

YOUTH CLIMATE COMMISSION

LA COUNTY YOUTH CLIMATE PRIORITIES REPORT



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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



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The County of Los Angeles recognizes that we occupy land originally and still inhabited and cared for by the Tongva, Tataviam, Serrano, Kizh, and Chumash Peoples. We honor and pay respect to their elders and descendants — past, present, and emerging — as they continue their stewardship of these lands and waters. We acknowledge that settler colonization resulted in land seizure, disease, subjugation, slavery, relocation, broken promises, genocide, and multigenerational trauma. This acknowledgment demonstrates our responsibility and commitment to truth, healing, and reconciliation and to elevating the stories, culture, and community of the original inhabitants of Los Angeles County. We are grateful to have the opportunity to live and work on these ancestral lands. We are dedicated to growing and sustaining relationships with Native peoples and local tribal governments, including (in no particular order) the

Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians

Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council

Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians

Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation

San Manuel Band of Mission Indians

San Fernando Band of Mission Indians

To learn more about the First Peoples of Los Angeles County, please visit the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission website at lanaic.lacounty.gov.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2019, youth climate leaders across LA County advocated for the establishment of a Youth Climate Commission (YCC) to bring the concerns of young people into government decision-making and build youth empowerment on climate change. The Board of Supervisors championed their cause and adopted a motion to create the YCC.

The 25 member YCC officially kicked off in June 2023, and immediately began working on a Strategic Engagement and Outreach Plan to connect with young people across LA County on climate change issues. A key piece of this Plan is a Youth Climate Priorities survey to identify the most pressing issues for young people 18 years of age and younger in LA County. Over 1,300 surveys were gathered, and the results provide unprecedented insights into the climate priorities of LA County youth.

Countywide, the top 3 priorities for LA County youth are:

1. Cleaner Air
2. Green Space
3. Green Buildings

As detailed in this report, these priorities varied by Supervisorial District but “cleaner air” was consistently and overwhelmingly the number one priority. Another important finding was that 91% of young people surveyed feel their lives are being impacted by climate change, including their mental health, and over 70% are already taking action to address climate change.

These results provide the YCC with direction on the focus of their work for 2024 and beyond. It also provides the Board of Supervisors and County departments a clearer understanding of what young people want to see more significant action on going forward. Sharing these findings is a first step towards fulfilling the purpose of the YCC so that intergenerational climate action can be taken to build a healthier and more resilient future for all residents.

OUR PROCESS

OUR PROCESS

In an effort to listen and learn about the youth climate priorities in each district the YCC developed and administered two data collection tools:

- Short Youth Priority Survey (electronic and paper)
- Long Key Informant Survey (1-1 interviews)

Commissioners used both high and low tech approaches to expand their reach. Electronic surveys were shared via County newsletters and social media platforms, and Commissioners participated in nearly 50 outreach events such as community pop-ups and local school presentations. A total of **1,316 youth ages 18 and under took the surveys**, which were available in both English and Spanish.

The intention of the surveys were to:

1. Better understand what the youth priorities are countywide as well as per district;
and
2. Learn insights on how youth in Los Angeles County take action on climate change.

The findings play an important role in guiding the on-going work of the YCC while also informing the climate-related activities of County government and organizations in the region.



COUNTYWIDE RESULTS

COUNTYWIDE RESULTS

Top 3 Countywide Climate Priorities for LA County Youth
(based on 1,316 surveys):

1. **Cleaner Air (6.59)**
2. **Green Spaces: (5.05)**
3. **Green Buildings (4.79)**
4. Reduce Waste (4.48)
5. Healthy Food (4.37)
6. Mobility (4.29)
7. Green Jobs (3.32)
8. Include Youth Voices (3.11)

Total Surveys Collected

Survey Categories	Total
18 and under (valid)	1,316
19 -24 (not valid)	196
25 -30 (not valid)	83
30+ (not valid)	143
Visitors from Outside of LA County (not valid)	28
TOTAL	1,766

(450 surveys not valid and not included in analysis)

Surveys Collected By District (Valid Surveys Ages 18 and Under)

District	Surveys	
1	275	21%
2	267	20%
3	230	17%
4	218	17%
5	326	25%
Total	1,316	

COUNTYWIDE RESULTS

- The total number of surveys collected by commissioners is 1,857.
 - 1,316 short surveys
 - 91 long surveys
 - Additional 450 surveys (not included in the analysis due to being over 18)
- Additionally, qualitative information was also collected in this process. It is noteworthy to mention that the largest number of youth comments from the short survey highlighted issues of transportation and waste, even though neither of those were selected as top priorities.
- Youth also raised other cross-cutting topics, questions, and ideas, for example, related to environmental justice, and some also mentioned homelessness in open responses.

