

Garry Brown

Us off here, we can get going. It's a few minutes after three. Hopefully some more people will be joining us. But I want to welcome you all to the second meeting of the Environmental Justice Stakeholder Group. And we had our first meeting several weeks ago and kind of had an indoctrination of what this is about. And we're all learning, believe me, we're all learning. There's so much to it. And the more meetings I attend, the more I realize how much there is to actually doing and undertaking this project. But I think we'll all benefit at the end. So anyhow, I'd like to introduce David, who you met at the last meeting. He walked us through it. We have a lot to cover today and it's giving you information and requesting your feedback because that's where we are now at a critical part. This is an agenda that you see that we're going to go over today.

Garry Brown

And believe me, if you have questions about anything as we go, please don't hesitate to ask and we'll go from there. So, David, do you want to take over?

David Loaeza

Yeah, definitely. And hi everyone. This is David Loisa, regional coordinator with California Forward. And I'm your neighbor here in Anaheim. So the first part is just we want to share these couple of slides with you just to give you a little bit of context of where we're at. So we are in this first part of the regional of Surf, which is developing this regional plan, which is sort of the data phase. And as you can see here, there are four, five elements that will be shared more in detail by Jesse. But here are the five elements that go into this regional part. Sorry, this first regional part with the data. And there's several important pieces that we want to share. The first one is that this is our very first deliverable to the state for this program. So we're hoping the deadline is at the end of August, but we're hoping to get it to the state a little bit sooner than the end of August.

David Loaeza

And once this plan is shared with the community overviewed by the community, the next phase of this program will go to the strategies phase and through the community and your input, the HRTC, which is the governing body for Ocerf, will determine some of the strategies that will be developed over this phase. And the piece that we want to share here in the phase that follows the strategies phase is the implementation phase. So this will begin to unfold in about a year. But the important piece here is that we're doing a lot of planning, a lot of convening, a lot of requesting your feedback on, for example, this draft regional plan. But all of this is meant to be part of some real projects that will receive substantial funding over the next couple of years. So there's really a big goal at the end which is actually getting funds and projects funded.

David Loaeza

Now we'll turn it over to Jesse to dive into the presentation.

Garry Brown

Yeah.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Thanks, Debbie. If it's okay, can we record this in case for some of the groups who just couldn't make this time. Is that fair for everybody especially?

Garry Brown

We talk about the details here.

Jon Light/Melissa Waters

This meeting is being recorded.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

So to Angela's point, I will take a couple of minutes for those of you who couldn't attend the first meeting. Again, this whole thing is called the Community Economic Resiliency Fund or Surf is the acronym and it's primarily an economic development planning grant. But the point is that it needs to be done differently and in particular when it comes to this stakeholder group, is that this needs to be done in an environmentally sustainable way, which has not been the case in previous kind of iterations of economic development planning and economic development period. So I think the reason why this stakeholder group is here is to be a check against just general economic development but also be a voice of reason and advocate for well, those aren't necessarily mutually exclusive things, right? You see a lot of green tech coming into the California economy and the Orange County economy that those are things that we could be driving kind of in collaboration with.

Garry Brown

So one is of course to balance.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Out just general economic development to make sure it's cert cert environmental justice also through this group, helping us understand what are those opportunities from an economic.

Garry Brown

Development standpoint that do meet kind of.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Your environmental sustainability and general goals. Also, Angela, to the point, a big part of this is equity. Equity across in all respects there's actually a need for economic development equity, right? There are some places that are just wealthier than others when it comes to Orange County and across the state of California. But of course there's environmental inequities and that also leads to public health inequities. So I'll get into kind of the plan a little bit. But the point is that we are capturing again, not just to do economic development planning and execution for Orange County, but with those other tenants and values in mind. Again, as we kind of go into what's in this report, it'll bear this out. So let me just go ahead and share screen here. This is primarily the work of our lead researcher and his team, Dr. Wallace Walrod. He just had a conflicting meeting at this time.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

We're doing a series of these. I'll turn this a series of these depending on stakeholder groups. So this is the kind of the environmental and environmental justice group. But part of Surf is also the input of philanthropy, the input of labor, the input of community based organizations, the input of the business community, the input of local governments and other economic development and government agencies. So this is one stakeholder group of many. So we've tried to put as many as we can and sometimes it just.

Garry Brown

Doesn'T line up with people's schedule.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

So I'm happy to stand in. So as David said, a big part of this is a deliverable of the regional plan part one, which I would define. I try to make it simply like.

Garry Brown

The data, the data and typical research.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

And David said then there's a strategies conversation which we would like to bring this group back come maybe towards the end of the year and then projects. So this is not just some elaborate planning exercise, although plans are important, but that dollars are going to be spent in a way that's economically more equitable for Orange County and environmentally more sustainable.

Garry Brown

That's what we're working towards.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

But again, this is kind of the big first step in a series of steps here. I would say that in this group there are members, you have colleagues who are your voice when it comes to how these decisions are ultimately made. So yes, I think we wanted to broaden the representation and we wanted input, but know that there are people on this call who will be the strongest advocates for the input that's being received here. And just generally, again, to make sure that these things are done in an environmentally sustainable way. So this is kind of what we've done. We broke down the surf presentations or the research. Actually, if I may, let me actually, just let me try to drop something.

