the design development through charrettes with the contractor

- [ ] At junctions of budget evaluation and design changes, revisit the community design parameters with residents to help prioritize decisions

Construction

- [ ] Provide regular status updates to residents

- [ ] Continue community education on regional efforts at the Salton Sea

Long-term Maintenance

- [ ] Evaluate the efficacy and success of the different engagement techniques used

- [ ] Continue community data collection to understand the effectiveness of the projects to feed into the adaptive management plan

The Alianza Environmental Justice (EJ) Youth Cohort brings together young people from the Eastern Coachella Valley to learn about the Salton Sea and share their stories.

II. Community Engagement Principles & Analysis of Current Efforts

Alianza was asked to create this report as part of our pro bono work for the California Natural Resources Agency and the Salton Sea Authority, in order to present recommendations for equitable community engagement and a roadmap for successful inclusion of community. These recommendations will be of benefit to the State, creating a more informed resident base, projects that serve the community, and potentially long-term resident buy-in for the long-range work at the Sea. It is important to understand that resiliency cannot only be infrastructural or ecological in nature—it must also include community members and social resiliency to create strong stewards that will support and utilize the projects in the future, as illustrated in the graphic below.

Our first major recommendation is to create a detailed, project-by-project SSMP Engagement Strategy for the next three years. A Lead Project Manager that is locally based should be established within DWR to craft and implement an updated engagement strategy, in conjunction with a contracted local engagement entity, communications or marketing firm, DWR, and CNRA. A specific engagement strategy is necessary to adequately budget and plan for upcoming events, and streamline outreach efforts in service of a more holistic narrative.

COMMUNITY

INFRASTRUCTURE

ECOLOGY

RESILIENCY FOR THE SALTON SEA
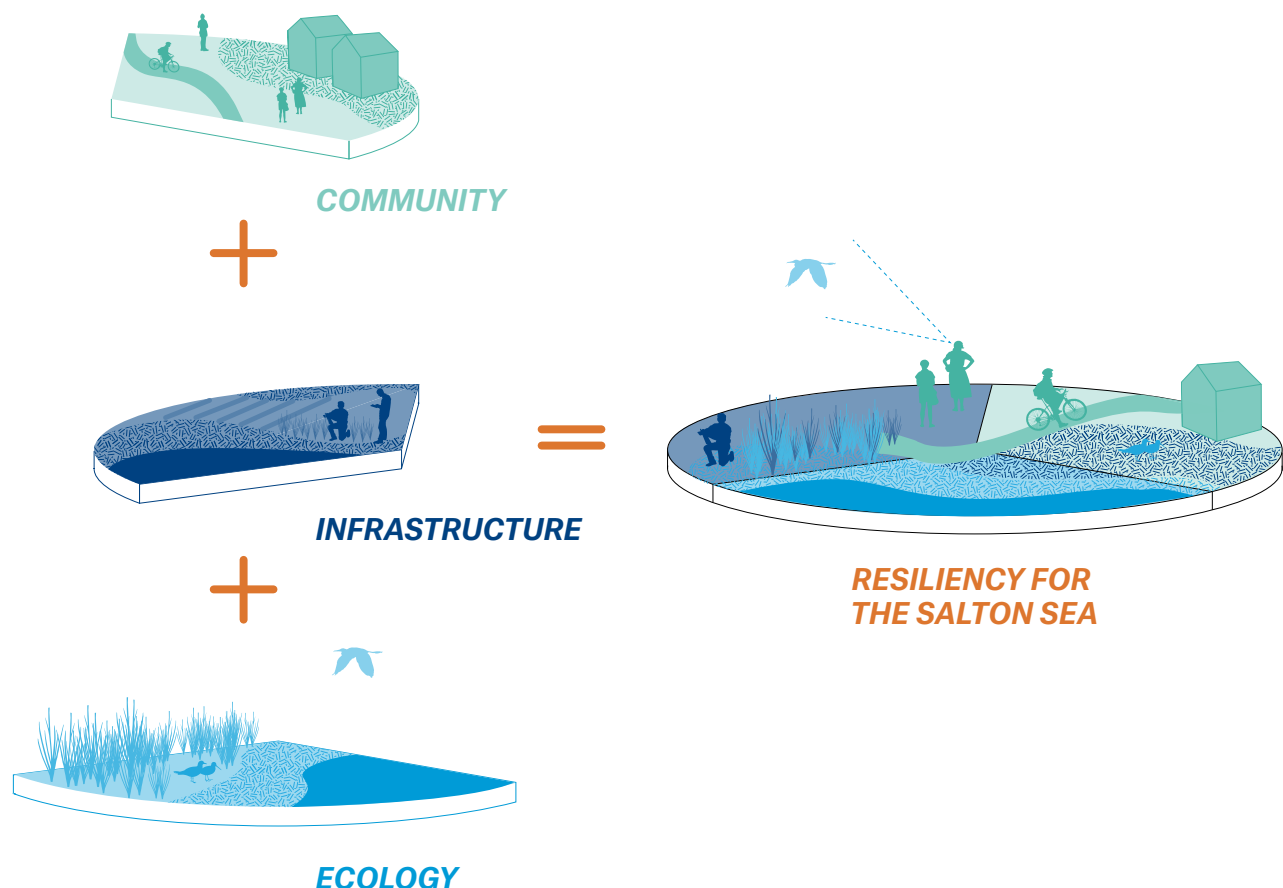
Community Context

It is a priority of this report to identify the State's unique opportunity to benefit from ongoing work and community organizing accomplished by local organizations. These groups are working on-the-ground to identify community needs and to understand how multi-beneficial infrastructure can serve as a tool to build a more equitable region.

The needs of this region have already been identified by the many residents and the on-the-ground NGOs working with them. In 2012, Alianza, formerly known as Building Healthy Communities Coachella Valley (BHC CV), commissioned UC Davis through the partnership of California Institute for Rural Studies (CIRS) to produce a report on environmental justice in the ECV. The resulting *Revealing the Invisible Coachella Valley: Putting Cumulative Environmental Vulnerabilities on the Map*, identified both environmental hazards and social vulnerability in the region.

One of the major takeaways from the report is that the Coachella Valley is in dire need of improved air quality. Riverside County is currently considered a non-attainment county for PM10, PM 2.5, and ozone, and the Salton Sea exacerbates this. The list of identified needs in the report also includes the lack of infrastructure, community amenities, and recreation areas, low accessibility to health clinics, and an overall need to increase improve public health.

It is necessary to understand who lives in communities where SSMP projects are proposed. It is essential to base choices on scientific data. In addition, data and personal experiences from within the local communities provide valuable insight for informing projects that mitigate exposure to pollutants contributing to the current environment at the Salton Sea.

Current SSMP Engagement Goals

Within the Salton Sea Management Program Phase I: 10-Year Plan, released in August 2018, it is stated that the State is committed to an outreach process that is transparent and open. To this end, the State has developed an outreach strategy that includes workshops, the creation of advisory committees, and contracting with Comite Civico del Valle (CCV) to bolster educational outreach to communities around the Sea. However, the majority of CCV's current contract focuses on outreach materials, educational events, and social media announcements. While these efforts are vital and necessary to having successful turnout at workshops and events, there are no additional steps described as to how communities will have sustained input into the shaping of the projects described. The development of an explicit engagement plan which spells out how and when community knowledge can influence the State's plans is critical. The long-term success and stewardship of the built projects, as well as the long-range development depends on this plan.