PRIORITIES BY AGE

Climate Priorities for Ages 14 and Under (based on 646 responses)

1. **Cleaner Air (6.57)**
2. **Green Spaces (4.96)**
3. **Green Buildings (4.55)-tied**
4. **Healthy Food (4.53) - tied**
5. Reduce Waste (4.46)
6. Mobility (4.22)
7. Green Jobs (3.39)
8. Include Youth Voices (3.22)

Climate Priorities for Ages 15-17 (based on 591 responses)

1. **Cleaner Air (6.66)**
2. **Green Spaces (5.14) -tied**
3. **Green Buildings (5.12) -tied**
4. **Reduce Waste (4.49)**
5. Mobility (4.32)
6. Healthy Food (4.23)
7. Green Jobs (3.18)
8. Include Youth Voices (2.86)

Demographics of Respondents

- Age
 - Ages 14 or younger: 646 (49%)
 - Ages 15-17: 591 (45%)
 - Age 18: 79 (6%)
- Gender
 - Female: 695 (53%)
 - Male: 559 (42%)
 - Non-Binary: 38 (3%)
 - Transgender: 11 (1%)
 - Other: 13 (1%)
- Race/Ethnicity
 - Latino only: 520 (40%)
 - Asian American or Pacific Islander only: 237 (18%)
 - White only: 246 (19%)
 - Black or African American only: 50 (4%)
 - American Indigenous: 6 (0.5%)
 - Multiracial or Other: 257 (20%)

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

Youth Climate Commissioners conducted 91 Key Informant interviews with LA County youth ages 18 and under, including young adults ages 19-30. This experience provided an opportunity for Commissioners to gain quality insights and have meaningful conversations with youth on local climate issues. Below are some important takeaways:

Climate Change

- 91% of respondents answered “Yes” they are being affected by climate change.
- Top ways youth are being affected by climate change
 - Affects the air I breathe (84%)
 - Affects natural spaces (70%)
 - Affects my mental health (58%)
 - It is making my community more unequal (38%)
 - Affects my access to opportunities and resources (30%)
 - Affects my household financially (23%)
 - Affects me in different ways (10%), including severe weather and disasters, how I spend my free time, how I make decisions about my future, limiting what I can wear on a daily basis, dealing with heat and no AC; trouble focusing at school due to no AC, no shade in the schoolyard during recess, and no heat in winter.
- 71% of respondents have taken action or made a change because of climate change, and 16% plan to take action (plan to do community service, conserve energy, use less plastic, become vegetarian, start an Eco Club, and help to stop the Willow Project).

Communication

- The most trusted sources of information about climate change are the internet (63%), news outlets (53%) followed by school (47%) and social media (47%).
- The top three most used social media platforms are Instagram (74%), TikTok (49%), and Youtube (44%). Others include Twitter (16%), other platforms (16%) (including Snapchat, Reddit, Facebook or don't use social media), and Discord (11%).
- The best ways to share information with youth are in-person events (60%), videos (53%), infographics (52%), podcasts (30%), and blogs/articles (23%).

Youth Engagement

Engagement Opportunities most interested in:

- Attending and helping to organize youth-led events (52%)
- Talking with experts, leaders, and elected officials (42%)
- Career help and job training opportunities for youth (37%)
- Participating in hands-on workshops on youth topics (36%)
- Joining online events and live streams (18%)
- Other (5%) Local gardens, job opportunities that involve change

DISTRICT-SPECIFIC RESULTS



DISTRICT 1 ENGAGEMENT & RESULTS

Climate Priorities (based on 275 responses)

1. **Cleaner Air (6.52)**
2. **Healthy Food (5.11)**
3. **Green Spaces (4.66)**
4. Green Buildings (4.33)
5. Reduce Waste (4.16)
6. Mobility (4.02)
7. Green Jobs (3.71)
8. Include Youth Voices (3.49)



ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Tabled at the South El Monte Pancakes with Santa event, surveying young people about their climate priorities and informing them about the YCC.
- Tabled at the South El Monte Pumpkin Patch, an event hosted in partnership with CultivaLA, and also the Westlake Pumpkin Patch to connect with young people on the YCC and their climate priorities.
- Tabled at the Westlake Winter Wonderland event, which draws hundreds of young people, to hear youth perspectives on climate change and share about the YCC.
- Tabled at the Downtown Pomona Artwalk + Alliance Black Marketplace event in celebration of Black History Month to ensure all youth voices and perspectives are included in the survey results.