Garry Brown

In the chat here. If I could just pull it up. Sorry, jumped ahead real quick.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

I think. Again, the report was shared with you.

Garry Brown

But let me sorry, exit real quick.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Just to drop it in the chat. The full report is here.

Garry Brown

And so.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Again, for everyone to take a look at. Sorry, let me just make sure that I know that was shared previously, but.

Garry Brown

It helps to just have it handy.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

And so if you think about economic development and you think about all the different stakeholders, as Gary said, it's a lot of information to cover. Obviously all of you are the experts when it comes to environmental equity or just kind of the environment in general. But one is your counterparts on this decision making body need to be more educated about the things that you know well. And conversely, if you're not following labor market analysis and industry cluster analysis and public health, you need to somewhat be at least your HRTC colleagues need to be educated enough so we can make decisions on these things. So that's kind of what we tried to do. We tried to break these down for that group, the HRTC, in more PowerPoint presentations. Then went through a full narrative and that's what was dropped in there. And then this is the process to where we want not only input from your colleagues who sit on this high road transition collaborative, but also you right that you have colleagues and you have representatives, but not everyone can speak so clearly for everyone else in the group.

Garry Brown

And this is what the opportunity provides us here. So I think we want to just.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Cover here's kind of within the major report. I'm not going to read through this because I'd rather this be more feedback from you. And then of course, there's one major question about what are the three industries that you think are most important? So how do we drive economic development.

Garry Brown

But in an environmentally sustainable way?

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Another thing that can be tricky is I'm going to tell you two things that contradict yourself, that contradicts itself. It's a big report. And so I think it's obvious for you to jump into the sections that you are most familiar with that is important, that gets supplemented. And Gary has already done a good job of ensuring that more information about water needs to be in that report. And so we will definitely work on that as we look to improve this report. But as I mentioned, part of this is also the collaborative nature of these decisions. And it's important to hypothetically get your opinions on things that you may not know that much about. And part of this report is to inform you. So when you think about industry clusters, and you may not know much about industry clusters, some of you may not, it's also important to hypothetically get your feedback on that as well.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

So it's not just a robust environmental report, right? Because I think you already produced those, you already have those, you already work on those. It's about kind of in the context of how do you kind of grow a more equitable and environmentally sustainable economy. So it would be preferable that you look at other sections. But I want to recognize that it's just human nature because you know, most to dive into those sections and that because this is a big document, you might do that. So I would just acknowledge that's totally fine as well. But hypothetically, your input would be great in a variety of sections and not just the one around sustainability,

environmental, justice, and climate. So I will work like the regional summary as you look at the report as well, because this is economic development.

Garry Brown

I would say first Jesse yes, sorry to interrupt you.

David Loaeza

I see a black page that's loading. You want me to screen share?

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

I can screen share the oh sure.

Garry Brown

Let me try to stop sharing and then reshare.

David Loaeza

I can also screen share if it makes it easier.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Sorry, do you see the deck now, at least one of the slides or.

Garry Brown

Is it still no, we don't now.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Does it come up in the slideshow or does it not show up?

Garry Brown

I can go back. It doesn't show up in the slideshow.

Erin Andreatta, Crystal Cove Conservancy

Sure.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

I'll just dish that. We'll just keep it this way then. If it's large enough, hopefully it is.

Garry Brown

So one thing I would just mention.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Again, because this is kind of an economic development plan.

Garry Brown

First, it is kind of weighted towards those topics.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

But as mentioned, you can't make those decisions in a vacuum. They shouldn't be. And so this is why you have strong inclusion of things like climate and the environment. So just recognize that. I think it's always easy to say there's not enough on this section. We welcome that feedback. But I guess if you think about these topics, these probably could be 200 page reports per topic and this is already 250 pages. So I mean, short of this being a 600 page document, this is why again, I recognize that maybe some topics.

Garry Brown

May not have as much as others. Just because this is kind of one.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

We have to respond to what the state wants in the report and two, that this is economic development first. But I would say but not only. And so I want to recognize those things. So as you go through these are the different things, the different topics that are in there. I don't want to kind of read through them and go through all of them because I'd rather get to the point where you provide more feedback. Again, from now we go for the segments

of labor market analysis. So you'll see that in the report as you review one thing, we thought that was important to be additive and this was before iterative AI kind of came out, the likes of Chat GBT. But of course that's going to have a profound effect on the economy. It seems like that's what a lot of people are talking about nationwide, globally.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

And so we actually already kind of thought that was going to be a major impact. And so we have some things around that. And I think I neglected to mention, like labor is also a major stakeholder here. So we actually got the UCI Labor Center, which is a very new center, to do some analysis around the differentials between having a union job or being under a union contract and not so same job, apples to apples, how much more are you making if that same job is a union job versus not? So we got that analysis as well. And there's no narrative in the report just yet because they just kind of did that research. But in the updated version you will see that as well, if you so choose. Industry cluster analysis and then the SWOT analysis, which I think is where we're going to spend most of our time.