Overall Engagement Principles

The SSMP has been designed with dust suppression and habitat creation as the areas of main priority because of the State's obligation through the Quantitative Settlement Agreement (QSA). Through the process of interviewing stakeholders for the purpose of writing this report, it has been made clear that resident participation and real community engagement has been lacking in the State's process of formulating the SSMP. It has also been affirmed by those who participated in our interview process that resident engagement still has an opportunity to be added to the process of project design within the SSMP. This report identifies the unique opportunity that the State of California has to adapt current processes and introduce new methods to authentically engage the communities around the Sea. In doing so, the State can create an engagement process that leads to a more robust and holistic design of the SSMP projects so that these include beneficial amenities for the communities where they will be built.

An engagement process that has community participation as a core tenet will be advantageous to the State moving forward with the 10-Year and Long-Range planning efforts. It will:

- Inform residents about what's at stake
- Establish a core base of engaged residents and increase community support
- Reveal new opportunities for design improvements and efficiencies

Our proposal is that, through a vibrant engagement process, the State will produce projects that will target the original priorities of dust suppression and habitat creation while adding a new equally important priority of public health and well-being.

Roadmap for Engagement

The recommendations listed below are aimed to provide a roadmap for crafting an engagement strategy that results in a robust and equitable engagement framework from the outset. Further examples and descriptions of specific engagement and outreach tactics can be found in the Appendix of this report.
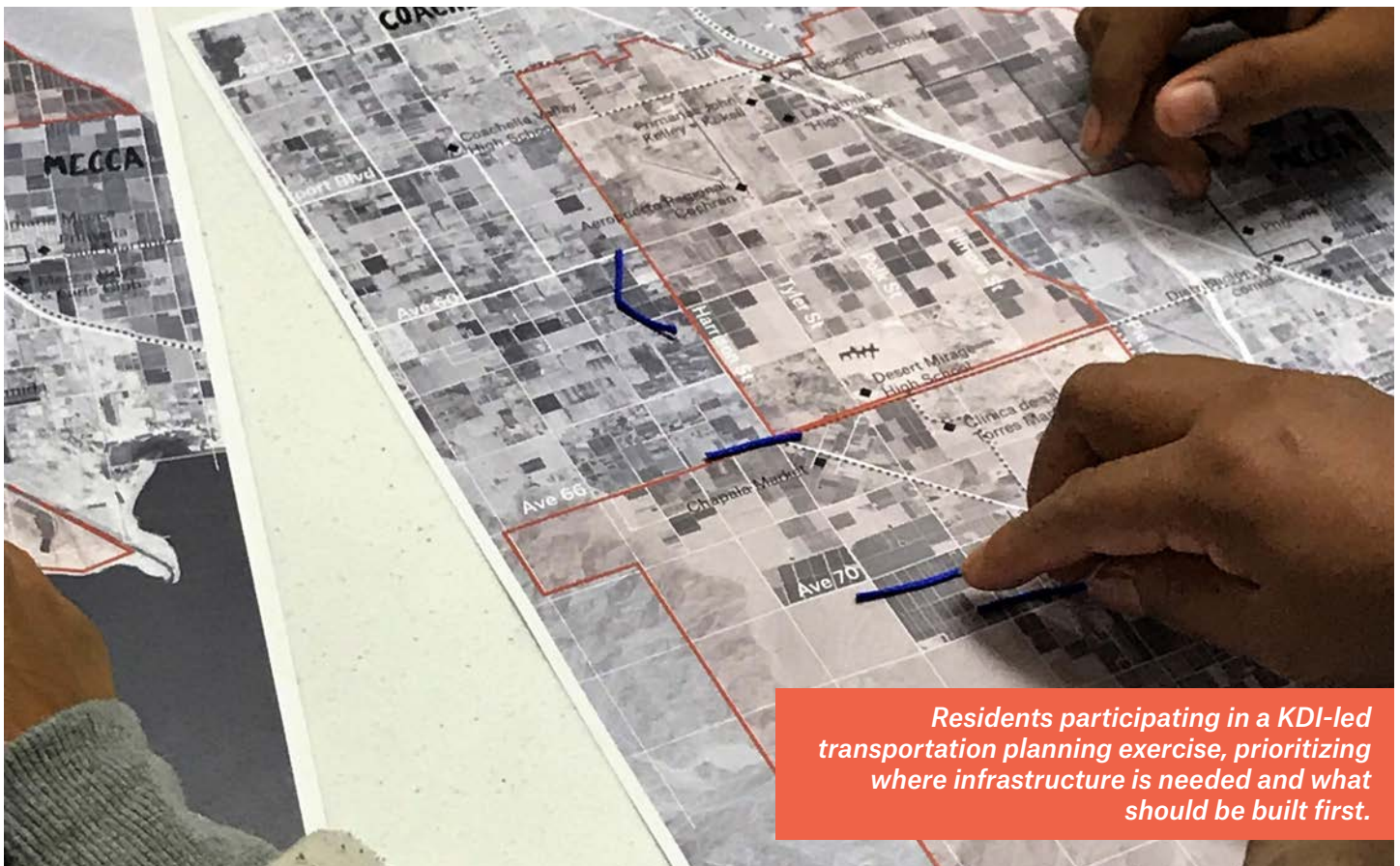
1. Create Partnerships

It is vital that the engagement strategy is not used as a top-down method to inform residents about the SSMP projects but as an opportunity to create long-lasting community partnerships that will lead to a collaborative effort with equally weighted input from all sides. When there is true partnership, the communities engaged will have the opportunity to define the information needed and the conversations that should take place during meetings and workshops.

We recommend that during the first interactions with the communities, the facilitators take the opportunity to learn more about community needs and understand why people to want to be part of the conversation. So, rather than disseminate information on the projects and current standing plans, the community engagement should seek education from community members on their expertise and learn firsthand their needs and priorities. Once those needs are identified, the facilitators will be able to determine the structure their subsequent meetings or workshops and enrich their outreach by learning who are the harder to reach members of the communities.

Steps for Creating Partnerships:

- Listen to residents
- Value community expertise
- Understand community priorities
- Create a power map of stakeholders
- Determine who is not at the table
- Identify community needs

Residents participating in a KDI-led transportation planning exercise, prioritizing where infrastructure is needed and what should be built first.

During the design of a public park in Oasis, CA, KDI created a youth Street Team that lead efforts to collect community stories and needs that ultimately were integrated into the park design.

2. Delegate Responsibility

It is necessary that CNRA and DWR delegates authority to the communities, first by identifying the areas where the community can have direct input in decision making, and second by being upfront about the limitations within these. The SSMP projects cannot move forward in planning, design, and construction without the inclusion of identified community amenities. If the input that is being gathered by the engagement facilitators is not considered an integral part of the planning and design process, the engagement strategy will be in danger of setting itself up to tokenize the communities it has set out to engage, and perpetuate the sentiment of exclusion that these communities currently experience. A good example of how to delegate power is to host participatory budgeting workshops where the community understands how the project budget is structured and can make decisions on how to spend that money on amenities. Participatory budgeting is a democratic process through which community members are able to decide how to spend part of a public budget. This requires skilled facilitators that can marry the priorities on both sides—the State's obligation to suppress dust, and the needs of the community around recreation and public health.