DISTRICT 2 ENGAGEMENT & RESULTS

Climate Priorities (based on 267 responses)

1. **Cleaner Air (6.28)**
2. **Green Spaces (5.03) - tied**
3. **Green Buildings (5.02) - tied**
4. **Mobility (4.27)**
5. Reduce Waste (4.25)
6. Healthy Food (4.24)
7. Include Youth Voices (3.46)



ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

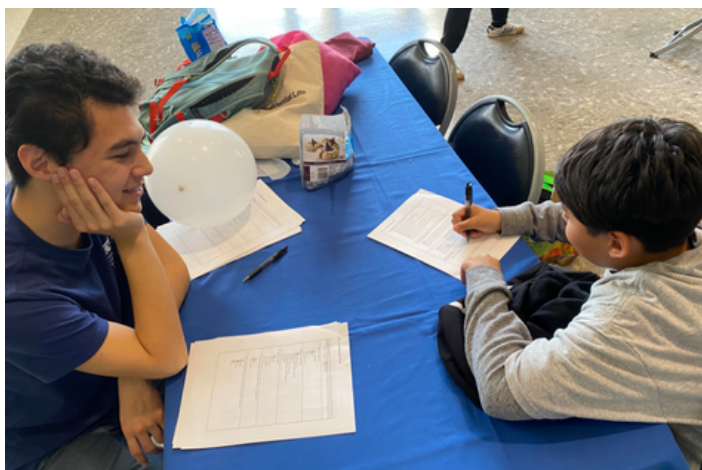
- Presented before the USC Student Sustainability Council, which works alongside the USC Presidential Working Group on Sustainability, discussing the work of the YCC, how USC students could get involved, and administered the youth climate survey.
- Tabled at the Youth Climate Strike Los Angeles event in front of City Hall, speaking about the YCC and surveying youth on their climate priorities.
- Presented at the Pilgrim School's student-run Climate Action group about the ways young people can get involved in climate action and the work of the YCC.
- Presented at the SoCal Grantmakers Environmental Funders Convening, a forum that educates prospective and current environmental funders, about the YCC and its role in advising the Board of Supervisors and County departments on their goals, plans, and policies.



DISTRICT 3 ENGAGEMENT & RESULTS

Climate Priorities (based on 230 responses)

1. **Cleaner Air (6.73)**
2. **Green Spaces (5.50)**
3. **Green Buildings (5.15)**
4. Mobility (4.52)
5. Reduce Waste (4.48)
6. Healthy Food (3.93)
7. Green Jobs (3.11)
8. Include Youth Voices (2.57)



ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Table at the UCLA American Indian Science and Engineering Society - STEM Youth Motivation Day, which is geared towards middle school students, providing information about the connection between climate policy and STEM learning and the YCC activities.
- Canvassing youth organizations within the District and conducting outreach to events to increase YCC presence and build relationships.
- Engaged with students at the Paul Revere Middle School on climate topics and shared information about how to get involved with the YCC.
- Tabled at the LA County Youth Commission Listening Session for District 3 event, geared towards getting youth voices heard and involved.
- Connected with youth at the Youth Climate Strike LA.
- Collaborated with the LAUSD Climate Teacher Group to survey students within their school district.



DISTRICT 4

ENGAGEMENT & RESULTS

Climate Priorities (based on 218 responses)

1. **Cleaner Air (6.72)**
2. **Green Buildings (5.06)**
3. **Green Spaces (4.89)**
4. Mobility (4.45)
5. Reduce Waste (4.28)
6. Healthy Food (4.23)
7. Green Jobs (3.23)
8. Include Youth Voices (3.15)



ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Participated in the Lynwood Unified School District Explore Your Future: College and Career Day for 900 6th graders, sharing about pathways to green jobs.
- Joined the Indigenous Youth Band to survey participants on local climate priorities.
- Tabled at the College Conference in Lynwood (geared towards high school students) provided information about the YCC and administered surveyed to participants.
- Attended the Winter Wonderland Parks After Dark event. Info sharing/survey collection.
- Attended the SGV Transit Feasibility Study Community Workshop to collect surveys, share YCC information, and learn about youth interests.
- Provided feedback at the SD 4 Urban Forest Management Plan Community Workshop and gained insights on community priorities related to trees.
- Tabled at the Youth Mental Health Summit in Monterey Park with other youth-serving organizations, providing information about the YCC and engaging in an interactive reflection activity connecting nature to mental health.
- Spoke to K-12 students at a career fair, uplifting goals and opportunities to get involved with the YCC. Led an interactive art activity exploring connections to our community.
- Engaged with K-12 students at the Roots and Shoots community event.
- Connected/surveyed youth at the EmpowerLA Youth Conference.
- Engaged with over 800 middle and high school students at the LA County Girls Empowerment Conference, connecting with local educators, students and orgs.
- Participated in a Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration hosted by the Norwalk Dream Center at Norwalk High School, to listen and learn about climate priorities.
- Met with members of the Sunrise Movement to discuss youth climate priorities.

