

San Diego Community Power Plan

Phase 1: Listening

Unincorporated Communities Pop-Up Engagement Summary

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Prepared for

San Diego Community Power

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1. Overview

San Diego Community Power (SDCP) is developing a Community Power Plan (CPP) that will provide a decision-making framework to guide its strategy and development of local programs. Based on findings from a community needs assessment, the CPP will guide investments in developing local renewable generation, demand reduction, storage, and other distributed energy resources in SDCP's service territory.

The first phase of community engagement for the CPP focused on listening and information gathering about community priorities and needs around energy-related issues across different communities to inform the development of the community survey and CPP, including the community needs assessment. SDCP conducted six pop-up engagements throughout unincorporated San Diego County between July and August 2022 to get the word out about SDCP and hear from a range of community members who have not yet been enrolled in SDCP's service.

This summary documents the pop-up engagement objectives, when and where the pop-up engagements occurred, format, and input themes. Input from each pop-up engagement can be found in the appendices.

2. Objectives

The specific objectives for conducting pop-up engagement in unincorporated San Diego County during Phase 1: Listening were to:

- Begin to build relationships and communication channels with communities in the unincorporated areas, including learning about their goals, priorities, and needs
- Introduce SDCP and its 2023 rollout
- Solicit input for the development of the community needs assessment and CPP
- Target engagement of Communities of Concern¹ and seek engagement across the unincorporated areas, recognizing that goals, priorities, and needs may vary geographically

3. When and Where

For the purposes of pop-up engagement, unincorporated San Diego County was organized into four sub-areas as displayed in Figure 1: North, Central, South, and Desert. At least one pop-up engagement was planned in each sub-area for geographic representation. Most pop-up engagements took place at County libraries on busy days recommended by library staff or during food distribution events to target individuals from Communities of Concern. Table 1 includes the pop-up engagement locations by sub-area, dates and times, event information, estimated engagement number, and if a bilingual outreach team was present.

¹ Defined as the top 25% scoring areas from CalEnviroScreen, known as Disadvantaged Communities (DACs), as well as the additional census tracts identified by the Cities of [San Diego](#) and [Chula Vista](#) through their Climate Equity Index (CEI) reports. Specifically, the City of San Diego identified these census tracts as areas with very low, low, and moderate access to opportunity, whereas the City of Chula Vista defined them as the top 25% scoring areas within its own analysis. If other member agencies were to identify additional census tracts as the cities of San Diego and Chula Vista have done, SDCP would recognize those designations under the umbrella of Communities of Concern.