Steps for Delegating Responsibility:

- Identify portions of projects that require information dissemination and/or consultation
- Decide on most effective steps in the strategy to delegate responsibility
- Define opportunities for participatory budgeting

3. Find Opportunities for Empowerment

The engagement strategy must ensure that CNRA and DWR will work with existing networks of grassroots groups, NGOs, and major stakeholders. It needs be acknowledged that these networks in the Coachella Imperial Valleys have the ability to mobilize their communities to express desires, wishes, discontent, and project ideas. The State must recognize that it does not have the capacity to do it all—evaluating what portions of a project, such as a small-scale restoration project or data collection effort, can be community managed. This will help the State build relationships with community leaders and lead to regular use of the newly added amenities. If this is done successfully, these projects will be seen as positive additions to the communities and, more importantly, the projects will be seen as a successful response to the communities' concern that the SSMP is not being planned with their direct input.

Steps for Finding Opportunities for Empowerment:

- Determine opportunities where the recommendations from the community can be incorporated into the Engagement Strategy
- Acknowledge the State limited capacity
- Identify ways for local organizations fill these gaps and complement the process

Desired Stakeholder Goals

To inform this report, the Alianza team interviewed three groups of stakeholders that have been part of the SSMP advisory committees to further understand their suggestions and thoughts on opportunities for community engagement. Though the questions asked of each group were different based on their expertise, all three meetings resulted in similar ideas about the types of engagement as well as structural changes most needed in the delivery of the SSMP projects. The groups interviewed were:

- Air Quality and Science: Imperial Irrigation District (IID), Imperial County, Pacific Institute, CA Air Resources Board (ARB), US Fish and Wildlife
- On-the-Ground Organizations: FIELD, CCV
- Implementation Agencies: CNRA, DWR, Tetratech, Salton Sea Authority (SSA), Burke Rix Communications

Within these conversations, a few common themes emerged as key suggestions for how to craft a robust engagement strategy for the Coachella and Imperial Valleys, listed below.

Recommendations

1. Emphasize Community-led Data Collection

Multiple participants emphasized the need for sustained and thorough data collection and the translation of that data into easy-to-understand information for residents living around the Sea. Within

The Alianza Youth EJ Cohort has begun balloon-mapping the shoreline of the Sea, thinking of more engaging ways for residents to understand how changes to the Sea will affect their everyday lives.

a larger definition of engagement, a community-driven data collection initiative could help to bolster community involvement in decision making while simultaneously creating an informed base. These suggestions largely focused on air quality.

2. Focus on Education

There has been an absence of clear and frank conversations with residents around the changing future of the Sea. Environmental education was emphasized, particularly by IID, as a necessary step towards engaging residents and school children. Suggestions of setting up educational events, both now while projects are in their design stages and in perpetuity once projects are built, were common across the groups. These ideas ranged from environmental educational signage, to creating Salton Sea curricula for school children, to tours of IID dust mitigation projects.

3. Develop Clear Graphics

Throughout these conversations, many stakeholders noted the lack of a clear narrative that could be communicated to residents. Clear graphics were suggested as a means to alleviate this, particularly for residents who primarily speak Spanish or have low educational attainment. Further suggestions for the type of graphics necessary for SSMP engagement are listed in the following section on developing an Engagement Strategy Framework.

4. Dedicate Engagement Funding

One note that is important to highlight is that a dedicated budget for community engagement was brought up in these conversations by NGOs and agencies alike. Not only was there confusion around if there was an explicit budget for engagement writ large, but also if there was an engagement budget for each planned SSMP project. Many felt that both were needed in order to have specific and relevant conversations about how each project could be molded to meet community needs. This also includes the creation of a resourcing plan that projects what staff are necessary for project design and implementation, as well as logistics such as providing food and childcare at meetings. Without a clear budget, developing a long-term and sustainable engagement workplan is impossible.

5. Incorporate Community Design Parameters

Developing community informed design parameters and criteria was suggested by DWR, and supported by conversations with CCV and FIELD. With the design-build structure that is being utilized for the construction of the SSMP projects, this method seems to be the clearest roadmap for integrating community priorities into the realization of the different projects.

66
I want to
change the way
other people
view our
community. I
want to show
our true
beauty.
99

-Diego, 15
Mecca, CA

#ECVEJ

66
We should
plant more
plants to
help better
our
community
and our
environment.
99

-David Vargas, 17
Mecca, CA

#ECVEJ

66
I want to help
people in my
community
change from
having tough
lives to living
the lives they
deserve.
99

-Ever, 16
Mecca, CA

#ECVEJ

66
Even though
plants and animals
are important, we
must never forget
about the people
when we start to
think about new
ways to better the
Salton Sea and our
environment.
99

-Mariela Huazano, 20
Mecca, CA

#ECVEJ

Members of the Alianza EJ Youth Cohort took to social media to express their hopes for the Salton Sea, and how they want to help their communities.

III. How to Build an Engagement Framework

Building on the recommendations from SSMP stakeholders, this chapter further details the "Do's" and "Don'ts" of creating a successful engagement strategy, as well as the tools for planning for an overall engagement timeline and specific logistics for individual events. This section includes general guiding principles for the tone of engagement, a framework matrix for determining the appropriate engagement tactics to use for a meeting, and lastly a table of logistical suggestions developed in conjunction with a group of local ECV youth.

The Nuts & Bolts of Engagement: Developing Best Practices

The Alianza team and five ECV college youth collaborated in creating a guiding engagement tactics table, shown on the following page, that the State can use when planning engagement. The five youth selected to participate where part of our EJ Youth Cohort summer program and have been involved as volunteers and/or organizers with one of the organizations in Alianza for at least one year. A total of four sessions where conducted with the youth to identify and refine overall engagement tactics that should be part of all engagement events. Our goal was to combine our institutional and professional expertise with that of the youth to present something that is specifically designed for the Coachella Valley.

The first session consisted of creating a work plan and introducing the report outline so that the youth could understand their contribution. The youth were asked to act as a focus group and to think about their own experience and expertise in organizing and as active members in their community when working through this process. In the second session the group brainstormed overall tactics based on target age demographics. The third session was spent further developing the tactics and creating a comprehensive list that could be translated into a practical graphic. In the last session the youth worked directly with

KDI to create a concept design for the graphic and workshopping the draft of this report.