Garry Brown

Because our impression is that the SWOT.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Analysis will definitely dovetail to what we think strategies are. When we have that conversation later on in the year, I would say, sorry, all feedback is important, don't get me wrong. But really, the better the SWOT analysis, the more robust the SWOT analysis, the better it is for the high road transition collaborative to make decisions on strategies which will then lead to projects because the projects have to be in alignment.

Garry Brown

Or congruent with the strategies that are developed.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

So that's where I'll spend most of my time. But as I mentioned, if you look at any segment of this report and you have comments, feedback, input, please send them my way. And then I think you'll see in an appendices a couple of things. It's a lot of stuff. So we did try to just have the researchers distill things into three key points. You might want to maybe jump to that section that might help give you kind of high level. Again, reading 250 pages will probably take a lot of time, so if you want to kind of cut that down into five or six. And I think another thing that was important that we just added is the community colleges have done some occupational assessment about higher paying jobs, more living wage jobs in Orange County and have been resilient to COVID. So we added that as well just to be good partners.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

That that research is important for surf when we think about job quality. So that's included as well if you.

Garry Brown

Wanted to take a look. But I would say I'm just going.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

To jump to the SWOT analysis. So SWAT is an acronym for strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and threats. For those who may not be familiar. And I'm not going to kind of read this thing verbatim. We will share the deck with you after, but we just wanted to provide you high level here's where we have when it comes to some of the HRTC's input and from another document that the county of ordix the region of Orange County has with the federal government called the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. A lot of those things still hold true because there may be structural or long term trends, but we definitely want to build upon this as we look to create this kind of surf research plan. And so I'm just going to do the bolded part. Highly educated and qualified workforce. That's a very true high level, I would say when you look at equity, though, and you look at the different numbers and in the research, you'll see it's not just the top line number.

Garry Brown

But maybe there's racial ethnic breakdown, what.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Those are possibly income levels obviously would impact these things. But as a general role we do, we are very fortunate to have a high education and qualified workforce. But let's acknowledge that's not true of everybody

and that's the equity piece. A strength also is that we are in the middle of this mega region that is Southern California, some 20 to 25 million people.

Garry Brown

And that is helpful because if you.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Want to get to be on an.

Garry Brown

Empire, if you want to get to La.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

And San Diego, go, there's really no better place to be than in Orange County. If you're in San Diego, it's a trek to get to La. If you're in La. It's a trek to get to San Diego. I mean, it's already a trek from Orange County. So to add that extra distance that if you're looking about having a footprint orange county has been the beneficiary of that to access all those markets and of course its proximity to the ports and we have invested in our transportation system and infrastructure. It's by no means perfect, but Orange County has kind of was a self tax, a self fund, some major improvements that you just don't see in the other region. And if you've driven to some of our neighboring counties, you kind of see.

Garry Brown

That you experience that.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

We do have world class educational research institutions, UCI being one of them. But if you look at the rankings of Cal State Fullerton as well, and we even have Chapman University, they are very well regarded nationally. So that's an asset of ours. We are a world famous kind of tourist attraction designation that is generally wonderful. It drives the economy. If you think about particularly coastal economy, so much of it is kind of driven around tourism. But we also should recognize that some of those jobs aren't high quality or high paying and that we have to try to think about how are we.

Garry Brown

Going to ensure that those jobs can.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Kind of uplift people and have wages that people can sustain themselves on. And we would say this is just kind of a quantitative fact that whenever.

Garry Brown

You see unemployment rates, I mean, it.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Doesn'T matter what the macroeconomic kind of picture is that when unemployment is generally low, orange county is still the lowest amongst our peers. And even when unemployment is high, yes, in Orange County becomes higher, but it's still lower. So whether it was COVID or otherwise the housing crisis generally, orange county has.

Garry Brown

Always had a lower unemployment rate than.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

The rest of our neighboring counties, which.

Garry Brown

Is kind of the best apples to apples comparison. So that's kind of a strength and.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

That speaks to kind of that I think we have a very diverse economy and so generally not one if one industry has trouble, it doesn't take the whole economy down, which could be true of others. I mean particularly think about

like transportation logistics in The Empire or what's happening with Hollywood right in La. Those could be issues that impact kind of your unemployment rate and kind of the economic impact of the region. We do have high levels of internet connectivity from an infrastructure standpoint. Some of the issues are affordability and quality when you have a lot of density. But when you think about other regions, some people are just are not connected at all. So there is still a digital divide, I want to acknowledge that. But the infrastructure is there and we kind of have to do some of the things to make sure there's adoption.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

And as I mentioned, we have strong concentrated industry clusters. Medical device is one of them. But it is diverse and that goes to the next point. Diverse and well rounded economy. That is ultimately a strength. But for some I think people have already brought up well, how do you brand Orange County? What is Orange County's? Kind of claim to fame. And that can be very difficult because I think we have a variety of industries. However, as I mentioned before, if something impacts that industry in other regions their economy kind of goes down the tank quickly. So it may be difficult to brand and recruit businesses and to grow a talent pipeline for those industries.