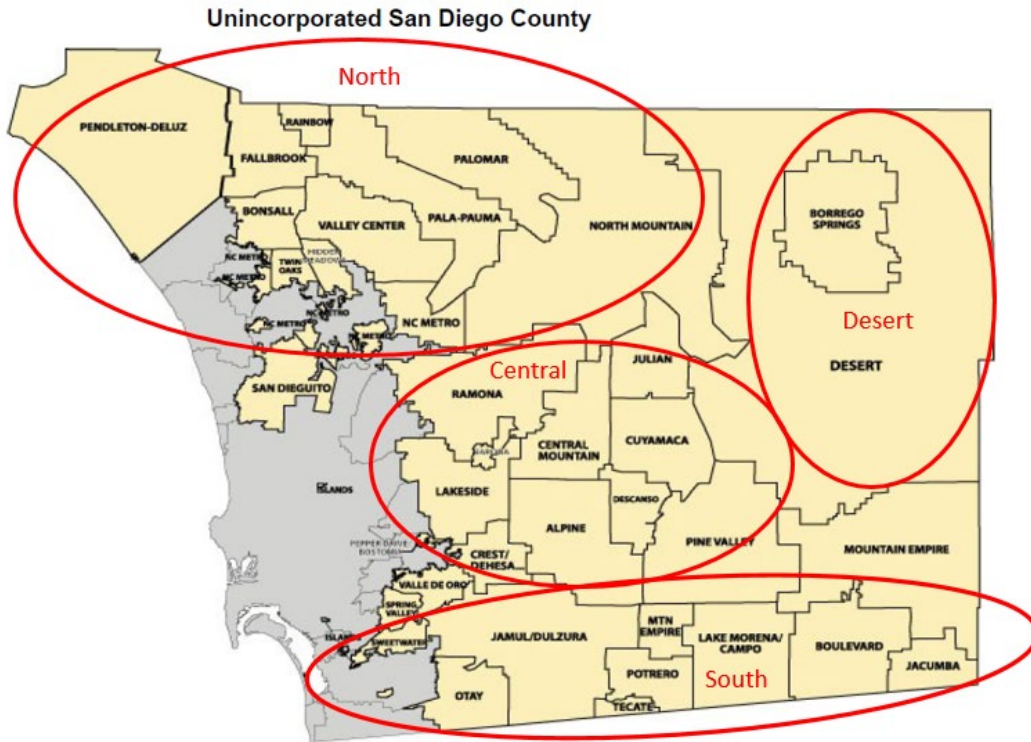


Figure 1: Pop-Up Engagement Sub-Areas

Table 1: Pop-Up Engagement Details

Sub-Area	Location	Date/Time	Event	Estimated Engagement Number	Bilingual Outreach Team
Desert	Borrego Springs Library 2580 Country Club Rd. Borrego Springs, CA 92004	Tuesday, August 2, 2022 12:00-5:00 p.m.	General Tabling and Presentation	10 members of the public	Yes
South	Dulzura Mini Market/Post Office 17023 Highway 94 Dulzura, CA 91917	Saturday, July 23, 2022 12:00-3:00 p.m.	General Tabling	15 members of the public	Yes
Central	Julian Library 1850 Highway 78 Julian, CA 92036	Wednesday, July 27, 2022 9:00-11:00 a.m.	Tabling during Food Distribution	20 members of the public	Yes
Central	Lakeside Library 9839 Vine St. Lakeside, CA 92040	Thursday, July 21, 2022 1:00-4:00 p.m.	General Tabling	25 members of the public	Yes

Central	Ramona Library 1275 Main St. Ramona, CA 92065	Tuesday, July 26, 2022 2:00-5:00 p.m.	Tabling during Food Distribution	25 members of the public	No
North	Valley Center Library 29200 Cole Grade Rd. Valley Center, CA 92082	Wednesday, August 3, 2022 12:00-3:00 p.m.	Tabling during Food Distribution	5 members of the public	Yes

4. Format

Each pop-up engagement had the same format. An outreach team set up flipcharts with discussion questions and a table with information about SDCP and giveaways. Team members recorded input from community members on the flipcharts. A form was also made available if community members preferred to write their answers to the discussion questions.

The following questions were asked during the pop-up engagements:

- What is your community working on right now?
- When it comes to electricity and power at your house, what issues do you face?
- What kinds of customer energy programs could help you and your community?

5. Input

The following sections summarize the major input themes from each of the pop-up engagements, with all input documented in the appendices (Appendix A: Borrego Springs, Appendix B: Dulzura, Appendix C: Julian, Appendix D: Lakeside, Appendix E: Ramona, Appendix F: Valley Center).

Borrego Springs

- It is very hot in Borrego Springs during the summer months leading residents to flee the area. Fulltime residents may be faced with health risks if they do not keep their air conditioners on, resulting in very high energy bills due to increased energy use and summer rates. People want SDCP to support switching to efficient air conditioning appliances like mini-split heat pumps.
- Many residents cannot afford increased bills. Education about how energy use affects bills would be helpful.
- Residents want to see programs that support lower energy bills (e.g., summer energy bill rebates, smart thermostats, energy efficient appliances, affordable solar).
- Power outages are a frequent issue, causing residents to be without power for hours at a time. People expressed interest in rebates for backup generators and solar batteries, as well as going off-grid entirely.

Dulzura

- Dulzura is on a well water system and there are concerns over limited water availability with population growth and new development.

- The main issues that people face are high energy costs, wildfire threat, and power outages that can last for days when a wildfire is in the vicinity.
- Residents are interested in solar assistance programs. There are concerns about the right available options, interconnection, and solar for apartments.
- People expressed interest in electric vehicles and charging stations. There is specific interest in larger electric vehicles and electric vehicles that have extended range and increased towing capacity.