Determining the Appropriate Tone and Type of Engagement

The tone of engagement and outreach needs to be one of acknowledgment of community expertise, and the willingness to listen to residents and their needs. In collaboration with our youth team, described above, a list of "Do's" and "Don'ts" for conducting a meeting or workshop was created. While some of the suggestions may seem basic on the surface, they are in fact the key to building community trust and are of the utmost importance. These recommendations are as follows:

Do:

- Use first person language
- Use simple, non-technical language
- Use humor
- Employ a community organizer or facilitator that is from the community where the meeting is taking place
- Educate the audience on why the issue is important and relevant
- Use community residents as group leaders within smaller discussions
- Acknowledge community expertise and experience

Don't:

- Belittle any comment or lose patience with residents
- Have law enforcement present
- Leave questions unanswered until the end of a presentation or meeting
- Limit the amount of time people can speak unless legally mandated
- Have presenters that don't speak the primary language of the community or have adequate translation services

How to Find Appropriate Engagement Tactics

There are two scales at which to evaluate what type of engagement is appropriate to use. First and foremost, the State needs to plan out the overall engagement workplan for a project from concept through implementation and maintenance. At different phases of the design of the parameters and physical site, some engagement types are more appropriate to use than others. The graphic below, adapted from the World Bank's *Design for Impact Framework,* is a starting point for understanding the applicability of these tactics. This framework should be filled out by the designated Engagement Lead from DWR in conjunction with local community organizations at the outset of a project, and reevaluated on a regular basis as the purpose of workshops shifts and level of knowledge among residents increases.

If done correctly, conversations about the context and compromise that is needed to move forward can be had in a productive way that establishes a common framework around which both agencies and residents can agree. This nuanced understanding must be a two-way street, with residents identifying what compromises are appropriate as well as what elements or amenities are "must-haves".

		Workshop	Participatory Budgeting	Gamification
				Collaboration
PROJECT KNOWLEDGE OF USERS	*Low*			
	Mixed			
	High			
GROUP SIZE	*0-10*			
	10-50			
	50+			
TIME AVAILABILITY OF USER	*Low*			
	Medium			
	High			
TIME CRITICALITY OF DECISION	*Non-Sensitive*			
	Sensitive			
DATA AVAILABILITY	*Low*			
	High			
ACCESS TO INTERNET	*Low*			
	High			
EXISTENCE OF MASS MEDIA PLATFORMS	*Low*			
	High			

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

ENGAGEMENT TACTICS

Peer-to-Peer Learning	Collaborative Data Collection	Crowdsourcing	Collaborative Modeling	Maps	Graphics	Illustrations	Physical Modeling	Virtual Reality	Outdoor Activities	Printed Material	Art-based	Social Media	SMS/MMS	Mobile App	Web Platform	Broadcast Media	Podcast
	Data				*Visualization*							*Communications*					

Creation of a Graphic Narrative

Graphics are an important engagement tool for community workshops and events to create a cohesive narrative and clear vision. The first graphic that should be produced for the SSMP, and one that is currently lacking, is an illustrative vision of what the Sea will look like in ten years should all the SSMP projects be implemented. This graphic should illustrate not only what the projects would look like and their associated elements, but where the projected shoreline will be in 2028. People should be included in this graphic as well, helping residents understand how they and their families fit into the overall narrative being proposed by the State.

Additionally, a set of on-the-ground perspectives are necessary to help illustrate what these projects will look like to the people that live there. Additional notation of recreational possibilities overlaid on these perspectives will help give more life and context to them. These drawings help people to place themselves in the space or along the shoreline, and give concrete form to a vision even if the details of each project are not known yet. These graphics can also help to combat other visions such as water importation, as it brings a sense of reality to the SSMP projects and takes the guesswork out of equation.

Further graphics that should be developed are illustrative sections and plans for each project, conceptual zoning diagrams for programming, and visual timelines for the design and implementation of the Phase 1 and Long-Range plans.

Summary of Graphics Needs:

- Illustrative vision of the Salton Sea
- On-the-ground illustrative perspectives
- Sections for each project
- Plans for each project
- Conceptual programmatic zoning
- Timelines for design and implementation

Creating graphics that depict what an equitable Salton Sea could look like in 2028 will help give clear vision and narrative to the SSMP, while simultaneously combating other narratives such as water importation.

Outreach to Youth

According to 2012-2016 ACS data, over 30% of the ECV population is under the age of 18. This age group not only will inherit the work at the Salton Sea in coming years, but also could serve as a strong engagement force for the State in reaching larger portions of the population. By explicitly engaging youth through the strategies suggested below, a youth-led initiative could be developed that would help open the door to engaging their parents, family members, and communities at large. We recommend having a specific and separate engagement strategy for youth work, and allowing them to have responsibility for engagement leadership throughout the design process. Involvement of local non-profit organizations that already have established youth organizing efforts in place will be key in the success of this work.

	6-11 YEAR OLD AUDIENCE	12-18 YEAR OLD AUDIENCE
TIMEFRAME OF MEETING		
Weekends	X	
Mornings	X	X
Afternoons		
Evenings		X
TYPE OF INFORMATION PRESENTED		
Technical information		
Detailed information		
Ecological information	X	X
Public Health information		X
PRESENTATION STYLE		
One speaker only		
Powerpoint presentation		
Visual-heavy presentation	X	X
Conversational tone		X
Workshop setting		X
ACTIVITIES		
Use of "ice-breakers"	X	X
Small groups	X	X
Arts-based activities	X	X
Use of games	X	X
Use of virtual reality		X
Collaborative data collection		X
LOGISTICS		
Outdoor presentation	X	X
Name tags	X	
Shorter meetings	X	
Well-known community location		X
Childcare		X
Food	X	X
Language translation		X
Carpool / transportation provided	X	X

IV. Recommendations for Implementation

In addition to a more robust and planned out engagement strategy, there are some structural suggestions that could be implemented to institutionalize this effort within the SSMP process. These tactics will build good will within the communities, serve as testing grounds for methods of blending community amenities with infrastructural work, and integrate community members into the design making process itself.

Institutionalizing Engagement

The SSMP Engagement Strategy, once drafted, should become integral to the 10-Year Plan and Long-Range work that follows. To achieve success with the state-mandated milestones and financial sustainability, below are ways to embed a foundation of systemic practices and measures to monitor the success of the SSMP engagement process.

A transparent and clear decision-making process amongst stakeholders that sets clear parameters for the SSMP design process to intake community recommendations is needed, including criteria on what is feasible and what is not. This should also include a transparent decision-making process for approving or denying resident priorities and project proposals.

Accountability is key, and will be necessary to build trust at the local level. Establishing ongoing engagement with the community and local NGOs will help to bolster this process and create a long-term solution-seeking process for the Salton Sea that incorporates community residents as key stakeholders.