Garry Brown

But ultimately I think it's for the better for our economy. From that.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Are there any other I'll just stop there. Do people have any recommendations when it.

Garry Brown

Comes to strengths that they've heard? And again, you can provide it in feedback.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

We have the chat. David will follow up with a survey that kind of also asks for the same input. But if people kind of have things now that we should be think about.

Garry Brown

Whether around the environment or not, it.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Would be very helpful to kind of.

Garry Brown

Take that input in now.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

If you can monitor the chat or if people just want to come off.

Garry Brown

Mute and provide any and we record.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

These so we can take notes on.

Garry Brown

The back end also. Yes.

Jon Light/Melissa Waters

Just to reiterate, I've been saying for years that Orange County has such an educational, research and technological might. Why are we not capitalizing on it.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Especially when it comes to the environment and climate?

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

What do you mean by companies starting here by the talent, the research, the.

Jon Light/Melissa Waters

Talent, the educated workforce, the capabilities of our universities we should be able to.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Go green faster than other areas around the country and we could be a hub around the country.

Jon Light/Melissa Waters

We could be a sustainability capital or example.

Garry Brown

Yeah, that's wonderful.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

I mean, that's a strength and it probably even goes to opportunity. Right. Because we are not realizing that. I think we have, as we say, world class education resource institution. But I think what you just said is probably more of an opportunity that we're not truly capitalizing on it. And that is an opportunity for Orange County.

Garry Brown

Exactly.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

And I think that's what hopefully through surf we can realize a little bit of that.

Garry Brown

Right.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

That again, that you can have economic.

Garry Brown

Growth through clean technology and through a greener economy and that they're not exclusive.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

We brought that up to the Board of Supervisors as well because we think we need to partner with them with the might they have and the funds they have.

Jon Light/Melissa Waters

And we actually do know that one supervisor is interested if they can help at all.

Garry Brown

Okay, wonderful. Yeah.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

The county is involved in this process primarily through the workforce boards which helps with talent development and helping people build skills to kind of work in respective economies. So this could be one of those things where if we're hearing from employers around green technology that they just can't find the skilled workforce that I think the county with their workforce board funds could help get people into that talent pipeline.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

As long as you're talking about workforce, one important thing to think about going forward is we electrify more and more of our economy. We're going to need electricians like crazy.

Jon Light/Melissa Waters

Yeah. So the training program, you need 720 hours of some kind of instruction and then approximately four years, 8000 hours of on the job training and experience, and then you go for your exam. But if we could funnel find some way of funding a specific program in certain disinvested communities to get because those will be good long term, well paying jobs that will last for quite a while.



Garry Brown  
Absolutely.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
So that's helpful as well. If it's not happening, then that's clearly a weakness. But then, as you mentioned, if we can build something, then it becomes an opportunity.

Garry Brown  
So that's good.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
IBEW is kind of on there. Not that every electrician has to be a uni electrician, but they are on the HRTC, as you know, John. And we can have those conversations about what the landscape is as far as how they're training people and how many.

Garry Brown  
People they can train.

Erin Andreatta, Crystal Cove Conservancy  
Wonderful.

Garry Brown  
Great feedback. Anyone else?

Garry Brown  
Yeah, Jesse. I'll just kind of reiterate I've been communicating with Dr. Walrod and others that I think one of the strengths that we have in particular that we don't really mention is our water resiliency. We're blessed to sit on an aquifer that's 60 million acre feet, and we use very little of it. We restore it, we manage it well. And this area of Orange County can take multiple years of a drought without serious problem at all. And and I think that goes to the point that Orange County has for years, for decades, been innovative in water. It developed the Groundwater replenishment system, one of its type treatment plants in the world, and we put it through our sewage, through four barriers of treatment, almost to a level of distilled water. Then we put it back into the aquifer. There's a lot of strengths we have with water technology, innovation that I think sets us apart from many other regions of the state.

Garry Brown  
Wonderful.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
I think we'll take what you said and kind of put it in an equivalent blurb here. But Gary yeah, we've been on those conversations and I appreciate that feedback.

Garry Brown  
Anyone else? As I kind of move towards weaknesses.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
Okay, so moving on. Lack of unified regional vision. I think that this is what surf can kind of help directly change and impact.

Garry Brown  
We understand that Orange County is really.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
A place of 34 different cities, all.

Garry Brown  
Of which I don't think are toxically.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Competing, but there is some competition, especially if you think about potentially economic development and let's say in particular sales tax dollars.

Garry Brown  
Right?

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Like, it's either spent in the city of Anaheim or it's spent in the city of Newport Beach or it's spent in a different city. And so those are things that just have to be considered when we think about some of these. Decisions that are being made. So there's just an understanding there that I think other regions might have already done this process but we should do more of. And I think surface is going to be that process that helps. There is a labor force gap.

Garry Brown  
If you listen to employers who probably.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Have the kind of some of these higher paying jobs they're not quite finding the workers. I think a lot of that is just a function of industry is changing rapidly. I think we all just experience that in our lives and it's just hard to get someone trained up right?