Julian

- Power outages can last for days when a wildfire is close by, affecting residents' access to services, some of which are already limited due to Julian being a small town (e.g., losing food in freezers, access to well water, gas stations closing, ATMs not functioning).
- Barriers for accessing solar include the high price of solar installation, not having a suitable property due to too much shade, living in a mobile home, and being a renter.
- Residents noted that they are seeing many problems and scams related to solar and want a trusted source for solar installers.
- Residents are interested in assistance programs for backup generators, battery storage, electric vehicles and charging stations, and solar.
- Residents also noted the need for improved public transportation service.

Lakeside

- The main issues people face relate to high and unstable energy bills. Low-income residents aren't able to afford their monthly bills.
- There are concerns associated with electric vehicles (e.g., electric vehicles not having enough range, high replacement battery costs, and lack of charging stations).
- Housing costs are high and renters are not able to access solar or take advantage of energy savings programs.
- Residents are interested in programs that provide energy discounts, incentivize solar, energy efficient appliances, access to electric vehicle adoption, and recycling/composting.
- Lower housing and public transit costs were also identified as interests.

Ramona

- Many residents face high energy bills and rate increases, especially during the summer months. Air conditioning is necessary, but some are forced by financial constraints to not use their air conditioners and suffer in the heat to limit their energy bills.
- Power outages are an issue. Some people are interested in additional support being provided during blackouts/brownouts (e.g., medical aid).
- People expressed interest in programs for low-income residents that provide bill discounts and incentivize energy efficient appliances, as well as programs aimed at saving energy during the summer.

- Residents are interested in incentivizing solar for homeowners and renters.

Valley Center

Please note that engagement was very low at the Valley Center event and therefore the input does not reflect a range of community perspectives.

- The Valley Center community is working on water access and resiliency efforts for drought.
- Residents face issues with solar panels and not having access to solar on mobile homes.
- One person was interested in direct solar installation from SDCP instead of having to go through solar companies.

Appendix A

Borrego Springs Input

What is your community working on?

- Being off the grid completely
- Residents and businesses leave in the summer because rates are so high; it is cheaper to rent a place elsewhere.
- Helping the food banks with donations

When it comes to electricity and power at your house, what issues do you face?

- High power bill and increasing costs
- Costs of bills
- Hot and have to keep the air conditioning running, resulting in \$1,000 monthly bills
- Too expensive
- Don't know when electricity is more expensive during the day (Time-of-Use rates)
- Power outages
- Solar for renters
- Costs

What kinds of customer energy programs could help you and your community?

- Backup generator rebate programs
- Solar programs that are affordable
- If I knew more about programs, I would apply.
- Smart thermostat programs
- Energy saving programs/education
- Backup power for cool zones (e.g., library) during planned outages
- Solar battery rebate programs

Presentation Input

- SDCP should offer programs specifically to help subsidize summer energy costs for fulltime Borrego Springs residents. Air conditioning is lifesaving, and many cannot afford to turn it off during summer for health reasons. Some will turn off their air conditioning to save power but it's a huge health risk because of the heat (e.g., strokes).
- Rebates could go a long way in helping residents (only about 1,500 people who live in Borrego Springs full-time).
- SDCP could help support people switching to more efficient air conditioning units such as mini splits.

- Some people are willing to pay for energy costs, but Borrego Springs residents might not be able to take on additional cost increases.
- Energy bills are not clear; concern for people who cannot afford electricity – with inflation, gas prices, etc., people are having trouble paying for food. Want to make sure that bills do not rise above what people are already paying.
- Suggested doing more outreach in the fall to connect with more people (many people leave during the summer) – “Borrego Days” hosted by the Chamber of Commerce (October 22nd and 23rd this year) is a huge event that brings in a lot of people from the backcountry.
- Interested in if SDCP would support Borrego Springs getting off the grid entirely (referenced a community in Julian that is complete off the grid)
- There are a lot of power outages – sometimes there are up to 4-hour or longer delays for the power to turn back on since SDG&E does not have someone stationed in Borrego Springs (transmission issue, not generation). It would be helpful for residents to have backup home batteries for outage events.
- Resiliency is connected to heat and impacts to health.
- SDG&E did offer a program for people to purchase home generators, but the cost was not affordable.
- Suggestion for SDCP to present to the Infrastructure Committee in the fall

Additional Notes

- None

Appendix B

Dulzura Input

What is your community working on?