Birdwatching overlook and platform

KAYAKING
BIRD BLIND
COMMUNITY MURAL
WETLAND HABITAT
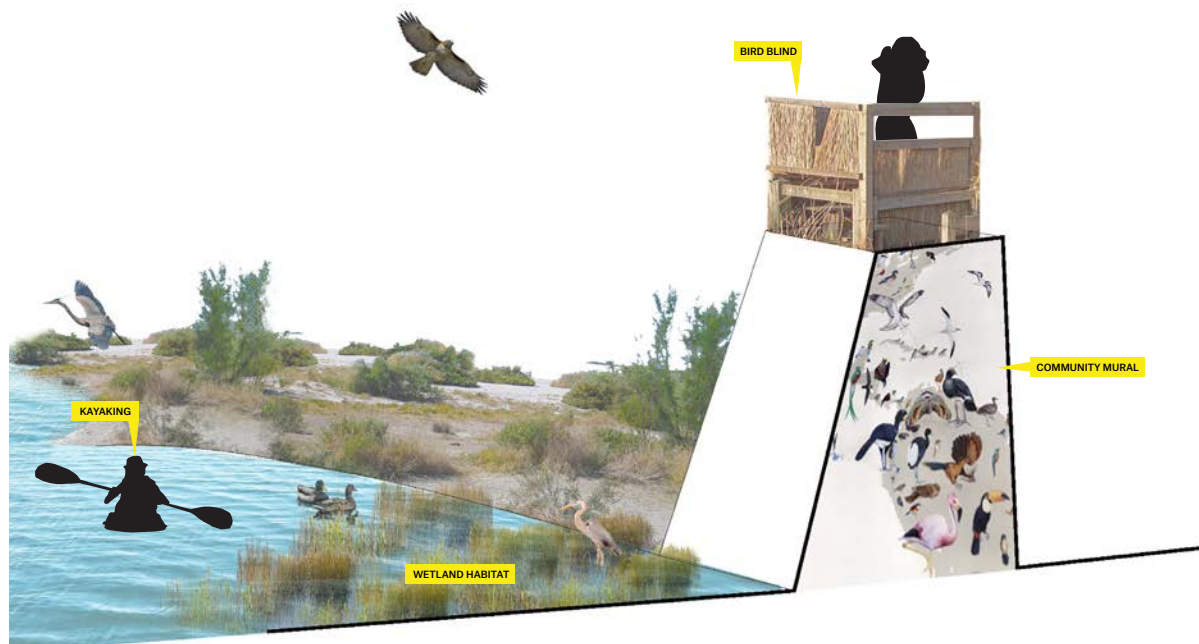
Setting a strong framework for evaluation will give the State the ability to understand when and how engagement efforts have been successful and where they could be improved upon in the future. Designing pre- and post-engagement surveys for the SSMP will enable this to happen more effectively, and should be prioritized prior to any community engagement workshops moving forward.

Internal Engagement Structures

All stakeholders related to the success of the SSMP projects should shift their current practices of engagement to align according to the definition and guidance of this report.

The Assistant Secretary of Salton Sea Policy and DWR need to communicate a clear understanding of the impact the contracted individuals will make in the larger scope of the SSMP to the SSMP committees.
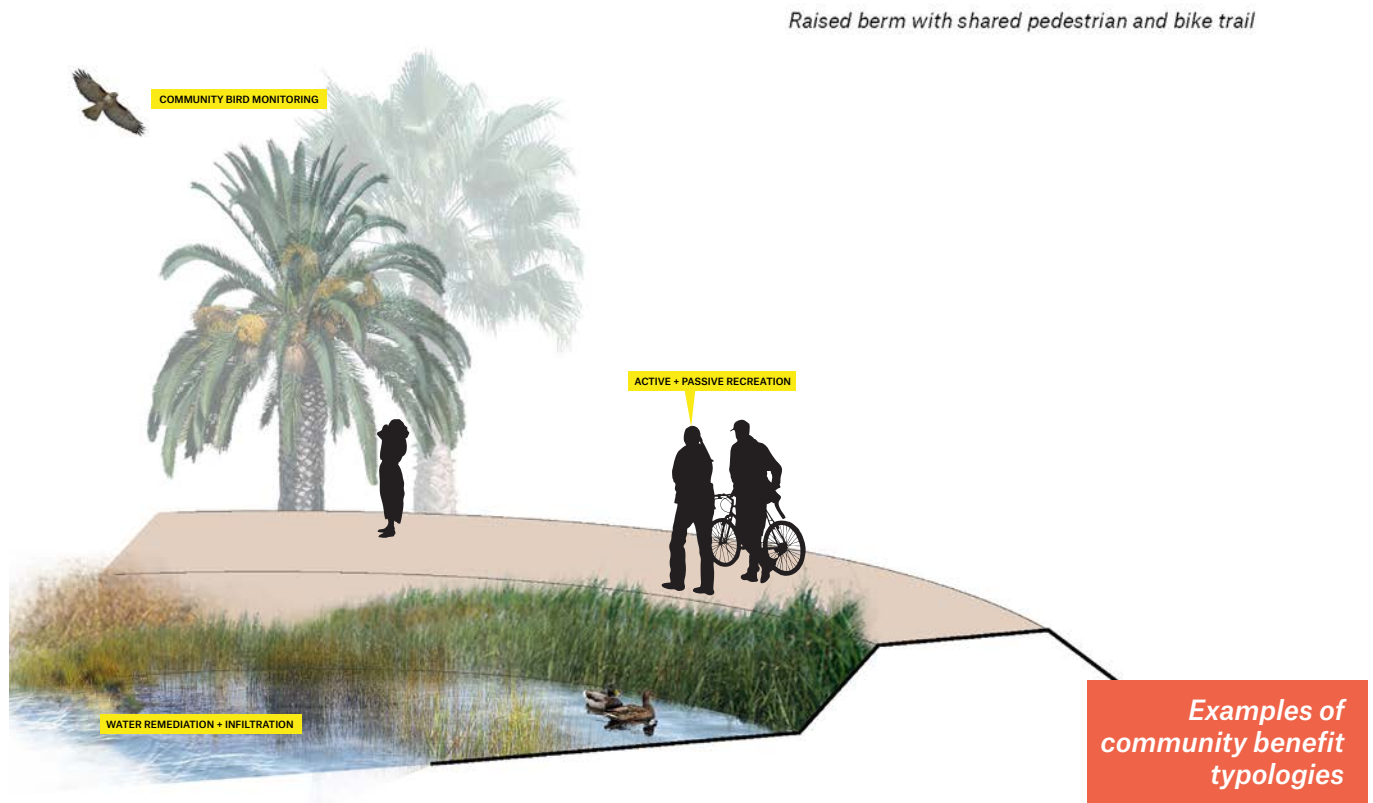
Adequate Internal Funding and Local Personnel

Securing adequate funding within DWR will be needed to ensure that the steps outlined in this report can be undertaken in a timely and efficient manner. Specific funding to contract an entity for engagement and public relations, outreach materials, meeting expenses, food, interpreters and translators, and mileage expenses will be necessary for each workshop.

Additionally, having "boots on the ground" that can build key relationships with local stakeholders and residents will help to promote better and faster implementation of the projects and the engagement strategy.

Measuring Success

Measuring success throughout the process can help elucidate successes and failures more accurately than solely at the end of an implementation process. Developing a clear engagement timeline and evaluation process is needed in order to do this. Steps to reach

Raised berm with shared pedestrian and bike trail

COMMUNITY BIRD MONITORING

ACTIVE + PASSIVE RECREATION

WATER REMEDIATION + INFILTRATION

Examples of community benefit typologies

this goal include:

- SSMP alignment with staff, partners, and community members for civic engagement
- Investment in community surveys for baseline data to track progress through mid-surveys
- Continually evaluate the engagement process during roll-out and produce an annual evaluation report outlining the efforts and lessons learned

Achieving a truly effective SSMP requires ongoing and robust implementation beyond the planning process. A jurisdictional commitment to seeing recommendations through to action is critical. Thus, it is imperative to evaluate the process with community stakeholders and build in opportunities for periodic review and evaluation. This can be accomplished through annual or biannual committees or task forces who can evaluate progress.

