

Community projects and efforts such as the City of Cudahy's Long-range Water Conservation and Parks Plan, is a strong necessity for areas such as Southeast Los Angeles. It was a very much appreciated opportunity to be part of this internship and although it was not very extensive, I feel I was still able to gain something from the experience. I went into this with a predicted sense, as a resident of this community, because I'm aware that very often the majority of community members are unaware of what is going on in their surroundings when regarding issues related to the city or other politics. Sure enough, unfortunately among the numerous individuals I spoke to, only one twelve year old was slightly familiar with the idea of planning along the L.A. river. Aside from her, no one else knew what I was referring to when I asked if they were aware or familiar with the plans for the parks in their area. One older gentleman in particular even joked and asked, "What parks?" as there are few and some do not fit the usual description of what should represent a neighborhood park. Some details I noticed throughout my time canvassing was that during the afternoon, most out were older or middle-aged women picking up their children from school, therefore not many had time to talk. Those whom gave us their time at home, made the conversation quick as they were settling in their children and/or cooking. During the evening though, it was mostly older men out, walking or riding bikes, but they all seemed to have somewhere to go. I made sure it was known that their time was appreciated despite it needing to be a bit of a rushed conversation. Each person I spoke to received an invitation to the special council meeting for the following Monday and although only few seemed sure they can try to attend, none actually did. Most were honest and shared that they would be busy, especially because it was a week-day and late notice. As for the meeting itself, I felt it was a great choice to attend. I constantly plan to sit in on meetings in my city and those

surrounding but my school schedule tends to get in the way, so this time I made the extra effort, and realized it is completely worth doing. Regardless of the fact that local residents do not attend, I got to see first hand exactly why that should change. I had the opportunity to listen to first hand discussion and details regarding the plans to come, in a manner I know I would not have understood by just reading a piece of paper. I'd like to hold on to the thought of some residents genuinely seeming interested in being informed in hopes that some day things can change and they can be much more involved. This will benefit me in the future because I am reminded of why I am choosing this career path to begin with; to bring change. I would someday like to see people such as my neighbors and grandmother, being involved in what goes on in their community as they see it begin to benefit them. We are accustomed to things being done for the motive of outside factors rather than for us directly but I am confident that in time, this can begin to shift and communities will learn their active roles in contributing to this change themselves. I now plan to attend more meetings, especially on my days off and over the summer.

Thank you of the opportunity to be a part of this.

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