Garry Brown  
Like if you have to get a.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Two year degree or a four year degree or now I think we're working towards more apprenticeships and credentials because they're faster. There's just a lag there's just a lag for you to kind of get the education you need to do some of these jobs while employers kind of need people now it's hard to wait two to four years or longer in order to kind of get those jobs. I think we all recognize that this is an environmental community but the lack of really affordable housing at all income levels is a real challenge and a.

Garry Brown  
Real weakness of Orange County and that.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Kind of dovetails an increasingly high cost of living. If you want to target anything there might be other things that are more expensive in Orange County but really if.

Garry Brown  
You look at it like the premium.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Comes because of rent and housing costs. If you remove that Orange County becomes a lot more of affordable place. I know that's a big if but that is true and that's a real weakness, right. It's really impacting and I think if we go to the future slide.

Garry Brown  
Or.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

A threat, it's just going to be kind of we see like declines in population that's mainly because of it's just becoming so expensive to be here. And you're seeing people like the growth of the England empire is because of that fact as people commute in for jobs in La. And Orange county but also even out of state, the growth of other states as orange county and California continues to lose people. Orange county is really a small place. It's quite dense as well. And so we have to be creative in kind of where we would put this housing. We do have single family lots. We have to think about underutilized retail centers or other spaces because I don't think we don't obviously want to develop on lands that we want as public spaces. So those are taken off. So that means we have to develop where there are already kind of maybe more urban cores.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

I think the vulnerability to natural disasters is just true of everybody. I think we're all from at least from an earthquake one, right, the big one. We're due kind of any day now on that. So are we truly prepared for that one thing that also goes to when you think about people going into the workforce is childcare supply and cost. That's just another cost that many families just cannot bear and that prevents people, and we saw it particularly during COVID who are not entering the workforce or leave the workforce for that factor. And still environmentally sustainability challenges. I mean, Gary, you said that's a strength, but I think in other.

Garry Brown  
Ways we're not doing enough and I.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
Think maybe you guys can, we could have it at both and almost can be true. But again, I think this group would agree that we're not doing enough. And if you want to help us articulate what maybe some of those weaknesses are, please do.

Garry Brown  
Are there any questions about weaknesses or.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
Comments on weaknesses or recommendations around weaknesses.

Garry Brown  
That you experience in Orange County? Sorry, there's still more.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
And next is like we have impacts of AI and automation.

Garry Brown  
That's probably again a global one, but.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
It's still going to be true here. Uneven outcomes. This is about the kind of the inequities experienced in Orange County and at a high level, Orange County's economic numbers look good. But remember, I brought up unemployment. It's not consistent amongst racial and ethnic lines, right? Educational outcome is not consistent around racial and ethnic lines. And so those are things that we have to try to battle when we think about a more equitable economy. I think income inequality is again a global factor and a national factor, but it's still true in Orange County. So we have to wait and it can be more acute because of the cost of living. So we have to try to battle that and then same thing. Climate, environmental impacts are also inequitable that there are people who just have who are living in healthy environments in Orange County. Some of the research, if you kind of go to that part, the difference can be ten years in life expectancy.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
If you're in some census tracts in.

Garry Brown  
Orange County versus others, this is the.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
Same county ten years difference in life expectancy. So that's clearly a weakness as well.

Garry Brown  
That we have to work through and.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
Even public health again, inequities continue to move that digital divide. As I mentioned, we have strong infrastructure. It does not mean that it is being accessed equally. And the potential for infrastructure issues, I think that's so true. That's so true statewide, but very true of Orange County.

Garry Brown  
And I think then with that sorry.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

That's finally over on the weaknesses side, does anyone have any recommendations on what.

Garry Brown

They've heard or suggestions or feedback?

Patricia Flores (OCEJ) is connecting to audio

Was the link that we got in the chat for these slides?

Garry Brown

No, it's for the full report.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

This will be shared after like immediately.

Garry Brown

After you can get this slide back.

Patricia Flores (OCEJ) is connecting to audio

Yeah, let's get a little bit more time to just look it over with Orange County environmental justice. We can definitely share a lot of the specific environmental health issues that are impacting disinvested or low income communities in Orange County. And then we'd be happy to share a little bit more detailed description of some of the current public health models disparities in addressing these issues and some ways to recommend as well.

Garry Brown

Yeah, absolutely.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

You'll get this deck as well. I think that's what the report is going to be more robust in kind of what the data sets are that we have.

Garry Brown

But again, if you have other data.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Sets that would be helpful to look at and of course when we get.

Garry Brown

To kind of your recommendation will be.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Helpful when we get to strategies. Right. So this is like an acknowledgment that there are public health I'm just pulling.

Garry Brown

That one out disparities and then we.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Have to come up with strategies as David shared with his about how do we address that. And so if you already have recommendations, that's wonderful, we could take those now, but they'll be very helpful when the HRTC kind of makes these decisions towards the end of the year. But again, I know the report is a lot, so please takes your time to digest it. But this is just us trying to condense it down because again, because it's 250 pages, there's really no way we could cover the entire thing. We wanted to at least focus your time in this context on kind of the SWAT, because again, I think the SWAT is probably the most actionable part of this kind of deliverable. Strategies are obviously going to be very.