Below are our major recommendations for changing the implementation process to align with the engagement strategy outlined in previous sections.

1. Include Community Amenities

It is essential that some community amenities are included in the first phase of each project built around the Sea. These amenities should be planned for from the concept phase through the development of design parameters in order to have an accurate cost estimate and integration of community design with the necessary biological and engineering criteria. This will illustrate to community partners that their needs are valued. Treating these features as "add-ons" signals that they are not important to the State, particularly if their funding is not secured upfront. The best way to do this is by including community amenities within the design parameters given to the design-build contractor.

2. Construct Community Pilot Projects

Even before the SSMP projects are built, community pilot projects should be constructed around the Sea. These could be projects such as boat docks, environmental education placards, or shade structures. Fast-tracking these smaller efforts will start to build ground support and excitement. Ideally, these community pilots would be multi-beneficial, serving to

mitigate dust while also building habitat and providing amenities now for the communities that need them.

3. Create Opportunities for Participatory Budgeting

Participatory budgeting is a powerful engagement tool, and could be easily implemented within the SSMP projects. This democratic process sets aside a portion of the total budget and allows community members full design control within the parameters set, giving them real power over real money. This truly speaks to the State's listed goals of transparency and accountability, and leads to a deeper understanding of the complex processes at play.

4. Amend RFP Language

Clear RFP language should be included that requires the selected contractor to continue engaging the community throughout the design-build process. Because this method of implementation allows the contractor to have more flexibility to shape the project's design, it is necessary for them to give regular updates and receive feedback from the communities in closest proximity to the site to stay true to the original project intention and identified resident needs.

5. Designate an Engagement Budget

For any of these changes to be implemented, a clear and designated engagement budget is necessary. The ability to internally create a clear annual engagement workplan vetted by the SSMP Engagement Committee should be the first step in creating a comprehensive strategy, and without a budget this is not efficient nor feasible. Additionally, a budget for each SSMP project should be established for workshops, events, and charrettes that engage specific communities or regions.
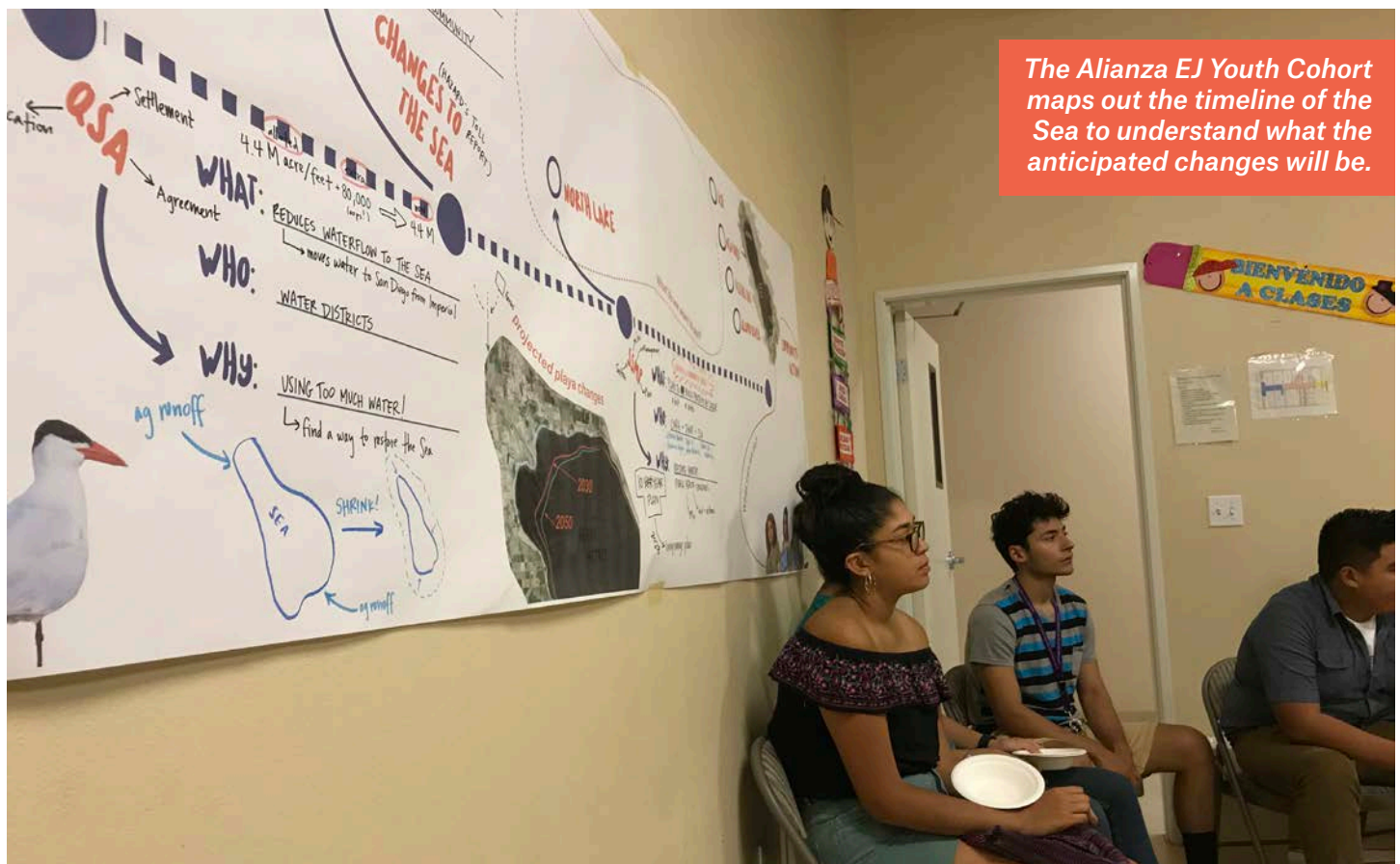
6. Encourage Local Job Creation

Community benefits, such as local job creation, will further help in creating sustainable SSMP projects around the Sea. While the building of the projects will inherently create jobs within the construction industry, working with local organizations such as FIELD to institute job training programs will be vital in employing local residents. However, there are

opportunities at a smaller scale as well, such as training and employing local communities in on-the-ground biological monitoring and data collection to further bolster maintenance efforts.

Conclusion

The mission and intention of the California Natural Resources Agency to "restore, protect and manage the State's natural, historical and cultural resources for current and future generations using creative approaches and solutions based on science, collaboration, and respect for all the communities and interests involved" should be reflected in the SSMP. The Salton Sea offers a unique opportunity to leverage a convergence of support from federal, state, and local stakeholders to address public health and ecosystem restoration. Currently, there is a clear need in the SSMP to improve engagement in communities that will be affected the most by SSMP projects and the need to address public health as a key priority. We strongly recommend community resident and local organization participation in the CA Natural Resource Committees working on the Salton Sea Ten-Year Plan, and believe

that this report gives a roadmap to how to begin this process.