- Fire readiness and informational programs where people assess residential properties and offer grant funding
- People living the best they can while dealing with rising prices (“Bidenomics”)
- Shaping the cowboy culture of the Old West
- Leaving food donations at the post office
- Dulzura is on a well and there is only so much available water before there is a need to go deeper.
- With population growth, natural resources such as water are limited.
- Concern that the new Border Patrol Station will be taking all the water
- Population growth is an issue.

When it comes to electricity and power at your house, what issues do you face?

- Purchased solar and having trouble hooking it up
- Don’t like SDG&E’s agenda
- Whether or not to hook-up the jacuzzi
- Concern about which solar option to go with
- Cost is way too high
- Cost of power is up
- Brownouts/blackouts
- Accessing solar on apartments
- Comfort while sleeping (need air conditioning during summer)
- Live in an RV, but will pass along SDCP’s information to tenants
- High price of electricity
- Another person who owns solar
- Blackouts that could last for days every time there is a fire in close vicinity

What kinds of customer energy programs could help you and your community?

- Assistance getting solar – specifically interested in receiving clean energy
- Feed-In Tariff program
- Extended range for electric vehicles
- Large electric vehicles

- Towing capacity of electric vehicles
- More charging stations
- We are far behind in requiring solar on new buildings.
- Excited that they won't be relying on SDG&E
- General interest in the types of renewable energy SDCP is using
- Opted out of SDCP

Additional Notes

- Encountered many homeowners with solar panels (5+)
- Post office patrons were easier to engage than people who showed up to the market for lunch.

Appendix C

Julian Input

What is your community working on?

- More bike trails
- County took over Jess Martin Park
- Volunteer who helps feed veterans and offers repairs to their homes
- Julian and Borrego Springs recently received a Dark Sky Place designation – the initiative supports maintaining a dark sky by limiting lighting and encouraging programs to reduce energy so that people can enjoy the stars and the initiative supports wildlife
- Julian Natural Wonderfest on August 20th – astronomy/educational event with a lot of environmental organizations represented
- Recent designation of Volcan Preserve

When it comes to electricity and power at your house, what issues do you face?

- Power outages
- Lost freezer during brownout
- Wanted solar but has too much shade on their property
- Power outages lead to not being able to access water from wells, medical issues, inability to feed animals, gas stations closing, and ATMs not working – very unsettling issues
- Investment in generators
- Power outages
- SDG&E will turn off power for days in a heartbeat with concerns of fire
- Crop season looks two months ahead, blooming sooner and then drying up
- Choosing to move and scale down house to get solar
- High costs and not being able to access solar as renters
- Received a free SDG&E generator, which offers peace of mind for animals, food, etc. – although have heard other people in Julian say they don't qualify for the free generator
- Rely heavily on air conditioning during the summer months

What kinds of customer energy programs could help you and your community?

- Limited by only one gas station
- When electricity goes out, gas stations and ATMs close.
- Would like a generator
- Switch to 100% LED bulbs
- Backup battery

- Mobile homes can't access solar
- Better bus service
- Replace solar panels that have reached their lifeline
- Battery storage to reduce energy
- Ability to be off the grid during peak hours to save money
- Fee reduction
- Solar programs for renters
- Electric vehicle charging stations
- Solar companies you can trust – people are facing too many problems and scams.
- Proudly off the grid (Cuyamaca Woods is not connected to SDG&E)
- Buying a house and can't afford solar
- As an uneducated senior, paying bills on public assistance is very difficult.
- Wish they could afford an electric vehicle
- Invest in sand batteries

Additional Notes

- Residents were friendly, talkative, and easy to engage with and outreach team was well received by library staff.

Appendix D

Lakeside Input

What is your community working on?

- Electronics recycling at Albertsons
- Supporting the homeless by personally giving food away
- Upgrades to lake
- Electric car stations at Lakeside Library
- New zero-emission Lakeside Library
- A lot of people have invested in solar in Lakeside.

When it comes to electricity and power at your house, what issues do you face?

- High bills
- How much they will owe now that their household is on solar
- There isn't always power available while camping.
- Financial support
- We don't want to pay more on our bill.
- Electric vehicles don't have enough range.
- Electric vehicle cost for battery replacement is not sustainable.
- Not enough electric vehicle charging stations
- Inefficient and wasteful (referencing solar/clean energy)
- Being a renter is a barrier to solar.
- Low-income resident can't afford their monthly bill.
- Renter can't take advantage of energy savings programs because property owner isn't interested
- Net energy metering – tax on solar
- Cost – they have their energy on all the time
- Excessive energy use for cooling and medical needs

What kinds of customer energy programs could help you and your community?