Garry Brown

Actionable and of course projects. But you would definitely, I guess a.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
Long answer, say you will get this.

Garry Brown  
Slide deck immediately after this, but we.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
Want to at least provide you the full report where there's more explanation, context.

Garry Brown  
To the data sets.

Patricia Flores (OCEJ) is connecting to audio  
Yeah, definitely. One of the things I'm thinking of is that there's a lack of investment in jobs related to a transition to a green economy. So there's not a lot of economic investment in the kind of things that would remediate environmental health issues.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
And that's a great weakness and opportunity conversation, right? Like we're not doing it, so it's a weakness and if we start doing it could become a real opportunity.

Garry Brown  
So appreciate that comment.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
David's taking notes as well. Again, we have this recorded because we're.

Garry Brown  
Going to condense all this down.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
So all this input is very valuable.

Garry Brown  
Thank you. Any others on the weakness side?

David Loaeza  
There's a couple of comments in the chat.

Garry Brown  
Sure.

Garry Brown  
Things on weaknesses. Okay.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
Thank Melanie. We'll pull that in if you need to elaborate more. I mean, we can elaborate now or.

Garry Brown  
I know we're in communication pretty frequently.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
But we will definitely take that as.

Garry Brown  
On the weaknesses side of things. Anything else, Melody?

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Do you want to provide anything from verbal context or is that sufficient? And again, we can pull that into my notes on the document.

Garry Brown

Okay, awesome. Then into opportunities.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Obviously if we have inequities one of the best things you can do. One of the biggest opportunities is to.

Garry Brown

Erase some of those right and work.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

On the communities that have been truly disinvested. And so that's going to be a primary focus of surf and that's something.

Garry Brown

That we should be doing as Orange.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

County for our community, promote innovation, entrepreneurship, as we talked about. If you think about Orange County compared to others, aren't as many organizations that really support kind of innovation, entrepreneurship especially, I think in this context, when we think about green tech and clean tech, there might be a few, but I think other regions just have more resources and they have more institutions that help with that. That's a real opportunity for us, particularly in the context of surf and just kind of where the state is heading with its climate goals. Orange County's demographics are changing, definitely ethnically, that's very clear. But also age, right? We are becoming much older. There's a lot of reasons why that's the case. But that means health care is going to become more and more important as our population ages. But of course when we think about inequities when it comes to the economy or even education, that if certain populations become the plurality, if not the majority, then addressing those inequities will be necessary to keep Orange County competitive from a workforce standpoint, from a job creation standpoint.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

So that's a real opportunity, I guess you could say it's a weakness that we have those we said that.

Garry Brown

But then fixing those definitely becomes an opportunity for us.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

We do have, again, pretty strong and well paying industry clusters. How do we have to lean into those career technical education to meet those needs? I think the traditional four year kind of getting a bachelor's degree model works for some, but the world is becoming a lot more flexible and nimble. And so career technical education, more direct hands on learning is coming back into vogue. Maybe for some of you it was a popular thing, it was done at the high school level. The state and others disinvested from that. But now there's this recognition of bringing it back. And it's not just shop or which shop classes or carpentry, but it is something you could do. Career technical education around cybersecurity, let's say. So this is also an understanding of what are some 21st century industries that are forming, building a more economic resiliency economy. We do a decent job of that, but that could always better and a real opportunity.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

And I don't think our economy as inclusive as it should be in education and job creation. I kind of mentioned that as well. The better we can be at that, the likely we will be increasing our regional GDP, increasing wealth and prosperity throughout. I already kind of brought this up, right? Transforming higher education. Not only is it kind of are people getting four year degrees, but the idea of a traditional student of I graduated high school at 18 and by the following fall, I'm somehow in college is just not true. There are so many working parents now entering college, so many people who left, who had to work for a little bit coming back, and that what was considered nontraditional is now becoming just as much the norm. How is higher education going to meet the needs of those residents in Orange County? As we mentioned, we really don't have a lot of collaboration when it comes to regional economic development.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

So developing that's a real opportunity and reindustrialization strategy is I think there's this recognition that people are restoring some of these industries back to California, back to the United States, and that Orange County needs to do its job in getting.

Garry Brown

Those that were traditionally outsourced several decades ago.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Again, back to the CTE and for regional career pathways, I think that was discussed when we talk about green tech and clean tech and the amount of kind of in the electrical sector, the green sector, like, how that's going to be important. We already mentioned the weakness of child care, that it's hard to get people to take training courses and classes if they can't have someone to watch their kids. So you could build that program, but if you don't provide some of those support services, they're just not going to go. And then how can we continue to attract and retain world class employers? We do a decent job of that. We must continue to do so. Particularly again when some employers are moving because of the high cost of living for their employees, that they are having difficulty finding talent because of just how expensive is to be here when you could be in a different state hypothetically and that person could own a home comfortably and have discretionary money.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

So that's another option before I move over to threats.

