

Small City, Big Shift

Community Climate Engagement in Pico Rivera

Pico Rivera is a small city with a big sustainability track record. Pico Rivera sits at the center of Southern California's freeway network. Poor air quality, extreme heat, and environmental burden are daily realities for this predominantly Latino Gateway city. This is how the City built a climate plan, in partnership with Day One and Cascadia, that brought the community in and reflects their input.

Key Engagement Statistics

36

Students engaged at Youth Climate Meeting with rotating roundtables including **6 focus areas** and **speakers**.

4

Pop-Up Events

Bilingual engagement throughout, in English and Spanish

Community Engagement Timeline



Community Conversation #1



Eggstravaganza Pop-Up + Youth Climate Conversation



Farmers Market Pop-Up + Community Conversation #2



Online CAAP Review + 2 Pop-Up Events + CEQA Online Comment

By 2040, residents said they want to see a connected, green, and resilient Pico Rivera: multi-modal transportation, clean energy, green space and tree canopy, local resilience centers, and a city mindful of minimizing displacement.

Youth Event Highlight

The Youth Climate Meeting put 36 students in direct conversation with city leaders across six climate focus areas. Each roundtable connected a topic to a real project happening in Pico Rivera and asked students two questions: how should the plan build on this, and how do you want to be part of putting it into action?

Youth participation is more meaningful than a one-time event might suggest. Students learned about how climate action and local government work, and practiced leadership, advocacy, and communication in a civic setting. Their input shaped the plan's approaches to green space, climate education, and youth involvement in city decisions. Research links early civic engagement to lasting community participation and stewardship.



How Community Input Shaped the CAAP



Residents pushed for **more trees, parks, and green streets**, reflected in three urban greening actions including a **new Community Forestry program**.

Safe, **connected streets** were a top priority. The plan responds with active transportation and EV infrastructure actions projected to drive **major emissions reductions by 2045**.

Youth advocacy for **campus green space, climate education, and real involvement in city decisions** led to a dedicated **youth engagement action** and strengthened the plan's equity framing throughout.

The community also named **health, water resilience, and displacement** as priorities, all reflected in the **Community Resilience chapter**, including specifics around equitable participation in future climate planning.

Lessons Learned & Recommendations

Even though the centralized, City-led meetings were accessible, bilingual, and held in a municipal building in a popular park, the pop-ups at Egg-stravaganza and the Farmers Market reached many more residents.

Working through Day One, an organization rooted in the community with deep environmental justice and youth engagement experience, gave the process credibility and reach that a city or consultant could not build alone. Connecting climate topics to real city projects and leaders built knowledge, leadership, and civic skills. Engaging young people now develops the next generation of community environmental leaders and deepens long-term stewardship of the plan.