DISTRICT 5 ENGAGEMENT & RESULTS

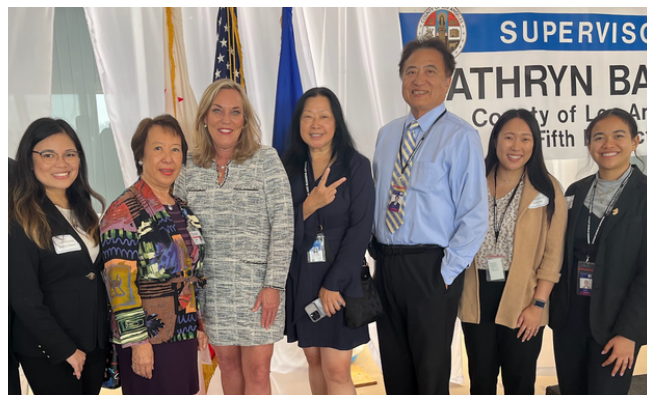
Climate Priorities (based on 326 responses)

1. **Cleaner Air (6.73)**
2. **Green Spaces (5.17)**
3. **Reduce Waste (5.08)**
4. Green Buildings (4.56)
5. Healthy Food (4.28)
6. Mobility (4.25)
7. Green Jobs (3.07)
8. Include Youth Voices (2.86)



ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Presented to the City of Burbank Youth Board about the YCC, the LA County Chief Sustainability Office, and the OurCounty Plan.
- Presented at Burbank High School’s Environmental Club.
- Attended Supervisor’s District 5 Commissioner Breakfast.
- Invited over 100 community members to participate in a “Letter to Earth” letter or artwork creation activity at Pasadena ArtNight.
- Interacted with over 600 community members at ActiveSGV’s 626 Golden Streets ArroyoFest.
- Held a waste sorting activity where individuals were asked to throw items into the correct waste bin (organics/compost, recycling, and waste).
- Partnered with South Pasadena High School Sustainability Commissioner to hold a school lunch tabling event on campus to solicit YCC survey responses.
- Partnered with local student-run nonprofit Compost Culture to solicit YCC survey responses at the South Pas Farmers Market.
- Launched a District 5 Youth District Coalition instagram page (@YCC_D5) which uses its platform to amplify county and local sustainability topics through infographics.



NEXT STEPS



NEXT STEPS

The findings of this survey provide valuable and unique insights into the interests, concerns, and engagement opportunities with LA County youth on climate issues. The YCC will take a two-pronged approach to using this data to elevate youth voices.

Amplify

The YCC will share the survey results with the Board of Supervisors, LA County departments, and the public at-large to increase their understanding of youth priorities and focus their efforts and engagement on them. This will include public outreach events, connecting with community based organizations and stakeholder groups, and meeting with Supervisorial offices and County departments. This will be the first time youth climate priorities will be shared that are data-driven and are at a District-level.

The YCC will also widely share the results with youth, particularly through the mediums they engage with most. District-specific Instagram sites are being established, a quarterly YCC newsletter was published in April, and additional outreach events and workshops are being planned. By sharing this data, the YCC hopes to further empower young people and galvanize action around the topics they care about most.

Take Action

The YCC will work to turn what they've heard into action by working as a Commission on the priorities identified in the survey and building District Coalitions to take action on District-specific concerns. This will include recommending legislation at the state and federal level, advising the Board and departments on plans and policies, establishing District Coalitions, and implementing or supporting priority projects in communities. Specific upcoming work includes providing feedback on the LA County Community Forest Management Plan, focusing on proposed state and federal legislation related to the Youth Survey priorities, advising on the refresh of the OurCounty Plan, and much more. The YCC 2024 Work Plan can be found [here](#).

This is just the first step in fulfilling the vision of the YCC and empowering young people to use their voices and agency to combat climate change in LA County.

You can learn more on the YCC website www.ycc.lacounty.gov and by following the YCC on Instagram [@yccamplified](#).

