



Youth Climate Action Plan Focus Groups:  
Analysis of Groups 11/20/2009-12/9/2009

**Locations/Groups:**

Redwood High School R.E.A.L. Program

Redwood City Teen Advisory Group (TAG)

Woodside High School

Sequoia High School

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## **Introduction**

The City Manager's office facilitated a series of focus groups regarding the proposed Climate Action Plan. A series of youth focus groups were coordinated in order to educate the youth about the plan and to also obtain their feedback and ideas regarding the plan. Between November 20<sup>th</sup> and December 9<sup>th</sup> 2009, four focus groups were facilitated with a total of 99 high school students in attendance.

## **Participants**

**Date:** 11/20/09  
**Group:** Redwood High School R.E.A.L. (Redwood Environmental Academy of Leadership) Program  
**Location:** Redwood High School  
**Youth:** 17 males between the ages of 15 to 18, and 13 females between the ages of 14 to 17 – most of these students are Latino and come from households with a lower socio-economic status.

**Date:** 12/2/09  
**Group:** Redwood City Parks & Recreation Teen Advisory Group (TAG)  
**Location:** Red Morton Community Center  
**Youth:** 5 males between the ages of 15 to 17, and 9 females between the ages of 14 to 17 – most of these students are Latino and come from households with varying socio-economical statuses.

**Date:** 12/3/09  
**Group:** Sequoia High School Eco-Club and other Sequoia students  
**Location:** Sequoia High School  
**Youth:** 10 males between the ages of 16 to 18, and 10 females between the ages of 14 to 17 – these students were of a variety of ethnicities and socio-economic status.

**Date:** 12/9/09  
**Group:** Woodside High School, Woodside Greenies and other Woodside students  
**Location:** Woodside High School  
**Youth:** 18 males between the ages of 16 to 18, and 17 females between the ages of 16 to 18 – these students were of a variety of ethnicities and socio-economic status.

## **Overview of Findings**

Each group was presented with the proposed climate action plan. At each focus group, the youth were asked to gage their level of understanding of the plan. It appeared that all of the students seemed to be able to clearly understand the purpose and proposed steps of the plan.

After each group was presented with the proposed climate action plan, they were divided in to small groups to answer the following four questions:

1. What about the plan excited you?
2. What in the plan could you be involved in? What specifically?
3. What would motivate you to participate in one of the programs in the plan?
4. Is there anything missing in the plan? If yes, then what?

Below is a compilation of common themes in the responses from the four focus groups, responding to the questions above.

1. Items in the plan that the youth were excited about were:
  - Free energy and water audits
  - Farmers markets being included with the downtown event
  - The idea that entire neighborhoods could “go green”
  - Single-stream recycling
  - Green jobs for youth
  - Community gardens
  - Composting and food scrap recycling
  - Money savings opportunities
2. Things in the plan that the youth felt that they could be involved in were:
  - Green@Home
  - Bike riding
  - Using public transportation
  - Carpooling
  - Car Sharing
  - Tree plantings
  - Single Stream Recycling
  - Composting
  - Recycling
  - Farmers Market Events
  - Water Conservation
3. Things that would motivate the youth to participate in the programs in the plan are:
  - Programs being offered in school
  - Youth led activities
  - Community/school competitions that encourage youth participation
  - Fulfilling community service requirements
  - People/teachers encouraging and requiring activity
  - Official recognition
  - Prizes/free stuff
  - Community bonding opportunities
  - Green employment opportunities for youth

4. Items that are missing in the plan are:
  - Schools clubs at each High School in the School District around “going green”
  - More programs for Elementary School students
  - Encouragement for youth/teen groups interested in sustainability
  - More involvement with the schools

### **Other Conclusions**

Both the Redwood High School group and the Teen Advisory Group (TAG) communicated in their small group exercises, the need for more education and awareness around sustainability. They felt that more awareness on the possible future consequences of not living sustainably was needed in their neighborhoods, and that more education was needed with certain demographics in their community.

### **Summary**

Majority of the youth were familiar with the concepts, terms and seriousness of the topic of climate change. It appears that the youth in our community have a strong sense of accountability in the area of climate change. Each of the four focus groups shared a similar concern of protecting the health of the earth and their communities for future generations. The youth seemed very interested in participating in the programs in the proposed climate action plan, as well as to make necessary habit changes.

### **Redwood City Verde Youth Ambassadors Program**

Of the 99 high school students that participated in the climate action plan focus groups, 94 of them participated in a survey about the Redwood City Verde Youth Ambassador Program. The survey included 18 questions about their preferences regarding what they would like the program to look like.

The survey showed that almost all (98%) of the students would prefer to have hands-on training as opposed to book learning. Majority (88%) of the youth agreed or strongly agreed that they like the idea of working outdoors as their form of work. 78% of the youth either agreed or strongly agreed that they would like to work as a team, as opposed to working alone. 68% of the youth surveyed either agreed or strong agreed that they would like to become a certified green gardener, as a part of their employment training, and 83% of the youth either agreed or strongly agreed that they would like to learn other skills like marketing as a part of their employment training. The complete survey results are shown on Attachment A of this report.

There was a strong interest from several of the students that participated in the focus groups, in finding out additional information about the Redwood City Verde Youth Ambassadors Program.

### **Attachments**

Attachment A – Redwood City Verde Youth Ambassadors Program Survey Results