The Alianza EJ Youth Cohort maps out the timeline of the Sea to understand what the anticipated changes will be.

Appendix

This section highlights case studies and tactics for outreach and engagement that have been successfully used at a variety of scales. These precedents show the need for and the employment of community engagement strategies in multiple contexts—from large infrastructure projects requiring complicated permitting structures, to local Coachella Valley examples. However, each has in common the emphasis on a three-faceted approach of weighting community amenities and needs equally with ecological restoration goals and infrastructural design. It is important to understand that resiliency cannot only be infrastructural or ecological in nature—it must also include community members and social resiliency to create strong stewards that will support and utilize the projects in the future. The tactics illustrated in this section speak to the variety of methods that can be used to achieve this goal and could potentially be applied in the SSMP engagement strategy.

Case Studies

Project Name: Living Breakwaters

Location: Staten Island, New York

Client: US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), New York Governor's Office for Storm Recovery

Date: 2014 - ongoing

Stated Project Goals: protect against storm surge; restore ecological diversity; provide recreational access to the shoreline
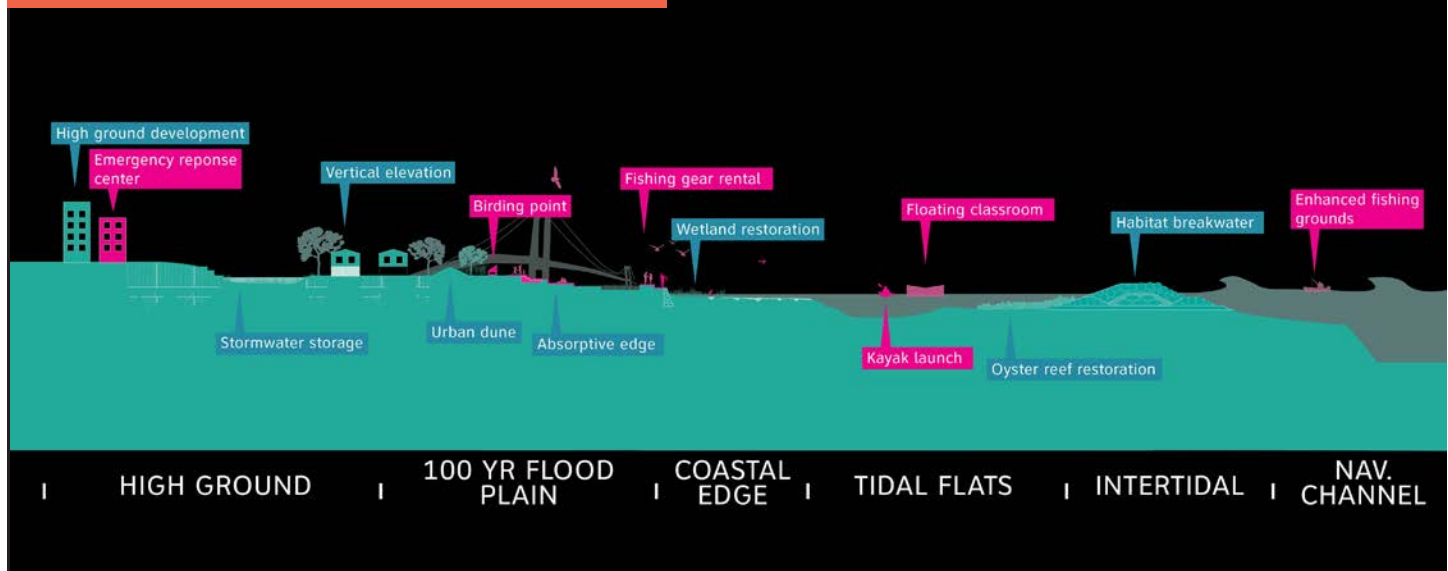
The Living Breakwaters project, designed and implemented through a HUD-led initiative aimed to rebuild New York's shorelines in the wake of Superstorm Sandy, is an innovative large-scale infrastructure project designed to reduce erosion and damage from storm waves, improve the ecosystem health of New York Harbor, and encourage stewardship through youth education and shoreline access. Funded through Community Development Block Grants for Disaster Recovery, this system of offshore breakwaters

not only is designed to reduce risk, but also have active oyster restoration and a "Water Hub" which will house educational activities and workforce training programs.

Throughout the design and development of this project, regular community workshops were held to understand what types of programming residents wanted to see, how their houses were affected by the storm, and what compromises they were willing to make in order to stay in a community that they loved and valued. Breakwaters do not keep houses from flooding, which was clearly explained to residents, but even so they decided this to be the best option because of the increase in the quality of life they would have from ecological restoration and education programming.

The three part project goal was explicitly written into the Purpose and Need statement of the project's Environmental Impact Statement, which was ultimately approved and permitted by the USACE.

The Living Breakwaters project brings together social resiliency, risk reduction, and ecological revitalization to create a layered approach to resiliency.

High ground development
Emergency reponse center
Vertical elevation
Birding point
Fishing gear rental
Wetland restoration
Floating classroom
Habitat breakwater
Enhanced fishing grounds
Stormwater storage
Urban dune
Absorptive edge
Kayak launch
Oyster reef restoration

| HIGH GROUND | 100 YR FLOOD PLAIN | COASTAL EDGE | TIDAL FLATS | INTERTIDAL | NAV. CHANNEL |

Project Name: South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project

Location: South Bay, San Francisco, California

Client: n/a

Date: 2003 - ongoing

Stated Project Goals: restore and enhance a mix of wetland habitats; provide wildlife-oriented public access and recreation; provide flood management in the South Bay

The South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project is the largest tidal wetland restoration project on the West Coast. Though a restoration project in name, it serves a three purpose goal of increasing resiliency to increasing flooding events and providing more amenities to residents and tourists visiting this area through environmental education, a trail system, and kayak launches. These components of public access were included as part of the Phase 1 efforts of restoration. This mix of public amenities while still maintaining clear ecological goals could serve as an example for the Salton Sea process, underlining the importance of planning for public access and recreational opportunities upfront in the stated project goals instead of as an afterthought.

A four-year public process was undertaken to design the restoration plan, including monthly stakeholder forums, and even now after the first phase has been completed ongoing public meetings are held to give updates on the long-term restoration efforts being undertaken. The Center for Collaborative Research was contracted to create and oversee the project's community engagement efforts.

Additionally, a dedicated website portal to the South Bay Restoration efforts was established with clear project descriptions and a FAQ section that gives further information on the projects and their current status. Notices on meetings can be found here, and a quarterly newsletter giving an update on project planning is also distributed.

Community amenities and recreational opportunities were a clear stated goal of the South Bay restoration work upfront.