Garry Brown

And again, we hate to end on.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

A down note, but that's just how the acronym is.

Garry Brown

Does anyone else from other than the.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Comments that provided have feedback on opportunities.

Garry Brown

You see in Orange County that we should try to be aware of as.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

We move through surf and just general.

Garry Brown

Regional economic development planning?

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

I see your comment.

Garry Brown

Thank you. Anyone else? Again, either via chat or want to express it verbally? Okay. Anyone else?

Jon Light/Melissa Waters

Jesse?

Linda Kraemer Climate Reality OC

Yeah, I just want to mention just because I just did a greenhouse gas inventory for San Diego Community College District, and we have a lot of community colleges in Orange County, and there's funding gaps sometimes for that. So you've mentioned it. Well, in opportunities, but in particular, our community college districts need that. I know they cut classes. I have an Environmental Resource Management certificate from Orange Coast College and this semester they cut classes. So there's still a lot of gap in how community colleges get funded. So I just wanted to bring awareness to that.

Garry Brown  
Yeah. Thank you.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
I think broadly, the community college have been an underappreciated resource, especially when we think about this flexibility.

Garry Brown  
Yeah, so noted.

Erin Andreatta, Crystal Cove Conservancy  
Right.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
I think there's kind of too much of a push of like, everyone needs a four year degree once you need college. So noted.

Garry Brown  
Here.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
I think it's something about and we will incorporate.

Garry Brown  
Thank you.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
And then Angela, I see your comment. Happy to because I don't think we're on this zoom sorry.

Garry Brown  
But I'm happy to connect immediately after this.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
If you could send a separate Zoom link or even just want to call me, I'll put my email and my number in the chat at the very end for everybody. Angela, I see your comment.

Garry Brown  
So threats, as I mentioned, declining population.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
We've seen declining population in Orange County. Again, the primary driver is just the cost of living. It's hard to have a growing economy if your population is not growing. Those things seem to be kind of a virtuous cycle already brought up. I think we all know affordability and high cost of living, that's what's driving the declining population. If we don't find a way to wrap our arms around that, it will.

Garry Brown  
Make growing the economy in the ways.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
That we want to more difficult. Sounds like sounds like a broken record. But because of the affordability and high cost of living, we've seen increased poverty rates adjusted for cost of living and homelessness. And I know homelessness is broad, whether you're talking about unsheltered or people who are living in their cars or crowdsurfing, whatever the case may be. That's driven by kind of the high cost of living, which is definitely threatening kind of Orange County's economy and being equitable in particular. And then there are barriers to entry, kind of the regulatory environment.

Erin Andreatta, Crystal Cove Conservancy  
Right.



Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
And I think the point of surf.

Garry Brown  
Here is instead of business at odds.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
With the environmental community on something like this, business at odds with, let's say labor, the labor community when it comes to kind of workforce or kind of job quality and protections. That rightly. So the state has kind of laid the markers down that, again, these should not be mutually exclusive, that you have to find the path forward, that you might have policy battles elsewhere, but that this is not an either or thing. And so I think that's something that it is a threat, but we have to kind of work towards solutions collectively.

Garry Brown  
Again with this stakeholder group and others to get involved. More threats.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
Mental health is kind of a growing concern that we all just have to kind of we also recognize we have.

Garry Brown  
Been informed that I think AI is.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
New and cutting edge and maybe no one is meeting the moment when it comes to that. But from the person that we had, it's a UCI professor, but he's also kind of an advisor to the UN when it comes to artificial intelligence.

Garry Brown  
So he really is kind of globally.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
Known in this topic that Orange County.

Garry Brown  
Is still behind even other regions.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
So picking that up in the face of artificial intelligence and again water supply and uncertainty gary, I still think again, if you like this one or not, please let me know. But I think even though we are better than other regions that it's still probably back to the point of it's never good enough. And what happens five or ten years, whether we're in a position for that. If you disagree with that, kind of let me know. But we still think that you can always better in the water supply space.

Garry Brown  
Hence a threat because water is life.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
Moving forward at climate and urban sustainability challenges. I think as was brought up kind.

Garry Brown  
Of Melanie and others, right, that if.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)  
We don't do a good enough job.

Garry Brown  
It'll not only impact Orange County but the globe.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Coastal erosion was a topic that we had obviously a very important environmental issue. But in the overlap of this, the intersection, of course it's even an economic.

Garry Brown

Issue because so much of the economy.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Is driven, so many jobs are on the coast that it's a detriment to the environment. But you're going to be losing jobs and kind of some of the economic.

Garry Brown

Driver of Orange County.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

So recognizing that we have to protect.

Garry Brown

The coast for those two primary reasons.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

And an increasing older population, hence it can be an opportunity if we can get our arms around it. But it can be a threat if you just have a lot of people who are now retired hypothetically versus a very small population is actually kind of like really working in Orange County. Again, a lot of it's aging in.

Garry Brown

Place with a lot of factors.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

But that is definitely a thing that's happening and it can be a threat.

Garry Brown

To kind of to economic growth.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Automation impacts as we brought up, it's been impacting, I think a lot of industries.