- They saved for a long time to purchase solar infrastructure and took advantage of tax savings.
- Afraid of roof issues connected to solar
- Putting up windmills and solar panels
- We have solar and have no complaints – it's a major cost savings.

- Composting
- Incentive to replace water heater
- Not enough incentives for solar
- Planting trees
- Rebates on electric vehicles
- Bringing portable solar panel batteries while out
- Maintaining low-income discounts with SDCP's service
- Financial support and distribution of solar panels
- Can't get through to the support programs that they qualify for
- More efficient energy appliances
- Community grants for access to electric vehicles
- Ways to recycle that are more ecological
- Getting surcharge for electric vehicle registration
- Lowering rent
- Investing in home solar power
- Solar for low-income individuals
- Public transit should be more affordable
- Caps on rent
- Expansion on community engagement/town hall for ideas

Additional Notes

- At least 6-8 homeowners that we spoke to have solar.
- Staff members at the library received the outreach team very well.

Appendix E

Ramona Input

What is your community working on?

- I don't know.
- Building more homes and stores
- Proposal for a skate park
- Schools providing meals
- Library is the hub of the town, a lot of resource groups come here to table
- Celebrating National Night Out soon with a safety/police focus
- PATH is providing resources for those who are unsheltered and families in need
- Senior Center and Boys & Girls Clubs provide community activities and support

When it comes to electricity and power at your house, what issues do you face?

- Tries to keep energy off as much as possible
- Bills decreased from \$250 to \$45 in one month since they hardly keep the energy on (i.e., they are financially forced not to)
- Has no money to pay the energy bill
- High price
- Cost
- The need for air conditioning and heat, but it is too expensive
- Not happy about rate hikes
- They have solar, but even with a tenant, the cost is too high.
- On low-income program and not able to use electricity between 4:00-9:00 p.m. – their monthly bill was \$433
- The price
- The bills are going up, especially during this heat. In years past, they could pay their bill, but now they choose to endure and suffer by not using electricity/air conditioning.
- Charging stations for electricity
- High electric bill – they are 83 years old and keep their air conditioning off until they can't handle it to save money.
- Has solar and updated air conditioning to connect with solar
- Medical dependency; power outage concerns
- With all electric appliances, the bill is too high. With a 9-5 job, you come home at peak hours and using electricity can't be avoided.
- It's pricey, especially during summer and winter and with tenants driving up the prices.

- As a landlord, there may be limited space for installing solar.

What kinds of customer energy programs could help you and your community?

- Summer programs that support energy savings
- Medical aid during power outages
- Economic support
- Information on how to save energy – targeting the Latino community
- Would like to see SDG&E go out of business
- Solar and wind energy
- Level Pay Program roll-over
- Programs that are severely discounted and handle back payments
- Energy efficient appliances – recommendations of brands on heaters and portable air conditioning units
- Programs for low-income residents
- Landlords incentivized to install solar
- Upgrade with energy efficient appliances
- Financial support for solar
- LED flood lights
- Free solar
- Support during brownouts/blackouts
- Want to feel the difference in price
- No change to SDG&E CARE Program, even though it was \$433 last month
- Access to solar panels for renters
- Financial support for solar
- More credible solar companies – company messed up their roof and isn't taking responsibility
- Homeowner would like solar
- Wants clean energy as long as all of the other pieces are thought through
- As long as SDCP doesn't affect the bill
- Protection from SDG&E surcharges/unknowns
- Would like landlord to invest in solar as a renter

Additional Notes

- Overall great outreach event – outreach during food distributions allowed for even more engagement.
- A couple of people mentioned that they are locked out of their electricity during peak hours.

- Librarian who also played the role as the food pantry host introduced incoming people to the outreach team as their community partner.

Appendix F

Valley Center Input

What is your community working on?

- Water access and resiliency efforts for drought

When it comes to electricity and power at your house, what issues do you face?

- Mobile/manufactured home, can't add solar
- Solar
- Solar panel issues

What kinds of customer energy programs could help you and your community?

- For SDCP to provide solar directly, provide direct installation from SDCP to avoid having to work with solar companies

Additional Notes

- None