Project Name: Coachella Valley Disadvantaged Communities Water Infrastructure

Location: Eastern Coachella Valley, CA

Client: n/a

Date: 2003 - ongoing

Stated Project Goals: to secure access to safe affordable drinking water, wastewater and flood control services in historically disadvantaged Coachella Valley regions through strategic planning, funding procurement, needs assessment, and reporting – all in collaboration with community members and stakeholders

The Disadvantaged Communities Infrastructure Task Force is the first and only Task Force of it's kind in the state of California. The Task Force is comprised of representatives from local disadvantaged communities, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations committed to working on both short-term and long-term solutions to ensure that all Coachella Valley regional disadvantaged communities benefit from clean and accessible water to their homes. An estimated 10,000 Coachella Valley residents, primarily in the east valley, rely on private wells for drinking water and many of them do not meet all the state and federal drinking water standards. This task force is working to connect more than 80 small, rural water systems to the district's services to bring affordable, reliable and safe drinking water to more than 4,000 people.

Alianza Coachella Valley is the only alliance in the Coachella Valley bringing together community members, non-profits, and government to lead efforts needed for a thriving region. Therefore, Alianza's Neighborhood Action Team Campaign was able to accomplish the creation of the Task Force by achieving a historic change in the Coachella Valley Water District's electoral system when the district's board agreed to change from an all at-large to a district system, which resulted in the first Latino to serve on the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) Board and is spearheading the Task Force in collaboration with many stakeholders.

Community engagement in Alianza's Neighborhood Action Team Campaign during the water infrastructure work led to change within CVWD.

Examples of Outreach Tactics

Outreach is defined as efforts that aim to initially engage audiences and expand the exposure of a project to residents. Outreach is particularly useful where a population does not have an in depth understanding or background of an issue, and therefore outreach materials can provide this necessary base knowledge to prepare residents to engage more thoroughly with the topics at hand. Having an informed base, though more work upfront, creates a more streamlined and efficient engagement strategy. This knowledge will build leaders within the community, and lead to meaningful and practical input into the projects that fit the context and parameters of the SSMP. It can also serve as a

key logistical tool to improve meeting attendance. However, outreach is inherently one-way, and it is necessary to compliment these efforts with a robust community engagement strategy. Below are examples of different outreach tactics, and how they have been deployed in a number of varied precedents.

Interactive Toolkit

Project Name: The Affordable Housing Toolkit

Client: Center for Urban Pedagogy

Location: New York City

This kit is an interactive workshop in a box, complete with tools to break down what affordable housing means in a simple and graphic way. A fold-out map illustrates changes in demographics and rents, and an accompanying guidebook provides step-by-step instructions for how to run a workshop, allowing for a diversity of organizations to confidently inform residents on the issue. This type of mobile toolkit could help bring the SSMP workshops out into the community.

Self-Explanatory

Project Name: Don't Bank On It

Client: Association for Neighborhood & Housing Development

Location: New York City

In response to a 2012 New York City Act passed on responsible banking, this guidebook works to make the policy more public and transparent. The material explains the policy with easy to understand graphics, making it an effective tool for residents to understand complicated policies and how they can become more involved in the process. A series of "Salton Sea 101" pamphlets could follow this model.

Arts-Based

Project Name: Connect the Dots

Client: n/a

Location: Boulder, Colorado

Sometimes a more playful piece of educational outreach an be as informative as a pamphlet. These dots throughout the City of Boulder map the 100-year flood line of Boulder Creek, drawing attention to how natural ecologies could have very real impacts on residents' everyday lives even if it is not constantly evident. Arts-based outreach also has the potential of engaging locally-based artists in the conversation. A shoreline installation at the Salton Sea could serve as a destination and conversation starter in this manner.

Meeting People Where They Are

Project Name: Sponge Hub

Client: Housing and Urban Development

Location: San Mateo County, California

When dealing with a project or issue that affects an entire region, it is necessary to meet people where they are by traveling from community to community. The Sponge Hub does just that, traveling between farmers markets, classrooms, and community events to provide educational materials on potential future parks projects in the South Bay and collect community ideas and feedback on the proposed designs. Having a flexible and mobile space is key in the Coachella and Imperial Valleys where populations are not very dense.

Presence Building

Project Name: EJ Postcard Distribution

Client: none

Location: Eastern Coachella Valley

As part of building the Environmental Justice Youth Cohort, Alianza produced a series of postcards in Spanish and English to distribute at school events to encourage students to come to the meetings. Mailers, flyers, and printed materials are particularly helpful in the Eastern Coachella Valley where not all residents have internet or social media access as a means of learning about community events.

Examples of Engagement Tactics

This report outlines both outreach and engagement efforts, as each is vital to a successful strategy of resident involvement in the SSMP. Engagement goes a step beyond outreach, moving from planning "for" a community to planning "with" one. It is rooted in relationship building and allows for residents or stakeholders to be at the center of a two-way conversation instead of purely the recipients of information. Though there are many situations where a town-hall style meeting or a community workshop are necessary and functional, there are many opportunities to go above and beyond these more traditional engagement techniques to help residents fully understand the complexities of a project. Below are examples of creative and innovative engagement tools that have been successfully used before, on both large and small scale projects.

Arts-Based

Project Name: Boogie Down Booth

Client: NYC Department of Transportation

Location: The Bronx, New York

This booth was a temporary installation, paying tribute to the musical legacy of jazz in the Bronx. With seating, solar-powered lighting, and music, this kiosk provided space for a "community bulletin" where residents could give ideas for neighborhood development. Additionally, a rotating mural provided space for students to illustrate the changes they imagine for their community. Providing a meeting space that sparks conversation could foster further engagement around the Sea.

Science-Based

Project Name: Billion Oyster Project

Client: New York Harbor School

Location: New York Harbor

The Billion Oyster Project is an initiative to help restore a natural oyster population to the New York Harbor, using public school students as citizen scientists. Involving residents in the actual construction or restoration work planned provides a deeper understanding and sense of pride in the planned projects, creating stewards for years to come. There are multiple data collection or community-led restoration efforts that could follow this model around the Salton Sea.

Virtual Reality / Mixed Media

Project Name: Buoyant

Client: Center for NYC Neighborhoods

Location: New York City

There are many cheap and lo-fi ways of using virtual reality (VR) as an engagement tool, such as the use of Google Cardboard. This project projected flood risk maps on to the streets that residents live on, providing a visceral way of understanding what a project could look like, or potential effects of a no-action scenario. An accompanying website provided a living platform to further help residents how to take action. Simple VR techniques could help residents more fully visualize the proposed outcomes of the 10-year Plan.

Games

Project Name: Popuptown Social

Client: Housing and Urban Development

Location: Long Beach, California

Having fun at a community workshop doesn't mean that it isn't serious! This zoning card game uses a deck of cards that allows residents to select their preferences for building types, amenities, and accessibility needs. Whereas this type of exercise is usually done with post-its on a board, simply reinventing it as a more fun and visual activity helps to engage people of different ages and help people open up in a formal setting. Gamification could be used to reach younger populations for their input as well.

Participatory Budgeting

Project Name: Oasis Productive Public Space (PPS)

Client: Desert Recreation District (DRD)

Location: Eastern Coachella Valley (ECV)

Participatory budgeting is an incredibly potent and strong engagement tool that gives direct power to residents and the decisions they are making for their community. Used as part of KDI's work in developing a park in Oasis, CA, this exercise cedes a portion of the budget to community control, creating a democratic process that results in programs that are directly prioritized by residents.