Garry Brown

Some have been resilient, some others but.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

I think again the proliferation of this now, particularly as it adds into kind of what we call white collar jobs, right? I think no industry is now going to be immune. I think a lot of industries are actually going to end up adopting it. So what does that mean for the workers in the workforce? Shifting commercial real estate trends as we saw in the face of the pent of COVID I'm taking this call from my home. Many of you probably are as well. That was not the case really kind of not even about three years ago, four years ago. And of course, as we mentioned, making sure that a natural disaster could always disrupt that's quite the economic shock.

Garry Brown

And so with that, do we have.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Any recommendations as well, as you see.

Garry Brown

From the threat side for Orange County.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

That we are just not prepared for?

Garry Brown

Thank you Melian, for the comment. That's a good data point. Thank you, John. And Melissa. Anybody else?

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

If not, I just think the final question.

Garry Brown

Sorry, cut somebody off. Commentary, feedback. Then the last one is this is just due to a shift that I.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Think the state is heading towards that they do want each region to focus.

Garry Brown

On what they believe at some point.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

To be the three top industry industries to focus on. Of course, as I mentioned.

Garry Brown

It has.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

To do with environmental sustainability and economic resilience and there has to be high job quality when it comes to those things. But this is, I think, a major question as well as SWAT is what is your opinion on what are the three industries we should be focused on that kind of grow the economy, but again, in those kind of tenants or.

Garry Brown

Pillars that I mentioned first, people, if.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

People have ideas, again, we'll take them now. But there's going to be a lot of money invested around building kind of industry collaboratives to grow these industries in Orange County. So it'd be helpful to get people's input on what those are that we will then again lift up to the high road transition collaborative to decide which three industries we are going to focus.

Garry Brown

On as a region.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

If anyone has any input there, that would be very helpful as well.

Garry Brown

And again, we'll incorporate all this. Some have already been brought up on.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

The call, but if you have your top three list, please feel free to.

Garry Brown

Share in the chat or just say them verbally. I think people know that question, so.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

I'm just going to stop share. And then if you don't have answers to that but just people have comments in particular about what you heard.

Garry Brown

Happy to answer questions here, but if.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

That's all as well and Gary, when you feel like it's appropriate, feel free.

Garry Brown

To adjourn the meeting.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

People can get some time back on their hands. But I'm going to drop my email.

Garry Brown

In the chat right now for any.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Comments and feedback and then my phone number.

Garry Brown

As well.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

And then we also drop a survey that might also maybe make it easier.

Garry Brown

To provide input as well.

Erin Andreatta, Crystal Cove Conservancy

Jesse.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

This is Melanie.

Erin Andreatta, Crystal Cove Conservancy

I do have a question on what's.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

The most helpful mechanism for providing feedback.

Erin Andreatta, Crystal Cove Conservancy

Do you want comments in the PDF? Do you want it synthesized in a Word document? I'm a big fan of not creating inefficiencies.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

So what's most helpful to you? Yeah, I think if you're going to go with if you rent point by point on the document, then I think just kind of the section or the line that you're because it's in a PDF form. So if you're able to convert it back to a Word document and just.

Garry Brown

Use comments, that's probably the easiest.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

If that's difficult, then just kind of identifying where the section is and then.

Garry Brown

Kind of providing your thoughts that'll work as well. So Linda, thank you for some of.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Those industries to think about.

Garry Brown

And David dropped the survey and we'll.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Do a follow up email, but that's primarily focused on the swaths and the industry cluster question, not so much about I mean, we do have other comments section about the full report, but again, we recommend everyone read the report. That's why it's there. But if you want to focus your time a little bit around, again, I think the SWAT and those industries are probably the most actionable and things that.

Garry Brown

Should be taken in consideration for the HRTC. I'm sure all of us have limited time.

Garry Brown

Right, jesse, thank you. It's obvious that there's so much to digest, much of this, and so it's important that you take some time afterwards. Try to read as much as you can. A lot of thoughts come as you have more time to read and stuff. And please feel free to submit comments. They don't have to be elaborate, but just submit ideas and comments. And we're fulfilling what we're supposed to be doing.

Garry Brown

Yes, please.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

I think the point of this is to be just as collaborative as possible. So thank you to Gary to kind.

Garry Brown

Of get the outreach of the broader.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

Community here because I think with more.

Garry Brown

Input, it gets done better.

Jesse Ben-Ron (He/Him)

So, again, thank you for your time and your comments. And if you have any others that.

Garry Brown

We look forward to those as well.

Garry Brown

So if nobody has anything more, we'll adjourn the meeting. Our hours almost up, but thank you so much for taking this hour to attend and participate. We need more. And if you have other friends that.

Garry Brown

You think should be involved, we'll put.

Garry Brown

Them on the invitation list.

Garry Brown

Thank you guys so much.

Jon Light/Melissa Waters

Appreciate you heading it up.

Erin Andreatta, Crystal Cove Conservancy

Thank you.

Linda Kraemer Climate Reality OC

Thank you.

Garry Brown  
Thank you, everyone.